

Dr. Lynn
Hiles



Revelation
OF

JESUS
CHRIST

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE CHURCH FROM A
MODERN PERSPECTIVE OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

The Book of Revelation has been one of the most misunderstood books of the Bible. Thank God for a refreshing look at the book that is intended to be a revelation of *Jesus Christ*, not a revelation of the “beast,” “false prophet,” or “antichrist.” No one has a keener insight into the true spirit of Revelation than Dr. Lynn Hiles. It is refreshing to see someone who opens up the true message of the King and His Kingdom.

In a world that is full of fear, hopelessness, doom, and despair, the true Church should be offering hope; instead, it has been the propagator of more fear and despair. Dr. Hiles is a model of a true New Testament prophet who sees the need for an unfolding of the gracious truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ that offers hope, not only to the world, but to the Church. The Book of Revelation gives a panoramic view of a glorious, victorious, overcoming Lord and His Christ. This message is the trumpet that is being sounded through a special voice of the Lord in Dr. Lynn Hiles.

—Dr. Kenneth Meadors
Dean of Academic Affairs
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The Revelation of Jesus Christ

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Book of Revelation

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Dedication

"FOR though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye JL not many fathers" emphasized the apostle Paul two millennia ago (1 Cor. 4:15). This reality is still true today. Two men who have parent-ed me are my natural father, Pastor Jack Hiles, and my father-in-law, the late Rev. Robert I. Miller. They are fathers to me in the natural realm, but they are also my spiritual fathers.

My dad is still my pastor to this day, and I'm very grateful that he is still living. He encouraged me to follow my calling and be all that I could be.

In my teen years I traveled with my father-in-law, Robert, in his scenic cruiser bus and learned a great deal about mobile ministry. To this day I still travel extensively; I suppose I got the road in my blood from smelling diesel fuel. Those were great days. Robert passed away in October of 2004 and is greatly missed.

To these men who instructed me in the things of God, I dedicate this book and echo the words of the writer of Hebrews: These are men "of whom the world is not worthy" (see Heb. 11:38).

Special Thanks

I would like to give a very special thanks to Peggy Valdez, who, while transcribing the notes of this book for me, passed on to the other side. She encouraged me to put in writing the things that God was showing me and undertook the task of helping me with the first seven chapters. Her work will live beyond her years.

Thanks are also in order to Roy Richmond who helped to transcribe the rest of my dictations and to Corey Ann Klima for her editing. Thank you!

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Foreword

MY friend Lynn Hiles has successfully done in this book what I have heard him do many times in person: take the unveiled truths of the Book of Revelation and cause them to come alive. He transforms every chapter and verse into a clear principle of relevant, life-changing truth that both the advanced scholar and the freshman student stand amazed upon hearing.

Many modern-day teachers insist that the Book of Revelation is strictly a book of prophecy. I contend, along with Dr. Hiles, that it is no more a book of prophecy than Luke or John and probably less prophetic than Daniel or Ezekiel. The first five words in Revelation give the true purpose of its content: “The Revelation of Jesus Christ.”

Only when we see Jesus—what He has done for us and what He is doing through us—can we come into our true identity. That is the purpose of this book: to sound a trumpet proclaiming to everyone that Jesus Christ is Lord and King, and His victory is our victory. That is good news!

In a time when the world is searching for good news and freedom from bondage and fear, Lynn Hiles comes with this powerful book. He announces to everyone that Christ has indeed made us free from bondage. By showing the revelation of Jesus Christ he liberates believers from the fear of pending catastrophe and, instead, encourages us to have faith to believe that the future is bright because the victory has already been won.

This book echoes John’s original Revelation, providing a panoramic overview of the entire Bible and the culmination of God’s covenant with humanity. From the slain lamb to the voice in the midst of the candlesticks, the message is clear: Jesus is the victor. From the Alpha to the One who sits on the throne, you cannot miss the ultimate triumph of Christ and His own.

Few people can so effectively and accurately interpret God’s intentions for His creation as Lynn Hiles does in this book. I am convinced that the truths that are revealed in these chapters hold the key to a coming tsunami of the Spirit that will bring the people of God into our greatest victories.

Jesus Christ is the firstborn of a nation of kings and priests that reign with Him. Only as we understand the types and shadows of Revelation can we be effective in our role on earth. Although many are planning to evacuate the planet, I believe this book is much needed for equipping the saints of God to rule and reign.

We are indeed moving from a church-age mentality into the age of God's Kingdom fully arriving. In this profound treatise, my friend has done the church and the world a tremendous service by making the truths of Christ so lucid and understandable. This book is a must-read for any serious student of the Word of God.

—Bishop David Huskins, Th.D., D.D.

Presiding Bishop

International Communion of Charismatic Churches

Preface

YOU and I are on a journey. As we open the pages of the great Book of Revelation together, be prepared to behold the great drama that God has been unfolding throughout the ages. It is a panoramic view of a great mystery that God has been progressively revealing to the human family since the beginning of time. We're going to take a fresh look at the Book of Revelation and consider again the words of John the Revelator. We will discover that his prophetic vision unveils the greatest of all revelations to the Church and a waiting planet: the revelation of Jesus Christ.

It is worth noting that this unveiling of Christ is not exclusive to the Book of Revelation alone; it is the theme of every book in the Bible, from the opening words of Genesis, which declare, *"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth"* (Gen. 1:1), to the Book of Hebrews where Jesus refers to Scriptures being written about Him. (See Heb. 10:7.) The entire book, or collection of books, that we know as "the Bible" is an unfolding revelation of Jesus Christ. I hope that by soaking in the Book of Revelation, one of the church's most contentious books, we'll begin to see Christ more through the "single eye" of faith.

"Come and see!" is repeated numerous times in Revelation 6. If somehow by the spirit of wisdom and revelation we can do just that, if we will "Come and see," God will cause the eyes of our understanding to be flooded with light, and we will be able to behold, perceive, and understand the revelation of Jesus Christ throughout this entire book. It is much to our benefit to receive this renewed vision; it will disarm us of the fear, intimidation, rhetoric, and flood of misleading information that has come out of the dragon's mouth. This overflow of propaganda has kept the human family fearful of even reading the Book of Revelation, when in fact it is Scripture's only book that declares a built-in blessing to those who read and understand it.

Some of us have been taught all of our lives that Revelation is about Godzilla-like monsters coming up out of the ocean. We've been sold stories of scud missiles, fighter planes, flying saucers, and other terrors that are just on the so-called "end times" horizon. Virtually any fearful and paranoid vision can be packaged and sold as gospel truth in the name of the last book of the Bible. But I am persuaded that this book follows the theme of its title: the *revelation* of Jesus Christ, given to John by God to show His servants what would shortly come to pass.

Revelation is not about dreadful beasts or scary monsters, and there's more to it than just end-time global events and dispensational concepts. Revelation, consistent with the rest of the Bible, is an ongoing revelation of Jesus Christ. It reveals the fullness of God's redemptive plan. It gives us not only a revelation of the historical Jesus, but also renders a view of who He is today. Revelation gives us a glimpse into what's happening in the heavens right now and what's taking place within the presently unfolding life of the believer.

Sorting Through Perspectives

It may come as a surprise to Americans accustomed to the contemporary *Left Behind* view of eschatology, but the Church historically has never held to one "official" interpretation of the Book of Revelation. There have always been varied viewpoints and opinions, and I believe there is merit to some of these perspectives that we have neglected in recent decades. Two of the more common ones are the "Historicist" and the "Preterist" viewpoints.

Proponents of the *Historicist* view believe that biblical prophecy is fulfilled cyclically throughout many different ages in history. *Preterists* hold to the idea that prophecy has been fulfilled with the closing of the "last days" of the Old Covenant in the first century A.D. Without a doubt, there are many Historicists and Preterists who can give you a legitimate and convincing argument concerning these particular perspectives of the Book of Revelation. I have studied these views and have concluded that they are quite possibly legitimate, at least to some degree.

As you read the pages that follow, you may see things that could pertain to world leaders, kingdoms, and events that have already transpired. If you embrace the Historicist view or the Preterist view, you will find authors and teachers who can profoundly touch your heart with that information. My purpose is not to be at war with any view, but to share what I believe the Lord has revealed to me—namely, that *Revelation is not primarily about things and events, but rather, it's about a Person.*

Truth be told, I have gleaned from all of the views and voices many ideas that have brought greater clarity to me. None of us have *all* the answers, but in "*the multitude of counselors there is safety*" (Prov. 11:14).

An Overview

In this treatise, I want to examine a Spiritual, Covenantal, and Christological view of Revelation, and the redemptive purpose of God revealed in this vision. Some scholars will tell you that the Spiritual view of the Book of Revelation is an interesting one, but it breaks the flow of prophetic understanding in that it doesn't just foretell the future. I find this unconvincing. According to Revelation itself, the "*testimony of Jesus Christ is the spirit of prophecy*" (Rev. 19:10). In light of

this truth, we can conclude that the clearest and purest form of prophetic interpretation reveals Jesus Christ and His Body.

The view presented in this book is Covenantal because the Book of Revelation is about the Church moving from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant in its understanding. And it is Christological because it is a study of Christ the head and His Body being fully unveiled. The word *revelation* comes from a Greek word meaning to unveil. In this book we will attempt to remove the “veil that is over our minds” as a result of reading Moses and the Old Covenant; in doing that, we will uncover a “*mystery that has been hid from ages...which is Christ in you the hope of glory*” (2 Cor. 3:15; Col. 1:26-27).

I am thankful that we are living in a day when we now have a more sure word of prophecy; and that more sure word of prophecy is realized as we look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. (Heb. 12:2). I do not claim to have all the answers, nor do I think myself an authority on Revelation. All truth is progressive and this is the truth that has been revealed to me to date. I am still learning and open. My purpose is to put this in a public forum so that it will provoke thought and dialogue. As we each bring the pieces of understanding that we have to the attention of others, it can be added to and adjusted, which will ultimately bring greater clarity to hungry seekers.

Chapter 1

God's Significant Signifiers

THROUGHOUT the Word of God, we find one basic theme: the revelation of Jesus Christ. Understanding this is a simple key that can be used to unlock the entire volume of Scripture. We find the revelation of Jesus Christ not just in the Book of Revelation, but from Genesis onward. Christ's unveiling is central throughout the Word of God. The writer of Hebrews recounts Jesus saying: *"In the volume of the book it is written of Me..."* (Heb. 10:7b).

Prelude: A Revelation of Christ Through the Whole Bible

As you study the Word of God, you will find many pictures of Him. I want to put great emphasis on this reality. First, we see Jesus Christ as the "Head." He is the Head of the Church; He is the beginning, the firstborn, the preeminent one.

Secondly, Psalm 139:16 says:

Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in Thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.

As you look into the Word of God, not only do you see the Head, Jesus Christ, but also the members of His Body. Those who choose to disregard certain portions of the Word of God have no idea of the unfolding truth they're missing. If we have eyes to see, the Old Testament will give us a fuller and more perfect knowledge of Jesus Christ. The Old Testament is Jesus concealed, the shadow. The New Testament is Jesus revealed, the full clarity. Those who feel that some Scripture is outdated have not discovered the basic principle declared in First Corinthians 2:12-14:

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. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 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.

All too often we have not looked at the Scriptures in the light of spiritual revelation. We've not understood that truth is like an onion—the more you peel, the more layers you discover. Even as the prophet said in Isaiah 28:10, *"Forprecept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little."*

If you are simply looking for the historical and grammatical thrust of Scripture, it can be found. I am not by any stretch of the imagination trying to negate the truth that lies in the narrative value of the Word of God. But there is a depth beneath this surface that is prophetic. As the spirit of revelation begins to grip your heart, the Word of God will become brand new. It will reveal truth to you, not just in a historical sense, but in an immediate, fresh, unfolding revelation of Jesus Christ, from the beginning of the Bible all the way through the end.

Let's look again at the text in Genesis 1. It begins by saying:

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day (Genesis 1:1-5).

We don't have to go three words into the first book of the Bible until we discover Christ: *In the beginning*. The word translated as "beginning" is #7225 in Strong's Exhaustive Concordance and it literally means "a first fruit." With this understanding in mind, we can read Genesis 1:1 with the sense of "In the 'first fruit' God created the heaven and the earth."

Here's the incredible thing: In Paul's letter to the church at Corinth, he calls Jesus Christ the first fruit! (See 1 Cor. 15:23.) Creation is created in Christ.

The letter to the church in Colossae states, concerning Christ:

For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him (Colossians 1:16 NKJV).

And finally let's take a brief glimpse into John's Gospel, where we see:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made (John 1:1-3).

As the spirit of revelation begins to breathe upon the Word of God, we see that this account is more than just a historic one. I believe that in the beginning of time God created everything in Christ. The worlds and the ages were framed in Him, for "*without Him was not any thing made that was made.*" The Genesis account of the earth as a formless abyss speaks of a time before recorded time when the earth was literally and historically without form, void, and "*darkness was upon the face of the great deep.*" If you'll just peel the onion a little bit and look at the layer underneath, you'll discover that this could also speak of that day when you were just like the earth. You had not yet been formed and shaped into the

likeness of your Creator; you were void, empty, and your life was full of chaos. Darkness ruled the face of the great deep that was within you. You were in a season when you reeled to and fro like someone intoxicated—without purpose, destiny, or direction. You were undone; the Divine Hand was absent in your world.

One day, though, your creation began. God arrived and began to speak into your abyss of darkness and chaos, saying, “Let there be light.” He could have said it a thousand different ways; perhaps He said simply the word “Jesus” and light flooded into your life. I am grateful for the day when God began to hover and brood over me. The implication of this idea in Hebrew is that of a chicken sitting on an egg, brooding over that egg until it is fully formed and brought to life. God began to brood over you long before you ever responded to Him consciously. Jesus began to move over the face of your great deep. He began to hover over the face of your waters, over your human spirit, and in your darkness and chaos God began to breathe the words: “*Let there be light.*” You were on your way out of darkness, into His marvelous light, formed into the likeness of your Creator. Each of those creation days so beautifully recorded in the first chapter of Genesis are but a revelation of the redemptive work and plan of Jesus Christ.

Cain and Abel

As we go a little bit further in the Scriptures, we see a man named Cain and his brother Abel. Cain was a farmer, a tiller of the ground. Abel was a keeper of sheep and he brought God the “first fruit” of the sheep he tended as a sacrifice, which pleased the Lord. This is another picture of Christ. This “first fruit,” the lamb that Abel brought, is another picture of Christ.

Cain’s sacrifice, by contrast, came from the ground. His sacrifice shows us the religious systems of our day that try to get us to offer the fruit of our own human sweat and labor. We attempt to obtain acceptance on the basis of what our earth and our fallen Adam can produce. The very best that humanity can produce in this fallen state is foreign to God because only the blood of a spotless lamb is an acceptable sacrifice.

Noah

Just a few chapters further in Genesis, we see a man by the name of Noah who built an ark to save his household. As we look at that ark we see it is also a picture of Christ. Consider this: In order to build an ark, one must cut down wood. In the Scripture, wood is a type of humanity. Jesus came into the earth and lived as a human being. He was cut down in the land of the living, giving His life as a ransom that He might become an ark for you and I to live in.

The account says of the ark: “*.and [thou] shalt pitch it within and without with pitch*” (Gen. 6:14). The word translated as “pitch” is the same Hebrew word that

has been translated in the King James Bible as “atonement.” God’s instruction to pitch the ark within and without could literally be translated: “Atone it within and without; put the atoning blood on the inside and on the outside.”

The precious blood of Jesus seals us for the day of redemption. Christ is a vessel that delivers us out of the old world that’s dominated by Adam’s fallen flesh, an earth that can only produce thorns and thistles, and a throng whose heart is only evil continually (Gen. 6:5). I don’t think it’s by chance that God told Noah to build three stories on the ark. This parallels the Tabernacle of Moses’ Outer Court, Holy Place, and Most Holy Place. The ark that Noah built and the Tabernacle of Moses are two perspectives of the same picture.

The dimensions of Noah’s ark were 30 cubits high, which in biblical numerology is the number for the blood of Christ; 50 cubits wide, the biblical number of Pentecost; and 300 cubits long, the number of divine completeness. This is an awesome picture of progressive redemption in the life of the believer. We are taken into this Ark called Christ, blood-bought and baptized in the Holy Ghost, and then led on to completeness or maturity.

This ark of Noah’s had one door, another illustration of Jesus. (See John 10:9.) I believe the ark’s window depicts Christ as well. When the flooding subsided, the ark came to rest. Noah opened the window and sent out two birds. The first was an unclean bird. I envision it flying all the way through Scripture and landing in the Book of Revelation, where Babylon becomes the hold of every foul spirit, the cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

I see the clean bird, the dove, flying to Matthew’s Gospel where it finds the olive branch in the Jordan River being baptized by John the Baptist. The dove lands on this Man, whose name is called the “Branch” in Isaiah 11:1. This dove says to us: “Here is the new world; here is the new creation. Here is where the curse is reversed!” Jesus Christ is the new world, for if anyone is in Christ, they are a new creature; old things have passed away and everything is re-created in Him (see 2 Cor. 5:17). Jesus’ presence in the Jordan with a lighting dove is a prophetic picture, and Peter goes on to tell us that the floodwaters carrying the ark of Noah are a picture of water baptism (see 1 Pet. 3:20-21).

We identify with Jesus in His death as we pass through the waters of baptism—the old humanity is buried. Our identification with Jesus becomes our vehicle out of the old world that was dominated by sin and carnality and into the New World, ruled by Christ Himself. I don’t think it’s by chance that the ark of Noah comes to rest upon the mountains of *Ararat*. The word *Ararat* means “the curse is reversed.” If you and I enter into Christ, the tide is turned and we are on our way back to the Father. Because Jesus suffered the pains of hell for us and literally became a curse, as we come into Him we are delivered from the curse of

sin and death, and delivered into a brand-new creation.

We can stand in the presence of God and enjoy the redemption that was provided through Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. Jesus said 2,000 years ago: *"Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out"* (John 12:31). If we are in Christ, our judgment is not in our future, but in our past.

Abraham

As we move on we see a picture of a man by the name of Abraham who hears the word of the Lord:

Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him therefor a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of (Genesis 22:2).

I'm sure you know this story as well as I do. Isaac and his father go up to a mountain in the land of Moriah and young Isaac looks over at his father and asks, *"My father. behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"* (Gen. 22:7).

Abraham replies to his question, and I believe prophetically declares, *"My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering"* (Gen. 22:8). As Abraham is about to lay the knife to Isaac, a ram was caught in the thicket. A ram is a male lamb. This is another picture of Christ's finished redemptive work. We can see in this ram caught in the thicket God's provision of a sacrifice. Isaac's restraint upon the altar is our identification with that finished work of Jesus. Prophetic revelations of Jesus Christ abound in Genesis.

Exodus

Let's look at the Exodus account and examine the lambs taken out on the tenth day of the month of the Hebrew slaves' deliverance. The protective lambs, one sacrificed for each household, were eaten and their blood applied to the door posts of their homes. The angel had come to bring death to the firstborn of each house on which no blood was applied. If the angel saw the lamb's blood, he passed over that house. The act of passing over is not an escape from judgment; the blood on the door posts of our hearts tells the death angel that there's already been a death exacted in this house. The firstborn has already died here. My identification with death causes the death angel to pass over me. Thank God today for the blood of Jesus Christ that is applied to the door posts of our hearts. When the blood is visible, death will pass over, just like the death angel did on that fateful night in Egypt. (See First Corinthians 15:55.)

After the ten mighty plagues, the children of Israel left the land of Egypt and were delivered—not only from death but from the pursuit of their enemy as the Egyptians were baptized into the waters of the Red Sea. The writers of the

New Testament see the typology in this and unveil their baptism into the sea and into Moses, the mediator of that covenant. (See First Corinthians 10:2.) On this side of the cross we are not baptized into Moses; we're baptized into Christ.

We can now turn our attention to what happened at Mount Sinai as the Hebrews were baptized into a cloud, which I believe portrays the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It's interesting to me that they come to Mount Sinai about 50 days after their deliverance from the land of Egypt. The number 50 is brought to light for us as we look at the feasts of Israel. The span of time from the Feast of Passover until the celebration of the Feast of Pentecost was exactly 50 days. The word Pentecost in the Greek language literally means "Fifty." When God gave the Law at Mount Sinai, 3,000 people died. In the New Testament, we gather at a new mountain—spiritual Mount Zion. Hebrews 12:22 portrays Zion as the centerpiece of the New Covenant, in contrast to Old Covenant Mount Sinai. Exactly 50 days after the true Lamb is sacrificed, Jesus' followers are in an upper room on the day of Pentecost, and 3,000 people were given new life and added to the Church! God's royal law of love is not written on stone tablets, but on our hearts. The Old Covenant letter kills, but the Spirit gives life in the New Covenant.

The parallels become even more fascinating when we see the tree that was cast into the bitter waters that the children of Israel came to. Read Exodus 15:23-25:

And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? And he cried unto the Lord; and the Lord shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there He made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there He proved them.

That tree shows us of the cross of Jesus Christ. He was nailed to a tree to deal with our bitterness. We will soon look at wormwood in the Book of Revelation, which speaks of bitterness and being cast into the waters. This wormwood kills a great multitude in Revelation, but Jesus overcomes bitterness by becoming the worm that is nailed to the wood. David once cried in anguish, "I am a worm and not a man" (Ps. 22:6 NIV).

Can you see how Jesus, as the Son of Man, became a worm and identified with us in our maggot-like state? He took the old humanity to the cross and nailed it to the wood to deal with our bitterness, to deliver us from the killing effects of the wormwood. God told Moses to put the tree in the bitter waters. Similarly, when the cross is applied, our waters can be transformed from bitter to sweet.

Divine Provision

Briefly, let's visit the rock Moses struck in the wilderness to give the Israelites miraculously flowing water to drink. Penetrating a holy mystery, Paul peered back into this ancient story and revealed: "*And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ*" (1 Cor. 10:4).

Then there was the divinely provided food that these same sojourners ate in the wilderness: manna. "Manna" was a word that means "*What is it?*" Isn't it amazing that they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years eating "what is it" and could never figure out what nourished them? Manna was bread that fell from Heaven. Jesus spoke frankly 2,000 years later: "*I am the bread which came down from Heaven*" (John 6:41). Each element in the Book of Exodus portrays Christ.

In Every Aspect

We could go through Leviticus and talk about the Aaronic priesthood. We could talk about sin offerings, free-will offerings, incense offerings, and all the garments of the priest. We'd conclude that the rich tapestry of ancient Hebrew worship is but another picture of the priestly ministry of our High Priest, Jesus. Christ is not only the offering, but the one who offers, according to the New Testament letter to the Hebrews. And then we'd tour the rest of the Old Testament! All through the Word of God, Jesus Christ is depicted over and over again through stories, pictures, types, and shadows.

This is a worthwhile undertaking, and I hope you spend more time seeing Christ in the entire Bible. But I think we've covered enough ground here to whet your appetite, and to help you understand why I believe this grand collection we call Holy Scripture is so much more than a history book. We can see herein the ongoing, unfolding revelation of Jesus Christ. This is especially evident in the writing called "Revelation" itself! It's the only book of the Bible that declares this overtly, saying, "[This is] *the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave.*" (Rev. 1:1). Amazingly enough, we don't preach Jesus from this book. We have preached bugs as big as Volkswagens and geopolitical intrigue, but we've completely missed the real purpose of this book.

Reading Signs and Signifiers

There is a singular passion at work here, and it is the Revelation of Jesus Christ. It is the progressive culmination of the 66 books of the Bible. (Can I also highlight that this is not the "book of revelations" plural? There is but one revelation going on here.) I also believe that the reason this is the very last book of the Bible is so that when you get to this part of the Scriptures, you can crack the code and realize that Revelation is not only talking about literal things, but deeply spiritual things.

Let me give you an example as we once again look very closely at Revelation 1:1. It says, *“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John.”* It is worth noting that John penned this nearly 2,000 years ago, and it is very clear that what he’s speaking about is not for some far-off future time, but events that would shortly come to pass, in his original hearers’ day.

To understand this better, let me call your attention to this portion of the opening: “[God] *sent and signified it.*” This simple statement is extremely important for us to understand. The word “signified” is most interesting. Break that word up and you get: “Sign-ified.” God communicated this to John through His angel in *signs* and symbols. We’re told right from the outset that this book is written in signs and symbols. Revelation has been written in code; if you’re going to understand this enigmatic book, you’ve got to decipher this code. You’re going to need to get into the same spirit that John was in when he received this revelation. Also, we must realize that this book was written in code not just so it would be difficult to understand but so it could be passed around undetected through the Roman Empire. (It would have been considered seditious if it had been written in plain language.)

You must realize that you don’t need *USA Today* to be able to interpret Revelation. You don’t need CNN. You don’t need to twist it and make it fit into one strategic time or one particular season in human history. I believe this revelation of Jesus Christ is relevant to every saint of God who has ever lived in any age, from the time that Jesus Christ walked the shores of Galilee to this very moment.

John the Revelator uses a great deal of Old Testament prophetic language in this revelation. Let me give you some of my hermeneutical principles in interpreting Revelation. If you go to Bible college, you will be taught that you must stay consistent with certain principles of interpretation when dealing with the Bible. If you are going to use one set of rules to interpret Scripture, then you must stay consistent with them throughout. As I mentioned briefly in the Preface, I look at this book from a Spiritual Prophetic view. As you read these words, I pray that you will receive an impartation of the spirit of revelation, so that God will begin to impart an understanding of these matters.

I want to give you a disclaimer: Because truth is progressively unfolding, by the time you think you’ve exhausted your study, more revelation will be added, making your understanding in need of an immediate update. Revelation is almost impossible to totally uncover in one attempt.

For comparison’s sake, let’s take a look at some of the simplest symbolism

in this book. There's a little furry creature in this book mentioned many times: a lamb. "*And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain...*" (Rev. 5:6). Now, I don't think it takes a whole lot of spiritual discernment for us to see that this lamb is a symbol. You don't have to be brilliant to discern that this lamb is not referring to a literal creature running around in some farmer's barnyard; this lamb is a picture of Christ. It's a code word, a key, a symbol, that's telling us that if we will compare spiritual things with spiritual things we will immediately know that this slain lamb signifies the Lord Jesus Christ.

How can we know this? We compare it to the lamb found in Exodus 12, taken out from among the sheep and goats. The blood of that lamb delivered the Israelites, a prophetic picture of the blood of Jesus Christ. If that's not enough evidence, we can peer into the New Testament world and see Jesus walking across the muddy bank of the Jordan River as He's about to be baptized in full view of the Hebrew multitude. John the Revelator follows the protocol of John the Baptist, who declares right there, *Ladies and gentlemen, it's the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world!* (John.1:29). If this lamb that John the Baptist is referring to is a spiritual symbol, then it behooves us to remain consistent with our hermeneutical guidelines and realize that the lamb we see in the Revelation is not a literal barnyard creature either.

Please follow me here, because if this is correct, the "Temple" in Revelation is not referring to some future building in the Middle East! It may not be made with hands at all. Perhaps the Temple in Revelation is the same one that the New Testament speaks of when it says, "*What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*" (1 Cor. 6:19). And perhaps the other pictures in Revelation—golden candlesticks, altars of incense, brazen lavers, brazen seas, the throne room—are not just pretty furniture on a planet called Heaven somewhere.

Maybe understanding can be gained in the rest of this scriptural code as well. Perhaps the meaning of the candlestick in the Book of Revelation can be revealed as we look at the candlesticks mentioned in Exodus where God told Moses to build a tabernacle and to make it after the pattern that was shown him in the mountain.

As you begin to understand the typology, the Book of Revelation unfolds as a book that's full of revelatory truth. The ability to crack the code is within our grasp. The symbol of the lamb is a fairly easy one to decipher. It's one of the more easily accepted; but I'm just as convinced that the rest of the symbols in Revelation are not found in today's newspapers or network television, but in Scripture itself. You just need to know that if you've read the other 65 books of

the Bible, you can get into Revelation and see these symbols uncovered by understanding the symbols found throughout the rest of Scripture.

Tempestuous Temples

It amazes me that as God is moving from the Old Covenant into the New Covenant, Jesus is taken to see all the beautiful buildings comprising Herod's Temple. Jesus looks at those buildings and makes a stunning observation: “*You destroy this temple and in three days I'll raise it back up again* (see John 2:19; Mark 14:58).

Upon hearing this, the carnal minds of the people around Him flew from the safety zone—not because of what He said, but what they *thought* He said. One of the most profound things I've learned over many years of full-time ministry is that people will not crucify you for what you say; they will crucify you for what they think you said! Jesus was not out of His mind when He made that statement; He was simply out of “their” mind. He had a *spiritual* understanding, and they had a *natural* understanding. They were looking at those marvelous buildings and explaining to Him that it had taken them quite a few years to build this magnificent Temple, so how was He going to be able to reconstruct it in three days? I'm sure they thought this guy had flipped His lid!

But the reality of it was, Jesus was talking about the temple of His body. He was using a literal picture to show a spiritual truth. And it happened, just as Jesus said. They destroyed the temple of His body. They hung Him on Calvary's cross, but three days later, the Father vindicated Christ by raising Him from the dead.

Let's take it one step further and talk about how the house that God is building today has already been under construction for two days. Peter says that “*with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day*” (2 Pet. 3:8 NKJV). This might suggest to us that the temple—God's spiritual house—has been in ruin and not completed for two days. We are now literally living in the dawn of the third day. God is not just going to raise up His physical body; He's going to raise us up as the Body of Christ and the Temple of God!

The Temple of God is being completed, and when it is finished, God will manifest in this latter house more gloriously than ever before! Jewels and precious stones were fine for the old Covenant, but they're wood, hay, or stubble compared to our dawning reality. God does not dwell in buildings made with hands (see Acts 17:24); God lives in houses made of “*lively stones*,” fitly framed together to be a habitation of God through the Spirit (1 Pet. 2:5). God allowed the Roman Emperor Titus to destroy the physical Temple in A.D. 70 because God was transitioning to a more expansive, spiritual Temple—you and I!

Where do you suppose the vantage point is for much of Revelation? God speaks and works primarily from His Temple! Suppose for a moment with me that this Temple is not just some great marble building in a Middle Eastern country somewhere. Rather, He speaks and acts through you and I!

If the lamb in Revelation is a spiritual icon—a symbol—then perhaps the rest of the book (staying consistent with our hermeneutical rules) is not about monsters coming up out of the ocean. Perhaps the beast rising out of the sea is also a spiritual symbol. As we look at Revelation's structure, we see from its beginning a flow consistent with the patterns of the feasts of Israel. The slain lamb indicates the Feast of Passover.

In Revelation 6 and 7, the sun, moon, and stars are darkened. This is difficult symbolic language for many readers to sort out. In Acts 2, Peter gives his great address at the Feast of Pentecost, as the celebrants are amazed at the Holy Spirit's outpouring. Peter says:

But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; and it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved (Acts 2:16-21).

Peter spoke some 2,000 years ago that these things would happen before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. He did not say that those things were coming but that “this is that” which had been foretold, being fulfilled in their midst! This took place at this celebration of the Feast of Pentecost. Do you recall that in the Old Testament a young man by the name of Joseph shared a dream with his father and his brothers? This dream was one of the sun, the moon, and the stars bowing down to him. The sun, moon, and stars were pictures of temporal Israel—Joseph's family. His father Israel (Jacob) understood the typological significance of the dream, indicated by this question, “*Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?*” (Gen. 37:10b).

We need to understand this: The sun, moon, and stars are not just literal bodies in the heavens, hanging out there in the starry skies of the night; in the Scripture, they are symbols of temporal Israel. The events unfolding in Peter's day at Pentecost were caused by God's pouring His Spirit on all flesh—not just Israel as a nation, but upon people of every ethnicity, language, and nation. God was fulfilling His Word, as prophesied by the prophet Joel.

Here is another example of symbolic language:

And I beheld when He had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places (Revelation 6:12-14).

It is easy to see that this passage employs some of the very language used in Joseph's dream and Joel's prophecy. Following the opening of this sixth seal, we see God's servants being sealed on their foreheads. (See Revelation 7.) Let's consider for a moment that we are viewing the progressive work of the Spirit of God, and let's look at this in light of the progression of the Feasts of Israel.

We first saw the lamb slain, shadowed for us in the Feast of Passover. Now we see in Revelation 6 and 7 a picture of the Feast of Pentecost, where angels seal God's servants on their foreheads. This echoes Ephesians 1:13-14:

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.

The "earnest" of our inheritance is the down payment that has been made ours by Jesus Christ. We have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. That, ladies and gentlemen, is not a literal inkblot across the top of my forehead, but an inner working of the Spirit of God in my life! This seal is God's guarantee of even greater things to come. It's also a confirmation of God's abiding presence, giving me protection, according to Revelation.

The apocalyptic language of Acts 2 is not meant to be taken literally, but as a prophetic proclamation to all those hearing it. Peter's message at the Feast of Pentecost is that it's lights out for natural Israel as a nation, a people who have blasphemed God for the last time, a people who have crucified the King of Glory. Please don't read this as being anti-Semitic; all humanity is culpable for the death of Jesus, and I believe that salvation is available to everyone—Israeli, American, Chinese—all of us. But there is only one way into the covenant of promise and that's through the precious blood of Jesus Christ. I'm not saying that Israel cannot be saved; what I am saying is that God is not a racist. Father does not choose one ethnic group above another, as if to say, "Well, folks, I've chosen Israel and I've rejected Palestine." Absolutely not. In God's New Covenant, absolutely everyone can come in and be a part of a meaningful relationship with God.

I can remember actually crying myself to sleep as a young man after hearing some of the horrifying things that were taught from the Book of Revelation.

Such fear had been sown in my heart. I remember coming home from church meetings and seeing a red moon—I would be terrified! I had no idea what it meant, but I knew such signs must mean *something* horrible according to what I heard preached.

What a joy and relief it was to discover that these are symbols of the Feast of Pentecost. Pentecost ushered in a mighty rushing wind, one that blew the fig tree typifying temporal Israel. This mighty wind removed natural Israel and gave birth to an all-encompassing spiritual Israel. A natural temple was destroyed and a spiritual house emerged.

An old Jerusalem was removed and a New Jerusalem—the Bride, the Church, the Lamb’s wife—was coming on the scene! An old heaven and earth passed away and a new heaven and earth—where righteousness was pulsating—emerged! The wind of Pentecost blew and reconstituted everything. You could say the Old Covenant world is *gone with the wind*.

Let’s continue to look at the pictures and patterns that God has embedded in the seventh chapter of Revelation. We’ve seen that through the work done in the Feast of Pentecost, many are divinely sealed on their foreheads; we see a great multitude that no one can number standing before God’s throne. It is no coincidence that in chapter 8 we see seven angels with seven trumpets, preparing to sound. By looking at Israel’s feasts in the Old Testament, we find the Feast of Pentecost followed by the Feast of Trumpets. What is significant about that? Just for a moment, consider that these angels with these trumpets may not just be fat babies with wings that step out on a cloud. Perhaps they are a perfect picture of prophetic voices.

After each angel sounds in Revelation 8, there is an outpouring of the seven vials (literally, the *bowls of blood*) symbolizing the great Day of Atonement. This day follows the Feast of Trumpets in the Hebrew calendar. In Revelation’s closing, the Feast of Ingathering is pictured. Using the sickle, the angel reaps the first fruits of the people, “*for the harvest of the earth is ripe*” (Rev. 14:15). I think you will agree that this is a great conclusion. Revelation does not end in gloom and despair, but it ends in a great global harvest. More than a mere handful “make the cut”; there’s an innumerable multitude standing before God’s throne singing redemption songs. This is the mystery concealed in the old Testament feasts: the redemptive work of Christ.

We can see that Revelation is a book painting the complete picture from all the glimpses given to us throughout the old Testament.

Scripture is like a masterpiece painting that begins its brush stroke in Genesis and ends in a panoramic view in Revelation. Since the prophetic language in Revelation is best interpreted by understanding the prophetic

language throughout the rest of Scripture, we have reliable keys to this great apocalypse. The Word of God declares that all Scripture has been given to us for our example. What a masterpiece! Who could have ever orchestrated such a great tapestry? What an unveiling, what a vision, and what a *revelation* that God has caused to unfold throughout His Word!

The orchestration of such a grand finale is nothing short of genius. The literary consistency is breathtaking. These pictures point beyond the temporal into the spiritual. If we can embrace this, Revelation will become clear at last. Monsters and otherworldly aircraft will melt away, and we'll find a glorious consummation of God's eternal purpose for all creation. You see, your theology either ends with the devil and his crowd taking over this planet or with Jesus Christ reigning victorious. If the latter is really true, then the Church, with Christ as her head, will enter her inheritance, rule the nations, and see a great worldwide harvest.

Let me reiterate that if John was in the Spirit when he saw this great revelation, it behooves you and I to get into the same Spirit and behold this same thing. Understand that John saw this entire book from the perspective of the Lord's Day. He saw it from the Day of the Lord; he viewed it through the perspective of the finished work, God's rest. Then he declared it from there, the end from the beginning. My theology does not end in gloom, despair, and agony. As a matter of fact, I want to tell you from the outset of this book that the end is not just a time period, but that the end is a person. Jesus said, "*I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last...*" (Rev. 1:11).

Christ is the beginning and the end. I don't know how your theology concludes, but mine doesn't end with the beast and the antichrist ruling. Mine ends with Christ as King! Christ must reign until He puts all enemies under His feet. Rather than this being a horror story, Revelation is purposed to be a blessing because it unveils the final triumph. This is the paradoxical victory of the Lamb, trumping sin, satan, the beast, and the false prophet. The Lamb is the only one who can make war with them and overcome them. This same Lamb is living inside you and I; His victory is being lived through us every day!

All the prophets of old raised their voices and delivered messianic prophecies of the coming King. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John told the story of the King who had come. Today we want to testify of this same King, presently reigning as the ascended one who sits at the right hand of God. The risen Christ unveiled in Revelation has the executive authority to administrate and release the Kingdom of God on earth, executing the Father's plan in its fullness as it's played out in the lives of men and women on earth. Revelation is about the conclusion of all God has planned.

Together we can understand and experience the full magnitude of the glory and triumph that has been wrought through the redemptive work and person of Jesus Christ. As we enter into Revelation's symbolic language and stay consistent with its spiritual interpretation, we will see this book unfold with new clarity. I pray that you will receive a fresh and renewed revelation of Jesus Christ. John opens his book with "come and see," but he ends the book with "and I saw." It is my prayer that this will be your response.

Chapter 2

His Appearing

LET'S take another look at Revelation 1:1, this time as it appears in the Amplified Bible:

[This is] *the revelation of Jesus Christ* [His unveiling of the divine mysteries]. *God gave it to Him to disclose and make known to His bond servants certain things which must shortly and speedily come to pass in their entirety. And He sent and communicated it through His angel (messenger) to His bond servant John.*

In several places in the Book of Revelation (particularly as seen in the Amplified Bible), the message given to Jesus Christ is directed to “His bond servants.” It’s worth noting that the bond servant in the Old Testament is a unique individual. Exodus 21:5-6 says:

If the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever.

John is being directed to write Revelation specifically to the bond servants; in order for you to really understand this book, *you must choose to be the bond servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.* Your heart must decide to say, “I love my Master and I don’t want to go out free; I want to be in service to Him.” At that point, you must be taken to the door—the Jesus of John 10:7 who says, “*I am the door of the sheep.*” You must have your ear nailed to the door. It is imperative that your hearing be filled with His voice. How fitting it is that John the Revelator, the one who leaned on the breast of Jesus, put his ear right on the door and listened to Jesus’ heartbeat. He could then write several times throughout the Book of Revelation, “*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches*” (see Rev. 2:7,11,17,29; 3:6,13,22)

This is not referring to the physical ear on the side of your head. You possess an ear that’s been developed and tuned to hear spiritual things from the Door Himself. Let us have our ear nailed to the door as we continue this study in Revelation. It is highly possible that many of us have had our ear cut off by the sword of well-meaning church leaders— like Peter in John 18:10—people who use the sword wrongly and cause many to not be able to hear what the Spirit is saying. However, I want to be like Jesus. In the same way that He healed the man’s ear in Luke 22:51, I want to pick your ear up from the dust of

human reasoning and reconnect it to your God-given ability to hear what the Spirit has to say to the Church.

Revelation 1:3 says, *“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.”* As I have said before, there is a built-in blessing if you read Revelation *and hear it with spiritual understanding*. Because of what I had heard preached, for many years I had a difficult time seeing how it would be a blessing to read Revelation. It was always frightening to me. But when I began to have my ear nailed to the door and could hear the heartbeat of the Father, I realized that this book truly has a blessing for those who read *and hear* it.

In the Eye of the Beholder

“For the time is at hand” (Rev. 1:3). The word translated “hand” is #1451 in Strong’s Concordance. The Greek word is *eggus*. It means “to squeeze or throttle.” In this verse, I hear the Spirit saying that if you read and understand the words of Revelation, the throttle is in your hand. The reading and understanding of this vision is empowering. This revelation will give you the enablement to speed certain things up. You can hasten the coming Day of the Lord in your life or you can delay it. John wrote in the very first verse of Revelation chapter 1 that these things must *shortly* come to pass. Now he’s telling us that the time is at hand.

When John spoke to the seven churches he was not referring to some far-flung era, but of events that would take place shortly after they were first written. Yet I see something even greater: The time is “in” your hand. Revelation is about what it takes to produce the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ in your life.

John said in Revelation 1:10, *“I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day...”* When I meditate on this—how John was telling us exactly where he was when he received this vision—I understand that we can see the Lord’s Day as more than just a chronological day. If a day with the Lord is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day, we can certainly see the times and seasons playing out chronologically in God. I also know that there are things regarding “the Day of the Lord” or “the Lord’s Day”—and I will use these terms interchangeably—that we need to understand in a trans-temporal way. They don’t speak exclusively of a particular time span, but that *Jesus Christ Himself* is the Day of the Lord! He is our Sabbath. He is the One who brought us into rest because He bore our judgment. Jesus said in Matthew 11:28, *“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”*

When we enter into the finished work of the cross of Jesus Christ, we enter into the Day of the Lord. We cease from our own labors and enter into the very

rest of God. Jesus Christ is the true Sabbath Day. Paul writes to the church at Colossae:

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ (Colossians 2:16-17).

Jesus Christ is the “body” or fulfillment of Sabbath. He is also the Jubilee. The very first public message Jesus preached comes from a passage out of the Book of Isaiah. As He stood in their midst that day in the synagogue, He read: “*The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me...to preach the acceptable year of the Lord*” (Luke 4:18-19).

The acceptable year of the Lord is also known as the year of Jubilee. The word *jubilee* itself means a “long, loud blast from a ram’s horn.” A ram’s horn comes from the death of a male lamb. When the finished work of Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection is revealed, you are beholding the Day of the Lord. Once you behold it, you can enter into this day. This day proclaims that you are no longer in Adam, but you are in Christ. This realization enables you to cease from your own striving and rest.

You can spend 40 *days* in the wilderness or you can spend 40 years in the wilderness. *It’s your decision.* You can hasten the coming Day of the Lord in your life simply by having your ear nailed to the door and by saying, “I want to be a bond servant. I love my Master and I want to serve Him forever.”

Let’s take a look at Revelation 1:4:

John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before His throne.

The unveiling of Jesus Christ is a multifaceted reality. He is the ever-coming One. Most teachings coming from Revelation emphasize a future bodily return of the Jesus who walked the shores of Galilee. I want to reiterate that I do believe in a future coming of Jesus. The main thrust of my message, though, is to draw your attention to Jesus as the One who is in the present reality of His appearing. It’s important that we realize: “*unto them that look for Him shall He appear*” (Heb. 9:28, emphasis mine). As I share this message with audiences around the nation, I tell them that I’m looking for His appearing in that moment, in their midst! I’m not looking for Jesus “out there” in some atmospheric cloud, full of wind or rain. I’m looking for Christ’s appearing in His Temple. Where is this Temple? Some may be amazed to find that the Word of God declares in First Corinthians 3:16: “*Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*”

Revelation is about Jesus returning to His New Covenant Temple: You. Us.

Built out of lively stones and fitly framed together (Eph. 2:21). Let's look at Malachi 3:2 in this light: *"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 fullers' soap."*

Christ is coming to purge the sons of Levi. He's starting with the Levitical priesthood, ministers first and on the line. God is cleaning house. He's making a whip and going in to drive out everything that offends. I'm not referring to some particular religious organization; the Lord is cleaning house in every one of our lives. God is cleansing us from every idolatry and setback that delays His full appearing in you, His

Temple. Jesus is removing all that's unlike Him with the brightness of His coming. Habakkuk 2:20 says, *"The Lord is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him."*

If you can look at this with "Revelation eyes," you will see that you are the Temple where the Lord resides. Because God has taken up His abode within you, then all the earth—the carnality, flesh, dust, and Adam's dominion—has to shut up and keep silent before Him. As a friend of mine used to say: "If you'll praise Him, you'll raise Him." God will rise within His holy habitation, and temporal distractions will have to keep silent. Let us focus our gaze—not only on the Man from Galilee and not only on the future-returning King, crowning His Kingdom—instead, let's look at the present *reality* of His coming. If we will allow God to arise in our midst, earth will keep silent and God's enemies will be scattered.

It is fascinating to look through Revelation and discover all that God does and says "out" of the Temple of God, and then consider the wide-open possibilities. What if we, together as a corporate Temple, are the entity from which Christ is going to release His trumpeting prophetic message? What if you're the Temple through which humanity will see the manifestation of God's presence and the unveiling of Jesus Christ? Colossians 1:26-27 tells us that *"the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory"*

Revelation is about what it takes to produce this mystery's unveiling. It's about what it takes to produce Christ's appearing and what's holding Him back. Some have taught from the Thessalonian letters that what holds back Jesus' appearing is the Holy Spirit. But Second Thessalonians 2:6 says, *"And now ye know what withholdeth that He might be revealed in His time."*

The "He" who is to be revealed in time is the Lord Jesus Christ. The Church has been told that the Holy Spirit is holding back the return of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is not holding back Christ's appearing. The Holy Spirit working

in you is the One producing Christ's appearing. The next verse tells us what it is that withholds: *'For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only He who now letteth will let, until He be taken out of the way'* (2 Thess. 2:7).

Far from being the Holy Spirit's "fault," what has kept Christ's appearing from taking place has been iniquity working in people's hearts. But, thank God, Christ took the entire human family into Himself on the cross. This is God's method for getting rid of the man of sin. From God's viewpoint there are only two men on earth. The first was from the earth; the second is the Lord from Heaven. With these menu options, it is not difficult to discern who the man of sin is. (Please refer to my book entitled *God's Beauty and the Beast* for more clarity!)

The cross was the cure for the ailment of sin and death that plagued the human family. Jesus' incarnation makes Him Son of Man and Son of God simultaneously. He became what I am so that I could become what He is. The Son of God became the Son of Man so the sons of men could become the sons of God. Jesus identified with the first Adam in his fallen state. He took all of that and nailed it to the old rugged cross to remove that man of sin.

I realize that not every person has come to the full understanding of this truth nor have they appropriated it in their lives. Nevertheless, the death of Jesus Christ is mistakenly preached as the death of only one man. I believe, in fact, that the death of Jesus Christ was the death of all men through His death, burial, and resurrection. He was the *last* Adam. Through His cross, Jesus restored us. Adam was brought forth in a garden, but it became a graveyard because of his disobedience. Jesus took a graveyard and turned it into a garden. It wasn't an accident that Mary walked up to Jesus post-resurrection and thought He was the gardener (see John 20:15). He was! Jesus is the keeper of the garden of God. The cherub standing at the tomb is pointing inside to the Tree of Life. Adam had access to a tree of life and turned it into a tree of death. Jesus hung on a tree of death and turned it into a tree of life.

In the beginning, God opened Adam's side and a woman was brought out of him; his help-meet, bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. As Jesus died on Calvary's cross, His side was opened by the spear of a Roman soldier. Blood and water flowed out of His side, through which was the birthing of the Church, the Woman of God—the Bride who would be brought back into Him through His death on Golgotha's hill. What profound implications are in the blood and water that flowed from His side!

Another profound implication is found in Jesus' conversation with the taunting thief hanging on a cross next to Him. I believe this thief portrays satan. Jesus not only dealt with Adam at the cross, but with satan. The thief said to

Him, *“If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us”* (Luke 23:39). It reminds me of another place in the Scripture where Satan said to Jesus, *“If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread”* (Matt. 4:3) and *“If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down...”* (Matt. 4:6).

This “if” carries the same insinuation as when the serpent asked Eve, *“Hath God said.?”* There is this constant attempt to question divine authority and identity.

Jesus nailed principalities and powers to the cross. He triumphed over them and took them out of the way. To me, the criminal hanging on the other side of Jesus that day displays what Jesus was doing on the cross with Adam. The second thief responded to the first and said, *“We receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss”*

(Luke 23:41). If we could only see that we got what we deserved 2,000 years ago. We didn’t get off the hook; we were crucified with Christ.

The second thief asked Jesus, *“Remember me...”* I don’t think “remember” means “Don’t forget about me when You get over yonder” in this context. This thief was praying that this Jesus would *re-member* him, crying out: “Put me back together again when You come into Your kingdom.” Jesus looked over at that thief and said to him, *“Today, shalt thou be with Me in paradise”* (Luke 23:43).

The cross is the gate to Paradise. It is the way back into the Garden of God. The tragic disobedience of Adam, in the garden of Genesis, ends in total triumph in a garden called Gethsemane by the obedience of one man named Jesus.

There is yet another garden we need to see. This garden is found in the city, the New Jerusalem. In the conclusion of the Book of Revelation, there is a final picture of a River of Life and the Tree of Life, which yields fruit and whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.

Revelation is about God’s plan of redemption. It’s about restoration. It’s about God putting us back into our original state, restoring everything that fell into corruption and decay. I thank the Lord that He didn’t put an angel at the east of the garden with a flaming sword to keep you out of the Garden of God. He put him there, the Bible says, to keep the way of the Tree of Life. This path hung suspended between the heavens and the earth. On the cross, Jesus reached up and grabbed hold of the Father with one hand and reached down and grabbed hold of the human family with the other hand, and He reconciled us there. He re-hooked the interface, and reconnected us back to our proper relationship with the Divine. We once again have access to the Garden of God. We know the way back: Jesus said, *“I am the way; I am the truth; I am the life”* (see John 14:6)

This is the way, and we can walk in it. We can walk in God's garden; we can hear His voice in the cool of the day. We can have restored fellowship. We can have restored relationship with the King of the universe. Oh, hallelujah!

This is why you're blessed if you read and understand the words of Revelation. I hope you can see that it's not just about global events that take place in faraway lands. Revelation is truly a revelation of Jesus Christ.

What if it's not unlike the revelation that Paul had of Jesus Christ? What if this revelation is one that will produce in you an appearing of the Lord Jesus, an unveiling of Him in your life? What if you could invite an "apocalypse," a manifestation of Jesus, right in your present situation? What a blessing it is to be able to discover in the words of this prophecy that which will facilitate unprecedented growth in your life!

As I travel across the country, meeting and speaking with many of God's people, I am on a search. I'm looking for Christ's appearing. I've learned where to look. I've learned to look in the Temple of God, the Body of Christ in His many-membered splendor, a people through whom Jesus will appear. My hope is not just that Jesus will "come again" some day. He will come again whether we hope He does or not. My hope is that when Christ shall appear, according to the Epistle of John, "*We shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is*" (1 John 3:2). It's my prayer that when He appears, I will not be embarrassed or naked in His sight, but that I'm just like He is. "*When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory*" (Col. 3:4).

Clouds of the Presence

There's a people growing up into God in this hour who are going to manifest the character, nature, and life of their Father in this planet.

They will display the glory of a Savior who has the ability to release the spiritually dead from the bondage of corruption. Oh, what a glorious revelation! A people restored into Christ's likeness, the express image of their Creator! The sons of God are without rebuke before a crooked and perverse generation (Phil. 2:15). Revelation 1:7 says, "*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. Even so, Amen.*"

In this text, Jesus comes with clouds. In another text, He comes "in" the clouds. As I began to meditate on this Scripture, I began to see that perhaps these clouds are not atmospheric bodies of dust particles held precariously together in the sky, but they too are a picture of a people. Hebrews 12:1 refers to the great men of faith, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses, as a cloud of witnesses: "*we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses.*" It is evident that the cloud of witnesses is a people.

Isaiah 60:8 asks, *“Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?”* Once again, by the reference to these as a “who,” we see the cloud is a people. In Genesis we see the Lord putting a rainbow in the cloud as a sign of covenant (see Gen. 9:13). This depicts God putting His covenant within His people. In the Kenneth Wuest translation, First Thessalonians 4:17-18 says:

Masses of saints having the appearance of clouds for a welcome meeting with the Lord in the lower atmosphere and thus always shall we be with the Lord. So be encouraging one another with these words.

The Lord comes “in” and “with” the clouds, who are in reality the saints of God. He’s coming into these clouds of His people now, in present reality—not just in some future atmospheric condition. Wouldn’t it make a whole lot more sense for every eye to be able to see Jesus because He’s manifest through a corporate, many-membered Body? Wouldn’t it be much more believable to know that His appearing is like lightning flashing from the east to the west because there are people being unveiled who are manifesting the life and nature of God? Christ is the Head of this corporate, many-membered Body. We need to look to a present unveiling of the Lord Jesus Christ, as He is revealed in the midst of the clouds, His people.

There is a negative side to being a cloud. In Second Peter 2:17, there *“are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.”* The context of Second Peter 2 shows a people who are driven by lust and reject real authority. Peter says they’re wells without water. In other words, they have no substance in them to bless the earth with moisture. Water gives life and is needed for the vegetation of the earth to grow, flourish, and bear fruit. Peter also compares them to clouds that are moved easily by storms. They run with darkness; there’s nothing within them that will minister peace and rest. Jude 1:12 echoes this:

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.

once more we see this waterless cloud being used in association with people. I don’t know about you, but I’d rather be a cloud that’s full of water. I’d rather not be an empty wisp, full of wind and carried about by everything that blows around. I feel like the prophet Elijah sometimes, who saw a cloud arising out of the sea about the size of a man’s hand. This cloud grew larger and more expansive as Elijah began to prophesy of coming rain. Once again, in our day, the rain is coming. God is going to bring an end to this famine as He releases a flow of divine life out of the midst of a corporate people who are like the clouds of the heavens.

As Psalm 104:3 says, “*Who layeth the beams of His chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds His chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind.*” God has made the clouds His chariot. God is seeking a willing people who will become His vehicle as He rides upon the wings of the wind. These people are not blown about by every wind of doctrine; they are mobilized only by wind of the Holy Spirit. Christ is empowering a people who will not allow the principalities and powers to rule them—a people who will not yield their members as instruments of unrighteousness, or yield to the dominion of Adam’s dictate—a people who have been made free from the bondage of that man of sin and the carnal mind that has ruled humanity for these many ages. God is bringing a people who reflect the light atmosphere of Heaven. They’re not bound by the weight of the world, but they move as freely as clouds.

Christ is the ever-coming one. It is incomplete to refer to just a first and second coming; there are many comings of the Lord in the Scripture. He appears to Mary at the tomb. He appears to the disciples in an upper room. He appears to over 500 friends in the days before ascension. He appears to the apostle Paul. He appeared to John on the Isle of Patmos. There was a coming of the Lord in judgment in A.D. 70. Whatever God has planned for the future is marvelously glorious. He is the ever-coming one.

Please know that it is not my intention to take anything away from history, or to remove any hope regarding that which is to come. It is in my heart to fully reveal and place an emphasis on Jesus’ appearing *today*. For He said, “*I am [He].. which is, and which was, and which is to come...*” (Rev. 1:8). He is the ever-coming one!

Chapter 3

An Island Called Patmos

I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me.

And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks (Revelation 1:9-12).

As we begin Chapter 3, let us take note of where John is while he is writing. He tells us that he is on an island called Patmos. According to *A Dictionary of Proper Names* by J.B. Jackson, the word *Patmos* means “my killing.” The one thing that will certainly produce the Lord’s appearance in your life is your killing (i.e., your death). This is not death in the literal sense but rather the removal of all that belongs to Adam and the old creation. Many of the pictures in Revelation are the same as the ones used in Genesis in its portrayal of the first creation. Revelation 22:1-3 speaks of what appears to be a restored garden in which there stands a Tree of Life:

And He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him.

Genesis also tells us of a garden in which there was a Tree of Life. Revelation contains an abundance of truth showing how Jesus removed an entire old creation and brought forth a brand-new creation, a brand-new species, a new humanity, a new world, and a new order. He accomplished this by simply removing the first man.

Let’s look a little closer at Patmos, the place of “my killing.” I used to teach that “my killing” was something in my future. But I discovered that John was not seeing his “killing” or the removal of his “old man” somewhere in his future; but rather he viewed it in his past. John heard a voice *behind* him. He was made to understand, as he was on this island called Patmos, that there was something he must see that was behind him. I think that one of the greatest

revelations coming to the Church is not a revelation of something that God is going to do, but a revelation and understanding of what He has already done.

John says that he was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day. Everything that John was seeing is from the perspective of the Day of the Lord. He sees it from the view of the Sabbath Day, from the day of rest, from the finished work. He also hears this voice behind him, like a trumpet. I believe this voice is declaring that our killing is not in the future; rather, it has already been accomplished. We must take another look at how Jesus got rid of who we used to be in Adam.

The Death of Death

John is on this island to hear the speaking of God and for the "testimony of Jesus Christ." The word "testimony" in this verse comes from a Greek word *marturia*, which, as you can see, the English word "martyr" is derived from. John was on this island called the place of "my killing" to receive a revelation of Jesus' own martyrdom and death. John was there to receive the revelation of the slain Lamb and to gain insight into what that martyrdom meant for you and me. For this reason, the Spirit brought him into the Day of the Lord. John discovers that his killing was accomplished at the cross and this is how he comes to the day of rest. John 12:31-33 records Jesus' words, saying:

Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me. This He said, signifying what death He should die.

I'm thankful for this. It precisely declares to us that lifting up from earth was the death He would die and this would accomplish the death of death. Many people quote this particular passage in regards to praise and worship, saying "Let's lift up the Lord tonight, because Jesus said, 'If I be lifted up I will draw all men unto Me.'" What you are literally saying is, "Let's crucify the Lord all over again"! If you pay particular attention to the context of this passage, you will discover that it has nothing to do with praise and worship. To use this passage in this way is almost a mutilation of Scripture. What is this Scripture truly declaring to us? It is saying that the crucifixion of Jesus was not just the crucifixion of one man. I think the greatest mistake made in preaching the death of Christ is that it is preached as the death of only one person, when in fact the death of Jesus Christ was the death of everyone. This is what Jesus is declaring: "If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto Me."

Please allow me to make some bold statements and then back them up with Scripture. Jesus did not come to die for me; He came to die as me. The apostle Paul says, "*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me...*" (Gal. 2:20).

When Jesus was lifted up on the cross, He drew everyone into Himself.

That's not something He's going to do in the future; He accomplished this over 2,000 years ago. Not everyone has recognized this truth and laid their hands on the head of the Lamb and confessed their sin to appropriate the work of the cross. Nevertheless, liberation is eternally and forever accomplished in His death. Jesus was like a black hole in outer space, a vortex that became a drain by which He drew the entire old creation into Himself and took it into death. Then on the third day He raised up a brand-new creation; Jesus Christ was the method and means by which God got rid of an entire old creation.

Scripture declares in Second Corinthians 5:21, *"For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."* Jesus took the sin of the whole world into Himself. He became the vessel through whom God exacted His judgment for injustice. This completes and satisfies the demand of God, who said, *"The soul that sinneth, it shall die"* (Ezek. 18:4b).

Jesus became the vehicle upon whom God would lay the curse. Jesus was the only man willing, able, and qualified to bear the load of this curse for humanity, *"being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree"* (Gal. 3:13b).

According to Isaiah 53, Jesus absorbed the iniquity of us all. God's Word further declares that *"He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied"* (Isa. 53:11).

It's important to realize that the sacrifice of Jesus was not made to pay the devil off or to buy you out of a cosmic pawn shop. The sacrifice of Christ was to satisfy the wrath of God, according to Romans 5:9-10:

Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

The death of Jesus was more than just a substitutionary death. The way we preach substitution today is lacking. Let's say, using myself as an example, "Lynn Hiles is a mass murderer." In this scenario Jesus steps up and says, "I'm going to die in Lynn Hiles's place, as his substitution." The problem with this situation is that we still have a mass murderer on our hands. When we understand that Jesus didn't just die for me, but as me, we realize that Jesus died as the mass murderers and all of us. Jesus, who knew no sin, was made to be sin for me. I, on the other hand, was made to be the righteousness of God as the result of Jesus' action. The disobedient act of Adam conveyed sin upon the entire human family: *"so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous"* (Rom. 5:19).

I'm not righteous by virtue of my actions, but by the one with whom I'm **in**

union. I'm *in* the Righteous One; therefore I'm righteous. I'm an overcomer not because of something that I've overcome, but by virtue of the fact that I'm *in* the Overcomer. It is out of God's life and nature that I walk *in* an overcoming lifestyle. It's not something I'm trying to become; it's someone I am because of my union with Him.

Our Father's vision is so centered on Jesus-as-me that all of God's wrath was fully satisfied and Moses' Law was fully met. God did not circumvent His own law. You got everything you deserved—in Christ.

It is no small detail that John the Revelator is on an island called the place of "my killing," and he's there to discover the testimony (or more literally the *martyrdom*) of Jesus Christ. It was on Patmos that he entered into the Day of the Lord, finding the finished work embodied in sabbath rest. On Patmos John hears a great voice like a trumpet saying to him, "Your killing is not in your future; your killing was in the martyrdom of Jesus. Your killing was when He was lifted up on the cross. You were lifted up with Him." This voice resounds: "I *am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last...*" (Rev. 1:11).

Much could be said concerning the "Alpha and Omega," but what grips me is that Jesus is attempting to get John to understand his killing as past tense. All men were lifted up in Christ. I believe that Jesus is identifying with us in the Alpha, literally, the "first son." Jesus so completely identified with Adam and the old creation that He took the Alpha son, the first son, to the cross and I nailed him there. We are drawn into death and resurrection; Jesus became the Omega son, the last Adam.

Throughout Scripture, the trumpet is the symbol of a prophetic voice. First Corinthians 14:8 says, "*For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?*" The Lord is sharing a prophetic insight with John, letting him know that the Alpha and Omega encompasses the end of the old creation and the dawn of the new. We become a part of what Jesus said, beginning in Revelation 1:5, "*And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood...*"

The resurrected Jesus is calling all of us to follow Him in the power of His resurrection: "*But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwells 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).

Jesus took an entire old creation into death and re-birthed a new universe in resurrection. Paul writes of this new reality in Second Corinthians 5:17, "*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are*

become new” John echoes this, concluding Revelation with the glorious observation: “*I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away...*” (Rev. 21:1).

We have entered into a brand-new creation when we enter into Christ. We are born from above; we begin our life as a brand-new species.

Real Sabbath Rest

In the unfolding pages of Revelation, we see how God’s work is finished. Whether trumpets, seals, or vials are on display, they are—as the title of this book declares—a revelation of Jesus Christ. John received his vision from the perspective of Sabbath-day rest.

In the Church today there are many arguments regarding “Sabbath” and the proper day we should observe as Christians. Should we worship God on the seventh day, or is “today’s Sabbath” a renewed eighth day of creation? Does the idea of a “special day” even hold water in the New Covenant? Exactly which day, if any, is the Sabbath? I think we can all gain real insight if we realize that the true Sabbath Day in Scripture is more than a certain day of the week. The Sabbath is a Person! Jesus said:

Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light (Matthew 11:28-30).

The only way you can enter into the sabbath rest of God is to enter into Jesus Christ, the one who finished the work. Many times in religious circles we see someone weighed down and we say, “You need to enter into rest.” In giving such a directive, we are actually trying to persuade people to *act* like they’ve entered into rest. The only way you can truly enter into Jesus’ rest is to see how the work got finished. If you don’t have understanding, you may act like you’re at rest, but in the back of your mind you are still contemplating the religious hoops that need to be jumped through and the spiritual things that have yet to be completed. Hebrews 4:1-4 offers us a helpful corrective:

Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as He said, As I have sworn in My wrath, if they shall enter into My rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For He spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all His works.

In this passage, the writer is encouraging us to enter into Jesus’ rest. He tells us how the gospel was preached to the children of Israel during their wilderness journey. The message given to them did not benefit them because it was not

received with faith. In studying this passage, I questioned the Lord regarding the “gospel being preached” to them. When was it?

The apostle Paul’s articulation of the “gospel” is the preaching of Jesus Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. There is no account in the old Testament where this kind of gospel was ever preached to the Hebrew people. The Lord began to reveal to me that the gospel was preached to the Israelite children at each station they stopped at along the way, from the time they left Egypt until they entered the Promised Land. There were 42 different stations during this journey. At each station God revealed, in some certain symbol a measure of the gospel. Look at the following examples.

Symbols Preaching Christ

The gospel was preached to the children of Israel through the slain lamb and applied blood, and their baptism in the Red Sea. When the branch was thrown into the waters to make the water drinkable, it pointed to Christ who knows how to make bitter waters sweet. The gospel was preached to them when the rock was smitten, Christ the rock following them through the wilderness. His smiting was their smiting. I’m convinced that the mistake of our generation will be that we think at the end of our wilderness journey that we must smite the rock again, rather than speak the Word concerning the smiting of the first rock. You can’t produce the Lord’s appearing by beating the people. You must speak the Word and mix it with faith. We must see how the work got finished in order to enter into rest.

Another picture of the gospel is the serpent on the pole. Jesus quotes the Scripture, “*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up*” (John 3:14). At Calvary’s cross Jesus Christ spoiled principalities and powers. Every day the falling manna preached the gospel. Jesus said, “*Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead*” (John 6:49), and “*I am the living bread which came down from Heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever.*” (John 6:51).

The ark in the middle of the Jordan River is a picture of the death of Jesus Christ. When Christ, who is our ark, was placed in the River Jordan, He identified with death as He went down into those waters.

In the Book of Joshua, the waters of this same Jordan River were “cut off” and driven back to the city of Adam, as the soles of the priest’s feet rested in its waters while bearing the ark of the covenant upon their shoulders (Josh. 3:15-16). This vividly illustrates the flow of Adam’s dominion and death cut off through Jesus’ death, showing that a way has been made into the Promised Land. This land is not some piece of real estate in the Middle East, but a person. When we perceive and understand these symbols and pictures, we can enter the

Promised Land by way of our spiritual union with Him.

Real Food and Drink

At any point of the wilderness journey, if the children of Israel would have mixed the Word with faith, they could have entered in. They wandered around on a heaven-sent substance, never understanding what they were eating. The same is true of the Church in our day. We are feeding on many things but are not acquainted with food of real substance. All the Israelites could say was: “What is it?” They didn’t know what they were eating, and they didn’t like it. They longed for meat. They murmured against the miracle. Is it possible that even today we live in a time when we would rather have a meat market parade of flesh in an entertainment-based religious system rather than a steady diet of the true bread from Heaven? We preach everything but Christ and then wonder why we have all this sickness and disease in temporal and spiritual realms. Is it possible that the right spiritual diet could result in there not being a feeble one among us? If we ate the true Bread and drank the water that came from the smitten Rock, would this make a difference?

God told the Hebrew people in Exodus, *“If you eat the bread and drink the water, I will remove sickness from among you.”* (See Exodus 23:25.) If the children of Israel would have come to an understanding of what they were eating, they could have cut their wilderness journey short and entered into the fullness of the promise.

Today we are in a similar predicament. The reason we don’t enter into promised rest is because no one has showed us how the work got finished—the work of getting rid of who we were in Adam and bringing forth a New Creation. Until we have a clear understanding of how the work got finished, we’re going to continue to keep trying to do the work over and over and over again. But Hebrews 4 proclaims that God rested in the works that were finished from the foundation of the world. God rested on the seventh day from all of His creation works—even God kept a Sabbath Day. We can rest assured in the finished work of God. Deuteronomy 5:14-15 says:

But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.

To me, keeping the Sabbath Day holy (and wholly) is more than avoiding the grocery store on Sunday. It transcends ceasing some kind of manual labor.

In fact, although this may raise some contention, I don't even argue with Christians who choose to keep or not keep a particular holy day! The underlying issue is God's frustration in trying to redo Jesus' work all over again. In the above passage, God is telling us that the purpose for the Sabbath Day is to remember that we were once slaves in Egypt and now God has liberated us. Our honoring of the Sabbath is rooted in remembering how the Lord brought us out of slavery. How did the Lord rescue us? He brought us out by the work of the slain lamb. "*Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come*" (1 Cor. 10:11 NKJV).

One of the things that frustrate many religious people today has striking parallels to what disgruntled the Scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day. They became angry at Him because He did more on the Sabbath than He did on any other day. In every instance, the work He did on the Sabbath loosed men from their sickness, burdens, and crippled states of being. Jesus loosed them from being bent toward the earth.

This is too exhaustive a theme to do justice to now, but it is most enriching to comb the New Testament and carefully recognize all that Jesus did on the Sabbath. The meaning of these actions extends far beyond the occurrence of Jesus' healing touch. Take, for instance, His healing of the man with a withered hand (Luke 6:6-11). This speaks to me of the Church's functions of Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor, and Teacher—the fivefold ministry (Eph. 4:11). When the Church truly enters Sabbath rest in this generation, Jesus is once again going to stretch out all five fingers of the withered hand. He's going to restore function to a part of the Body that has been powerless and had little influence.

He's going to pluck corn on the Sabbath (see Mark 2:22-28). This tells me that the fruit has come to maturity; it's no longer in the first stages of the blade or the first fruits of the ear—it's full-grown! It speaks of a people who are mature in sabbath rest. Jesus was the kernel of grain that fell into the earth and died. We are His harvest. He is hungry on the Sabbath to find the results of His death: the kernel that fell into the earth and died results in a full ear of corn.

Let's explore another passage:

And He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath.

And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.

And He laid His hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work:

in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day. The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day? And when He had said these things, all His adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him (Luke 13:10-17).

Throughout Scripture a woman is often symbolic of the Church; I believe this story to be a parable of her today. One of the problems with the Church is that she does not have true understanding of the rest that her Groom provides. These religious leaders are telling Jesus that this woman ought not be healed on the Sabbath. Isn't this an absurd response to the miracle that Jesus had just wrought before their very eyes? What better day to be set free from bondage than on the day when the work has been finished? What they did not understand was that the "Sabbath" was there to heal their illness and cleanse them of their sins, bringing them into wholeness. Can you see why this woman was bent over toward the ground, making her vision literally earthbound?

It might be that the Church is more focused on monitoring the earth, the devil, and Adam's dominion than on gazing at her restful Lord. All too often those of us who minister in pulpits across this planet get our message from CNN (or BBC) as seen through a lens of apocalyptic fatalism. We feed everyone in earshot a steady diet of *bad news* with "woe this" and "curse that." But Jesus comes to the Church and speaks kindly, but resolutely: "Woman, thou art loosed." and she is able to stand upright! Her perspective is changed; she can now lift her head into the heavens. If we will embrace this freedom, Church of God, we will come into a Sabbath understanding and become who we really are.

Let me remind you of Jesus' words concerning this infirm woman, "*And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, be loosed?*" (Luke 13:16). She was of Abraham's lineage, just like you and I. It is our inheritance to be freed. Jesus did not read her a litany of wrongs and sins, past or present. He spoke the word to her and she was loosed.

Allow God's true sabbath to loose you today and lift your head into the heavens. There you will see the finished work and you will come into full rest in the Day of the Lord. Like John we can declare that the place of our "killing"—our Patmos—is not in our future, but that it was accomplished through the work of Jesus Christ, by His death on the cross at Calvary.

Ephesians 1:3 says, "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.*" I love this text because it makes us understand that our blessing has already been realized in Christ, for He has blessed us. It's not something He's going to do in the future

alone; it is already done.

The Greek word translated “blessings” is the word *eulogia*. It is our English word eulogy. A eulogy is something that is said over someone who is dead. In this passage of Scripture, God is blessing us with a eulogy. He’s simply saying that you *“are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God ”* (Col. 3:3). When God blessed you with this eulogy, He placed you in the heavenly Christ. I believe this is what Jesus was trying to get this doubled-over woman to see. He loosed her from her infirmity so she could see her position in the new creation. He wanted her to see that there was a eulogy given over her.

Jesus’ death was the death of everyone. His standing in the heaven-lies enables us to lift up our heads and look at ourselves and others from a heavenly perspective. We are thus empowered to release manifestations of heavenly truth into the here and now. Thus transformed, we can pray with effectiveness, *“Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, as it already is in the heavens”* (Matt. 6:10).

To further establish this truth, look at Colossians 3:1. The King James Bible translated it as follows: *“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.”* Notice that in that translation the verse begins with the word “if.” Let’s look at this same passage from the Kenneth Wuest translation of the New Testament:

In view of the fact, therefore, that you were raised with Christ, the things above be constantly seeking, where Christ is on the right hand of God seated. The things above be constantly setting your mind upon, not the things on the earth. For you died and your life has been hidden with Christ in God.

The “if” in the King James version does not substantiate the fact, and is a less accurate rendition of the Greek in this instance. It’s not if, but rather, *because* your resurrection is already accomplished! The Wuest translation continues on to say, *“Whenever the Christ is made visible, our life, then also you with Him shall be manifested in glory. By a once for all act and at once put to death your members upon the earth”* (Col 3:45 Wuest).

He then lists what these members are on the earth. From the viewpoint of the finished work and the fact that you died in Christ, you count sinful impulses as dead and buried. Declaring Christ’s finished work does not mean that you go your way and do whatever you want to do. Instead, it is as the apostle Paul stated, *“How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”* (Rom. 6:2). Paul is trying to get us to see that the “old man” is in fact dead. It is from this revelation that we begin to walk in the newness of life and not the oldness of the letter.

If we remain under the tutoring of the Scribes and Pharisees, they will keep us bound and swallowing the dust of the earth. They would keep us from being

freed from our sin, and we would continue to attempt over and over what has already been accomplished in Jesus. We would frustrate the grace of God. We would be like Judas, the only picture of an individual “son of perdition” that I have been able to find in the Scripture.

Judas’ name means “praise.” There is a kind of praise and a spiritual operation that can betray the Lord. The picture of Judas shows us one who has the price of redemption within his grasp. He has the 30 pieces of silver in his hand. He walks back into the temple and he throws the silver on the floor of that place and says to the rulers of the synagogue, “*I have sinned by betraying innocent blood*” and they say to him, “*What is that to us? You see to it*” (Matt. 27:4 NKJV). He then went out and hanged himself. If he would have simply waited a few more hours, the hanging of Jesus would have been his hanging. Judas’ hanging was not redemptive! Only the hanging of Jesus was.

I believe one of the mistakes of the Church is that we think we can suffer enough. We think that hanging ourselves is necessary. We must come to understand that Jesus’ hanging on that cross is the only thing that will set us free from the bondage we’ve been under. He paid a debt He did not owe; I had a debt I could not pay. My death will never be enough to atone for my sin. There’s only one death that could bring the scales that were tilted against us into proper balance. Jesus is the only one who could pay the full and ultimate price.

In Revelation 18:7, we see what the key confusion of a Babylonian system is: “*How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.*” What she is actually saying is that her first husband, Adam, is not dead. She refuses to reckon the death of the old man. As a result she is constantly giving to those who follow her a cup of abomination and suffering. Her message instructs them to redo Jesus’ unique work of redemption. What a frustration of the grace of God!

We find this same spirit of Judas and the beast in the Book of Daniel. It says:

And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him (Daniel 7:25-27).

The spirit of the beast is sent to wear out the saints. There is in this hour a great weariness upon God’s children who have for many years tried to die

enough, suffer enough, and be processed enough to get rid of their old nature. (To understand more concerning this beast, please see my book, *God's Beauty and the Beast*.) Be encouraged: *"The judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion.... And the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High."* Judgment has already been exacted for this beast of weariness and condemnation!

Jesus says, *"Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out"* (John 12:31). This judgment is in the context of the crucifixion. Jesus is saying that there is a judgment that has come, and you must understand what it has brought to pass. In Daniel, the judgment takes away the dominion of the beast who has worn out the saints. We have weariness in our midst because religion can only bring you in by labor and sweat. This produces an inability to enter into sabbath rest, by not possessing an understanding of Jesus' finished work of peacemaking between us and the Father. People continue to be weary and worn out until they finally come to such a level of frustration that they give up because they feel there's no way they can meet the standard that's being declared.

But I declare to you today, Jesus' judgment was also our judgment; the judgment that Jesus talked about at the cross was literally the judgment of the world. The judgment seat of Christ is not some victorian chair set on a planet three miles south of Mars; it sits on Golgotha's hill, the place of the cross. The cross was the place where the judgment of the ages was gathered (John 12:31-33).

In my studies, I have discovered that some scholars think that Golgotha is the place where Adam is buried. (See McClintock and Strong's encyclopedia.) What a picture! Through His death, burial, and resurrection, Jesus brought an end to Adam, right there on Golgotha. He brought him into death right there at the place of the skull. In this place of suffering and death He thoroughly dealt with our enemy. If we can receive the fact that His judgment was our judgment, it will bring us into a place of rest where the saints of the Most High will arise and no longer be wearied by the beast. As we stand in this revelation, we will take away the dominion of the beast and the man of sin.

Let us honor the Sabbath and keep it holy. Let us keep a sabbath of rest that we might honor the Lord and remember how He brought us up out of the land of Egypt and the land of bondage.

Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ (Colossians 2:16-17 NIV).

The message of the cross is the only thing that can bring us into sabbath

rest. It is the only thing that can bring us into true liberty. *“If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed”* (John 8:36). Adam’s removal uncovers what has been hid from the ages, Christ in you the hope of glory (Col.1:26-27).

Tabernacle

I want to say one final thing in this Chapter. Notice that John had to turn to “see” the voice: *“And I turned to see the voice that spake with me.”*

And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks” (Rev. 1:12). When he turned to see the voice, he saw seven golden candlesticks. If you have studied the Tabernacle of Moses, you will find that in the second dimension of this tabernacle, the area known as the Holy Place contains the golden altar of incense, the candlestick, and the table of showbread. For John to turn to see the golden candlestick, he must have been facing the table of showbread. The Holy Place itself speaks to us of the Feast of Pentecost or the realm of Pentecost. John is standing at a table of showbread that has two stacks of six loaves. He must have been feeding from this showbread when he receives this revelation of the finished work. The word “showbread” means “to preach and teach this.” It also means the “bread of his face.” (See the Biblical Cyclopedic Index from the Open Bible, Thomas Nelson publishers.) I think the emphasis that the Spirit of the Lord would have me make at this time is that when Jesus sat at the table of communion with His disciples right before His death, He said to them, *“Take, eat; this is My body”* and *“This is My body which is given for you”* (Matt. 26:26; Luke 22:19).

I believe that John was feeding on revelation of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. It was not just a historical event. If we will feed on the fact that “His death was our death,” we will find a similar message that we must preach, teach, and show forth through our lives. A revelation of Jesus to you will produce a revelation of Jesus through you.

Bread represents the person and work of Jesus Christ. He is the true bread that came down from Heaven. I pondered on the loaves being numbered as six. My mind went back to the writings of Paul. I can identify six major tenets that Paul preaches, which he called the “gospel.” They are:

1. Jesus Christ was crucified;
2. He died;
3. He was buried;
4. He was quickened;
5. He was raised; and
6. He was seated.

The first stack of the showbread typifies six things accomplished by Jesus. What are the other six loaves? I was again reminded of the writings of Paul and

how everything that happened to Jesus, also happened to you and me. The second stack of six loaves refers to these concurrent events:

- 1 You and I were crucified with Christ;
2. You and I died with Him;
3. You and I are buried with Him by baptism.

These three deal with what happened to our previous identities and how Jesus got rid of them. And the last three deal with who we are now:

4. You and I were quickened;
5. You and I were raised; and
6. You and I have been seated.

Let's look at this passage:

And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins. ...Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:1;5-6).

I hope you will immerse yourself in these Scriptures so that you can identify with them fully. A heart-level understanding of Jesus Christ's wondrous work on the cross is not just a part of our history; it is something to be appropriated into our present-day experience. This identification is the very thing that produces Jesus' appearing in and through us. Jesus' coming is more than just some future event. Christ is coming forth through a people who are feeding on bread and wine. As they continue to hear that voice behind them telling them who they really are they'll say, *"How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"* (Rom. 6:2).

I'm not striving to get somewhere. I'm not striving to be something. I'm already something, and it's out of this being that I act. Christ has placed us. There's been a placement of God, which sets us in a place where we can walk in the newness of life and not in the oldness of the letter.

In the next chapter, we're going to address how this revelation affects us and produces the Lord's appearing. Even as John turned around to see the candlestick, he actually saw a revelation of Jesus.

Chapter 4

Seven Golden Candlesticks

AND I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being I turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as aflame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shineth in His strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in My right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches (Revelation 1:12-20).

I want you to notice that John says, “And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks.” He has suddenly been refocused. He’s finding that his “Patmos” is the place of his killing and this killing is not in his future, but in his past. He’s discovering that there’s something behind him that he must reconsider. When he turns to see this voice, it says to him, “Fear not; I am the first and the last....”

There is much to say concerning this declaration, but I particularly want to emphasize that Jesus was revealing His identity as “*the first and the last*” (Rev. 1:17). He was saying that He had identified with the fallen state of the first man Adam and that He became what we were in the Alpha son, so that we might become what He is in the Omega Son. He destroyed that first man, through death and through His resurrection; He became the “last Adam.” He brought forth a brand-new species.

When John saw Him, as recorded in chapter 1, verse 17, of Revelation he said, “*I fell at His feet as dead.*” The revelation John received at the moment he saw Jesus Christ didn’t cause John’s physical death, but this multifaceted revelation gave John the ability to reckon his old man to be dead.

“*When I saw Him...*” Any time you see the Lord, whenever you really get a revelation of Jesus, you will fall at His feet and say, just like John, and Paul, “I’m dead and my life is hid with Christ in God” (Col. 3:3).

What the world needs more than anything in this hour is a full and fresh revelation of Jesus Christ. *“And He laid His right hand upon me, saying...I am alive for evermore... [I] have the keys of hell and of death”* (Rev. 1:17-18).

Jesus was relating that He had the power to raise John up. He laid His hand on John and did exactly that. You and I need this same revelation. We need to see Jesus to the point that we fall down like the dead and allow Him to lay His hand upon us and raise us up until we walk in resurrection life. We are no longer trying to modify the behavior of an old creation, but developing and walking in newness of life instead of the oldness of the letter.

Chapter 1 continues, *“And He had in His right hand seven stars.”* (Rev. 1:16). In Revelation 1:20 Jesus declares to John the *“mystery”* of the seven stars in His right hand. He explains that they are the angels of the seven churches. These seven *“angels”* are the messengers to the seven respective churches. What is in His hand is ministry, with a sevenfold purpose and message. Seven in biblical numerology is the number of perfection. In Ephesians 4, fivefold ministry is given for the perfecting or maturing of the saints. This message is one of perfection, not flowing from Old Covenant sweat and labor, but ministry that imparts an understanding that perfection is based on a sacrifice.

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....By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. ...For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified (Hebrews 10:1,10,14).

Our perfection is a result of Christ's redemptive work. That is what John is seeing behind him. He is looking back at the cross. Someone might respond, “Yes, but Hebrews 6:1 says, ‘Let us go on unto perfection,’ as if perfection is a verb or something we do.”

This is an understandable objection, but the word *perfection* in Hebrews 6 is not a verb but a noun in the original Greek. A noun is a name of a particular place or thing. Perfection is not a doing but a being. It is a Person named Jesus. Perfection for us is recognizing that our perfection is based on who we are *in*. You are no longer in “Imperfection” (Adam); you are in Christ the “Perfect One.” Once your mind is renewed in this truth you will say, “How can we who are dead to sin live any longer in it?” The truth will make you free and your doing will flow from your being instead of vice versa. We are not human *doings*; we are New Creation *beings*. If any man *be* in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things pass away and all things become new. We live out of this newness of life.

The Sword of His Speaking

What John saw and declared in the first chapter of Revelation was more

than just a revealing of the physical man Jesus who had once walked the dusty roads of Galilee. This was a multifaceted revelation of the One who has a “sharp, two-edged sword” coming out of His mouth. We know this picture is not a literal one; it speaks of a *word* that is proceeding from Him, a word of truth and life coming from the posture of rest (see Heb. 4:11-12). It is good news being preached; each description of Him from the top of His head to the soles of His feet depicts some aspect of the revelation of Jesus that will be later addressed to the seven churches. These aspects are the answer to the difficulties in which these seven churches find themselves.

We discover, as we read how He addresses these churches, that they each have a problem. The good news is that there is no difficulty these churches are having that a revelation of Jesus will not remedy. For each of them, there is a description of Jesus that will bring them into the fullness of His purpose for them. What they need, as this Revelation continues to unfold, is a further revelation of Jesus Christ. God never asks these churches to repent of anything or get rid of anything until He first shows them who He is in the midst of them and that He is the remedy to their problem.

Whatever aspect of Himself that Jesus reveals to them (whether the “voice of many waters,” or the “one who has a two-edged sword proceeding from His mouth,” or the one “whose eyes are like a flame of fire”), it will meet the deficit in the particular church He addresses. Oh, how we need a further revelation of Jesus Christ!

The Vessel of God’s Speaking

The purpose and call of God for every saint is that God might reveal His Son, not only to us, but in us and through us. This Book of Revelation unfolds this divine purpose. The “*mystery that has been kept hidden for ages*,” according to Paul, is “*Christ in you, the hope of glory*” (Col. 1:26-27 NIV).

God doesn’t want this glory to remain a mystery. He wants to unveil it to us by pulling back everything that obscures our view. As John is feeding on the table of showbread, he receives a revelation of the finished work. Notice that when John turns around to see this voice that is speaking to him, he does not see one individual Jesus, but rather, he sees one “like unto” the Son of Man standing in the middle of the seven golden candlesticks.

As he turns, John doesn’t see the literal, physical body of Jesus, but he sees candlesticks and One standing in the midst of them. I inquired of the Lord concerning this and what was so particularly important about John’s seeing these candlesticks. The answer I received is given in the last verse. I want to submit the following for your consideration and meditation: The apocalypse or revelation of Jesus Christ is not coming from an individual man somewhere off

in the starry sky, but this revelation is of the Christ who is in the midst of the Church. It is specifically from and through the Church that He makes Himself fully known.

The Word of God declares that this particular piece of furniture, the candlestick, was made of one beaten work (see Exod. 25:31). Can you see that this is a perfect description of the Church today? It is of one beaten work. Let me explain what that means. "Beaten work" does not mean being abused and bruised by God; it refers to a people who are a product of the One who was beaten and bruised. He was wounded for my transgression; the chastisement for my peace was laid on Him (Isa. 53:5).

Secondly, Scripture says, *"Is not My word...like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?"* (Jer. 23:29). The Word of God in the hand of God is the instrument by which God accomplishes His will. The preaching of the cross will shape and mold us into a candlestick, as does a natural hammer on gold. It will make a people who are manifesting the light of Christ.

As John turns to see the voice, he catches a glimpse of not only Christ, but also the vehicle by which God intends to manifest the revelation of a finished work. It is through the candlestick that God is manifesting this ascended Christ to the world. As Jesus says, *"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel..."* (Matt. 5:14-15).

And the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches (Revelation 1:20).

In Exodus, God said the candlesticks for the Tabernacle of Moses were to be a beaten work formed by skilled craftsmen. God has set us under valid ministry to shape and mold us into that which will produce light.

One of the craftsmen who made the candlestick was named "Bazaleel," which means "in the image or the shadow of God." There are ministries in this hour that God is raising up that are given a word that is shaping and molding us in God's image. We can then manifest that same life and nature to a lost and dying world. It is this candlestick that John turns and sees: an icon describing the Church. Let's look further at the typology of this candlestick.

On this candlestick, there were 66 sets of ornaments (see Exod. 25:31-35). Sixty-six is the number of books that are in the Bible. Psalm 119:105 declares, *"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."* Isn't it interesting that this candlestick, which represents the lamp of the Lord, had the same number of ornaments that the Bible has books? I don't think it's too much of a liberty to say that this candlestick could be representative of the Bible. Some of you may wonder, "How can it be representative of the Word and still be a picture of the Church?" It's simple. The Word must become flesh again. There must be a people who do more than read the pages of this book. The Word has to become

flesh and take expression in us.

As we look closely at this candlestick (see Exod. 25:31), we discover that it was made up of some very interesting elements. There was a knop (a decorated knob), a bud, and an almond. These three different elements made up a set. A knop, a bud, and an almond speak to us of thirtyfold, sixtyfold, and a hundredfold, three in a set. There were 66 ornaments altogether, or 22 sets. The biblical meaning for the number 22 is “Light.”¹ “*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path*” (Ps. 119:105).

The Fivefold Ministry

Giving light is precisely the intended function of this candlestick. It was formed, shaped, and purposed to give light. With this piece of furniture came snuff dishes and tongs. The tongs were formed in the shape of a man’s hand. They were used to trim the wick. Let me remind you that the “hand” is a symbol of fivefold ministry because the seven stars or messengers were in his hand.

The hand of God is released upon us through the fivefold administration of ministry. It is used to trim the wick; it is instrumental in ridding us of that which has become charred, hardened, and will not properly give light. An untrimmed wick will cause the lamp to become blackened, hindering the light from emanating a clear and bright reflection.

God has purposed a people to come forth, even a beaten work, a people who have been dealt with by the Word of God and by the hand of cunning craftsmen. Remember, this “beaten work” does not come from the abusive beating of angry preachers; rather it is the result of valid fivefold ministry, which shapes us by declaring what the beating of Christ produced for us.

As we examine the “hand ministry,” we discover how it operates and functions. The five digits of a hand working together enable it to be one of the most dexterous parts of the body. It is capable of performing innumerable tasks and operations, from the powerful to the most delicate.

The ministry of the Apostle can be likened to the thumb because this ministry is the balance of the other four, just like the thumb is the balance of the hand. The Prophet, likened unto the pointing finger of the hand, is the one that says, “This is the way; walk in it.” The middle finger speaks to us of the Evangelist because this ministry is the one with the longest outreach. The ring finger speaks of Pastoral ministry because this is the ministry you need to be in covenant with. Finally, the little finger on the hand is like unto the Teacher because it is the only one you can get into your ear to scratch when you have an itching ear.

In His mindfulness toward us, God lays His “hand” upon us and removes the charred, bruised, and useless wick. The snuff dish was used to hold the

burned wick that was removed from the candlestick. I asked the Lord why it was necessary to have a snuff dish to hold ashes and charred wicks. He spoke to me out of the Book of Isaiah and showed me that His reason was that He might give us beauty for ashes. If we simply bring Him our ashes, God will give us the “oil of joy for mourning and the *“garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness”* (Isa. 61:3).

The Oil of Anointing

This candlestick was used for another purpose that we need to consider. From the central shaft of this candlestick, the oil of anointing was released to all the other parts of the candlestick. There is only one way for the Church to have an anointing: when it is poured through the central shaft, the One who is central to the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ. He’s the One who walks in the midst of the candlestick, and it’s from Him that the oil flows out to the branches to give us the oil of anointing, which gives light to the Word of God.

The light that came from that candlestick shone its light on the Table of Showbread, revealing its elements in the Holy Place. Oh, how we need illumination of the Table of Showbread and what communion really holds for us!

Jesus Christ is the true candlestick and the oil of anointing flows from Him. He tells one of the churches in Revelation that He would remove its candlestick out of its place if they didn’t repent. That suggests to me that He will no longer walk among us if there’s not repentance and change in our life.

Let’s take note that each side of the candlestick had three branches on each side, each with nine sets of ornaments. Picture in your mind the candlestick and remember there are nine gifts of the Spirit and nine fruits of the Spirit.

Just for the sake of clear understanding, let’s say we have all gifts and no fruit. We would have a candlestick that would be lopsided and out of balance, causing it to lean until it falls over. But if you have three branches on the opposite end with three ornaments each positioned on it, you will have a balanced candlestick. The fruit will balance out the gifts. Paul wrote, “*Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal*” (1 Cor. 13:1). If we don’t have love, we won’t produce anything but racket, useless noise, harmonically imbalanced.

Christ’s Centrality

There are four sets of ornaments on the central shaft of the candlestick, which speak of Christ. He is the vine, the central shaft; we are the branches (see John 15:5). If you remove Christ from your midst, the center and the very focal point of the Church would be missing, and you would have 18 sets of ornaments remaining on this candlestick. This number speaks of bondage. It’s also the number of the beast, if you count it 6 + 6 + 6, which equals the number

18. It's sad when you can visit many churches where you don't find Christ or the Spirit of Christ evident there.

Some time ago, a pastor told me that he did not allow the gifts of the Spirit to move in the Sunday morning services of the church that he oversaw because it might offend some of the more prominent guests.

What a sad and absurd thing when the Holy Spirit is not our most "prominent guest"! If you take Christ's leading out of the makeup of the Church, all you have left is the man of sin and antichrist who will bring you into certain bondage.

The afflicted woman discussed in the previous Chapter was bowed to the earth for 18 long years. She was bowed low because of the bondage working in her body. A church without the ministry of Jesus is destined to spiritual failure. It is a church full of darkness because there is no oil of anointing flowing and therefore, no illumination. If we, the Church, do not allow Christ to walk in our midst, the consequence of that choice will be great darkness.

In summary: We need to be pierced by the sword that proceeds out of Jesus' mouth. We need to hear and understand that He is the first and is the last. If we'll feed from the Table of Showbread and see life from the perspective of the sabbath rest, we will witness the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ among us. This revelation will bring the Church into a place that's full of illumination and the candlestick will not be removed from our midst.

In the latter part of Revelation, you will find a church called Babylon. There is no light of the candle found in her. Revelation 18:23 says:

And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.

That verse crystallizes for me the great deceit that has fallen upon a darkened and confused religious system. They have no candlelight to shine or see by. There's no manifestation of Jesus in their midst. They've not fed on the Showbread nor heard the message that their old humanity is dead. Therefore, they continue to declare, "I sit as a queen and I am not a widow" (see Rev. 18:7).

They refuse to reckon the death of the first husband Adam, so they continue to live in a lie, thinking of the old creation and the realm of death. Revelation urges us to "come up hither" to a higher place, another dimension in Christ.

I believe John the Revelator was qualified to write his vision because of what he had witnessed. He had seen the Anointed one walk the earth and get lifted up in crucifixion. He saw firsthand how the work was finished and the Man who finished it. John wrote the things he saw in and through Jesus. He also wrote

concerning the things that were to come.

These writings reflect the ongoing ramifications of what Jesus did over 2,000 years ago. The Spirit of the Lord told John to send a message to the churches in Asia and tell them, “I’m the Alpha, the omega; I’m the first and the last. Tell them I’ve summed it all up in Myself. I had a one-man plan, whereas in Adam all die, even so in Me all will be made alive.” This was what the Church in every era needs to hear and understand. This was the message John sent to the churches in Asia, like a two-edged sword coming out of Christ’s mouth. It is this message that produces Christ’s appearing in the midst of His Church.

Endnote

1. *The Arithmetic of God* by Don Kistler copyright 1976 published By Eternal Word Publishing Loris, SC

Chapter 5

Come Up Hither

AFTER this 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 shew 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 (Revelation 4:1-2).

“After this” is a key phrase that God is calling the Church’s attention to in this hour. Many prophecy teachers will tell you that between chapters 3 and 4 of Revelation the rapture takes place and the Church escapes this world. I personally disagree with this theory. Nowhere in these passages does God even mention such an important event. Surely it would be included somewhere in this chapter if this was His intention, particularly with the Church believing it to be our most important future event.

Hopefully you will come to see, as I have, that Revelation is dealing with something totally different here. Because we have been so temporally minded, we have interpreted many of these passages in an incomplete manner, believing God is describing temporal things. In reality God is painting things of spiritual substance in vivid color.

We are living in a relevant time of transition in the Church, not only in America, but all over the world. God is saying to the Church everywhere, “It’s time for you to come up here,” not to some geographical location but into a higher, deeper sphere of the Spirit that we dared not even imagine previously.

Part of this transition is an increasing awareness of God’s pattern of the Tabernacle of Moses, with its Outer Court and Holy Place and Most Holy Place. Most of God’s people see and enter the dimension of the outer Court. This was where sacrificial blood was shed and where the brazen laver sat, which speaks of blood-bought salvation and water baptism.

Some of God’s people see further into a second dimension, the Holy Place, which speaks of the realm of Pentecost with its oil of anointing and light of the candlestick. This symbolizes the flow of the gifts of the Spirit.

The golden altar of incense is a representation of praise and worship unto God. One of the most recent moves of God we have seen has been the restoration of praise and worship to the Church. There has been an explosion of interest in this dimension, and we have all received lasting effects from this renewal of liberating praise and worship.

As wonderful as this is, I believe that God is giving us another upward call. The Church has become somewhat “stuck” by not knowing that there is a realm beyond Pentecost. This realm is represented to us by the Most Holy Place, the place in Moses’ Tabernacle also known as the Holy of Holies. I want to speak to you concerning this third dimension and all it holds for us.

Spiritual Hunger, Divine Discontentment

In every place you find God’s people, there is a general draw of the Spirit of God. An unprecedented hunger has been birthed anew within us. There’s a divine discontentment, a hunger and a thirst for that which we have not known how to identify. It’s just like when you go to your refrigerator, knowing that it’s stocked full of good things to eat, but you are hungry (nonetheless) for something not found there. This same kind of spiritual hunger is in the midst of God’s people in this hour, and it can only be satisfied with spiritual things. Our hearts are crying out for something more.

We have all been going along our merry way and everything has been working out fairly well for us, particularly in America. Now, all of a sudden we have run into what seems like a wall in the Spirit. Upon encountering this wall, our first reaction is to go through the motions and act like the wall isn’t there. When this no longer works, however, we admit to ourselves that we’re discontented to the point of misery. Something has, up to this point, has escaped us. We can’t put our finger on it, but this condition has put us into a real dilemma of transition.

I want to attempt to articulate what the Holy Spirit has birthed within my heart; I pray that this prophetic insight will help you understand where you are. You are not in a bad place. You are in a very good place. If God has brought you to a time of divine discontentment, dear saint, I want you to hear the word of the Lord. This voice is as the sound of the ram’s horn, declaring in your ear that this is the hour and the time for you to “Come up hither.”

Revelation is relevant for this hour because that is precisely its message. We must “Come up hither” and receive a revelation of the throne room. What lies just beyond the veil that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place is a throne where there’s one seated on a blood-sprinkled mercy seat. Who is this? He is the one mediator between God and humanity: Christ Jesus.

Beyond Pentecost

There is something that God wants us to see, beyond the veil, which will eternally change us and the way we think. There are many who are frustrated right now in the “Spirit-filled” Christian arena. They are disillusioned because they’ve come to the end of their understanding within the realm of Pentecost. They don’t yet know that there is a realm to behold and experience *beyond*

Pentecost.

Many of us began with the experience of a blood-bought salvation. I look back at those days and I thank God for my Nazarene roots, which taught me that I must be born again and that I needed to be baptized. Those things satisfied me for a year or so, but then my spirit stirred and I discovered a longing deep within me that persuaded me that there was something more I had not yet known or experienced. The people that I was in fellowship with tried to tell me that I had received all there was. I should be satisfied with the mediocrity of Christianity and not get too fanatical about the things of God. Yet my hunger would not be denied.

I sense the same thing in the Body of Christ today as I travel all over this planet. I find people who are once again hungering for God, and even those who are now in the realm of Pentecost are coming to this same “divine discontentment.” It’s not that what we’ve known was wrong or not good. Rather, because Christ has been faithful to grow and mature us, that which we’ve known and walked in no longer satisfies the cry of our spirit.

As I look back on my early days, I remember that God sent someone my way who asked if I had received the filling of the Holy Spirit since I believed. Suddenly, my appetite was stirred and I realized that there was a realm beyond the outer Court, an experience beyond the Feast of Passover and my initial blood-bought salvation. It was the realm called Pentecost.

Shortly after that time, I began to seek God and found myself attending revivals all over our area, hungering and thirsting for God and seeking “something more.” I finally came into contact with a small tent revival ministry back in the middle of nowhere, and God released out of me what was already in me, that which had been deep in my spirit all the time. He released the outflow of the Spirit, with the evidence of speaking in tongues. I received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and there was a manifestation of God that lifted me into another dimension. This was what I had been searching for. At that time, it satisfied the hunger that was in my spirit.

After walking in that experience for many years, I began to feel the need for more, and I once again came to that “wall,” that place where I was again hungry. I felt that I had come to the end of myself, and the realm in which I had been walking and had become familiar was no longer satisfying me. The rehashing of past revivals and going over the same ground time and time again was no longer meeting the continual cry of my heart. Something within was once again calling me to “Come up hither.”

I had once more come to the end of a realm and began to search for more answers. I thought perhaps I had backslid or that something was wrong with

me. I couldn't understand why I didn't seem to enjoy what those around me were enjoying, yet something in my spirit was letting me know that this was because I had received an upward call.

Nonetheless, I decided to deny that this wall was there. I reached for my "Pentecostal toolbox" because it had always worked before. I reached for my bottle of anointing oil and I anointed this "wall" with oil and prayed the prayer of faith. I started on my merry old way again and all of a sudden, *bam!* I hit this "wall" one more time.

I was so thankful when I received an invitation in the mail a few days later to a conference on "Seven Ways to Bind the Wall." Off I went to the conference, confident that this would be the answer to my dilemma. I bound the wall for months and it was still there. Then I attended another conference on "Seven Ways to Loose the Wall." Apparently I had it all wrong! I bought the syllabus, books, and tapes, which taught me that instead of "binding" the wall I should be "loosing" the wall.

I tried *this* tactic for seven or eight months. The more I loosed, the more this wall remained. I was absolutely baffled as to why this wall would not move for me. So, I tried to run through a troop and leap over the wall. I tried *marching* around the wall. I tried everything I knew to remove what had become a huge obstacle and yet it remained in front of me, immovable.

During this time of utter frustration, it occurred to me that perhaps I should quit the ministry. After all, if I couldn't overcome, loose, bind, destroy, rebuke, or smear with oil, what good was I in this capacity? I considered bowing out gracefully and going into some other field of endeavor because I wasn't feeling the same level of contentment that I had known in times past. Something was definitely missing in my life and I was worn out with this wall.

It was in that moment of extreme "divine discontentment" that I walked back up to the wall; it seemed that I could put my hand up on top of it. Suddenly, I began to stretch and pull myself up over this wall and as I was able to glance up over it, I saw glory as far as my eyes could see. In that moment, the Spirit spoke to my heart and said, "Son, I want to tell you something. What you have come to is not a wall at all. It is a call! You've come to the 'riser' of the next step."

He then took me to the passage of Scripture in the Song of Solomon: "*O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance...*" (Song of Sol. 2:14, emphasis mine).

A set of stairs is composed of a riser and a tread followed by another riser and tread. The riser is the part that lifts you to the next step, the place for your foot that is higher than the one on which you now stand.

What I had been experiencing was the end of the place where I had walked and understood; now God was challenging me to come up higher. It was not a “wall” that I had been coming up against, but rather, it was the riser of the next step. It was not a wall but a call, a high calling in Christ Jesus. This call will take us beyond the realm of Pentecost.

Another Dimension

As I read Ephesians 1, I began to discover that the baptism in the Holy Spirit, which I had previously received was the *earnest*, literally, the down payment of my full inheritance in the Lord. I discovered that the baptism of the Holy Spirit, with all of the gifts, prophecy, tongues, interpretation, and all other accoutrements were only the guarantee that God had given the full disbursement of the inheritance purchased by our Lord, Jesus Christ.

I am by no means saying this to discredit the wonderful realm of Pentecost or anything that God does in that realm. I am saying, however, that there is so much more for us to receive and enjoy because of the total provision purchased for us by Jesus Christ.

Something in my spirit leaped when I heard the Lord say to me, “Son, if the down payment has been this powerful and glorious in your life, I’m about to take you into a realm that will eclipse those places, because the fullness of the inheritance is even more powerful and glorious.”

I want you to think about this as you read on. All of the marvelous things that you have seen God do in the realm of healing and other manifestations of God’s power are not to be compared with the greater glory that lies ahead. I am not saying that God will discontinue healing and the miraculous; in fact, He is going to bring them into even greater manifestation as we move into this next dimension. The half has never yet been told. But, as God spoke to me during those days, I began to hear a trumpet that I had never heard before, a sound in my ear that was encouraging me to, “Come up here, I want to show you a dimension in God that you’ve never known or seen before.”

To fully understand the concept of realms and how God works in them, I would recommend listening to God’s voice in Scripture concerning “threefold things.” Pastor Kelly Varner, of Richlands, North Carolina, has written a most comprehensive volume concerning the study of threefold truths. It is entitled, *Prevail: A Handbook for the Overcomer*, published by Destiny Image. I owe many of the following insights to Pastor Kelly.

Please remember that the Holy Spirit was addressing a church in the midst of the candlestick in Revelation 1. This candlestick was located in the Holy Place, the second dimension.

Let’s quickly review the types and shadows depicted in the Tabernacle of

Moses. There were three distinct places there: the Outer Court, the Holy Place, and the Most Holy Place, also known as the Holy of Holies. In the Outer Court there was the brazen altar. This altar was where the sacrificial animals were slain. This is where the blood was shed. It was the type that speaks to us distinctly of the cross and Jesus' blood shed for the remission of sins. We also find the laver, a basin full of water from the smitten rock. This speaks of water baptism and of the washing by the Word of God. The entire ministry performed in this place and the instruments of that ministry are parallel to the celebration of the Feast of Passover.

The second dimension is known as the Holy Place. This place is descriptive of the Pentecostal experience. Its pattern is seen in the celebration of the Feast of Pentecost. In this realm you will find the oil of anointing that flows, releasing the gifts of the Spirit. The candlestick that gives light is a type of revelation flowing from the Word once the Holy Spirit becomes your teacher. It shines its light on the table allowing you to see the bread of His face with a clear understanding. This illuminates the purpose of the cup of the New Testament when Jesus says, "*This is My Body, broken for you*" (1 Cor. 11:24). The golden altar of incense speaks to us of prayer, praise, and worship. We have seen and tasted of this realm.

Here is another perspective: The Outer Court speaks of a harvest that brings in thirtyfold. The Holy Place speaks of a sixtyfold yield, but there are a people who will experience, know, and understand the realm of the hundredfold yield that can only be found in the Most Holy Place.

In the Outer Court, you come to know Him as Jesus, your Savior.

In the Holy Place, you come to know Him as Christ, the Anointed One, anointed to be Healer and Baptizer.

In the Most Holy Place, the third dimension, you will come to know Him as Lord.

In the Outer Court, there are a lot of man-centered activities taking place as people bring their sacrifice.

In the Holy Place, the activity is more concerning God and humanity. For instance, someone has to light the candlestick, someone has to bake the bread, and then God manifests His presence in that place. It's a place of co-ministry of God and people.

However, when you step behind the veil into the third dimension, it's the place of God alone. There's no flesh seen in that place. It is a sovereign realm where it's "*not by might, nor by power, but [it's] by My spirit, saith the Lord of hosts*" (Zech. 4:6).

Just as the Outer Court is synonymous with the Feast of Passover, and the

Holy Place with the Feast of Pentecost, the Most Holy Place corresponds with the Feast of Tabernacles or what we could call “fullness.”

Dwelling in the Outer Court is like being in the state of babyhood. The Holy Place is where adolescents live, but the Most Holy Place houses fully grown children of God.

As I began to study chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation, I saw many things that are promised to “him that overcomes.” Everything that is promised to those who overcome relates to something that can be found in the Most Holy Place beyond or on the other side of the veil that separated it from the Holy Place.

The Spirit said to the church in Pergamos that if they would overcome they would be given “hidden manna” (see Rev. 2:12-17). The hidden manna is not located in the first or second dimension of that tabernacle; it is found in the third dimension Most Holy Place, in a golden pot.

We can feed on something of the Christ that we’ve never yet tasted, “hidden manna.”

God promises the church at Ephesus, if they will overcome, He will “*give [them] to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God*” (Rev. 2:7). I believe this speaks of the Rod of Aaron that budded. There were engravings and hangings that looked like a garden in this part of the Tabernacle, in the Most Holy Place.

God promises the church at Smyrna, if they will overcome, He will give them “*a crown of life*” (Rev. 2:10). This golden crown is found bordering the mercy seat set in the Most Holy Place.

Finally, God speaks to the church of the Laodiceans and tells them if they overcome, He will grant them “*to sit with Me in My throne*” (Rev. 3:21). This, too, is positioned beyond the veil in the Most Holy Place, where the throne of judgment has become a blood-sprinkled mercy seat.

The dialogue in Revelation is directed to churches in transition. It’s speaking specifically to a people who are being urged to leave the second dimension of the Holy Place and follow the upward call into the Most Holy Place.

Beloved, the trumpet of God is sounding and has been sounding for some time now. Every trumpet that sounds will cause an ascending of saints and a descending of the Lord. First Thessalonians 4:16 reads: “*For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God..*” The Young’s Literal Translation of this passage says that the Lord descends “*in the trump of God.*”

The Lord is descending into our very lives today. He is descending in the trumpet of God. He’s coming in the message He’s bringing to our hearts. Let Him descend in your life and there will be an ascending for you, an upward call.

You will find a place in God that you've never walked in before.

God has not brought you to the end of one realm for you to die there. He's not brought you to these steps and to this place that seems like a wall to bring you to utter frustration. He has brought you to the end of this realm so that there will arise within your spirit a determination that will cause you to say with Paul in Philippians 3:11-14:

If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

If you are sensing this call, dear one, you are blessed today, because God has not left you to be satisfied with the mediocrity of coming to only a part of your inheritance. He will bring you to full redemption. You are going to see the fullness of the manifestation of God's Kingdom.

God is bringing you into a realm of Kingdom operation, where you're going to see the King, His throne, His lordship, and a realm of intimacy with Him that goes beyond anything you have ever known.

One day Jesus was on a mountain and He began to preach and teach what we know as the Beatitudes. I believe these "Beatitudes" are the *attitudes* we need to *be* in. They are attitudes that will teach us how to receive and dispense the Kingdom of God.

He said that you are blessed when you are hungry. It is a blessing in this hour to be hungry and thirsty for God. You are blessed when you're poor in spirit. That doesn't mean that you go around with your head hung down; you are simply recognizing an acute need for God. If there is a sense of poverty in your heart toward God and a desperation that moves you to find Him in a greater way than ever before, you are in a very good place. It's an upward call. He's not brought you to a wall, but to a call. He's brought you to the secret place of the stairs, where you are ready to hear his voice.

If this speaks to you today, respond to the voice of that trumpet and "Come up hither." If you are sensing an inward hunger, a cry in your spirit that you're not satisfied with the rehashing of past revivals and the repackaging of what men call a new thing; if you're tired of all the hype and the glitz and glamour that's trying to substitute the utmost need that you've sensed in your spirit—the need to know Him above all else—you are not alone. There are thousands who have not bowed their knee to baal. There are multitudes who are hungry for God and they are on the threshold of the greatest happening that humanity has

ever witnessed. You have come to Revelation 4:1, where there is now “*a door...opened in Heaven.*”

God can open the door that no one can shut; God can shut doors that no one can open. Isn't that what He said to the church at Philadelphia? “*Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it....*” (Rev. 3:8).

You have come to an open door, a place that is open in the heavens. God is about to usher you into a realm you've never experienced before. You are going to behold glory as far as you can see. As we look at chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation, and look in greater detail at the seven churches, we're going to find that the message to these churches is a message of repentance.

Repentance is not just about coming to an altar somewhere and getting saved, or “rededicated” because you've backslidden. It is about changing your mind. It means that there is a change made in the way you think about things. Repentance in the Greek is the word *metanoeo* meaning to rethink or think differently.

Over the next few Chapters we're going to examine each one of these churches to discover precisely why they must repent. These “repenta-bles” are things impeding their progression into this third dimension of the Most Holy Place. These are significant areas that are still present in the Church today. There must be the same measure of repentance in the Church in this hour to effect the same measure of change.

Please note, that before God ever requires anything of anyone, He first reveals Himself in their midst. Christ is the remedy for the problem at hand. God always supplies the provision before the need for that provision appears. Grass was made before the cow was created. We will find that through the revelation of Jesus Christ, we are endued with power from on high to overcome every hindrance.

Chapter 6

Ephesus

Revelation 2:1-7 says:

*U*NTO the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for My name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. 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. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

As we look into the second chapter of Revelation, consider how the Spirit of the Lord identifies Himself to this church. He reveals Himself as the one who holds the seven stars in His right hand and as the one who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.

To get the full impact of this, you need to remember that He clearly defines the seven stars that are in His right hand as being the seven angels to the churches. The Greek word for angels means “messenger.” These seven “angels” of the seven churches are not angelic beings with wings, but rather the overseeing ministry used as messengers to these churches.

The first strength God identifies in Ephesus is their dealing with false apostles. He commends them for their stand against evil and duplicitous leaders. These pretenders were found to be false because they did not prove to be true apostles in function. Apostles, just as pastors, teachers, prophets, and evangelists, can be tried by the ministry that flows from them.

The hand, as we previously discussed, speaks of the fivefold ministry. Jesus says that He has the seven stars in His “hand.” Each finger is distinct in function and expression, but they are joined together into one instrument that, just like your own hand, is able to perform many tasks for your good and for your well-being. Jesus lived this concept by laying His hands on those He healed and ministered to.

When John fell down at the feet of this one who had come to show him the

revelation, Jesus laid His hand on him and raised him up. In this hour, I believe God wants to lay His hand upon people all over this world and raise them up into a new dimension of God.

There is a fresh flow of fivefold ministry whose anointing is coming out of the ascended Christ in this hour. God is releasing apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, His hand in the earth, to declare not only the death of Jesus, but His *resurrection*. This declaration will cause us to stand on our feet and not only proclaim the truth of resurrection life, but manifest that life through us.

Marks of True Ministry

What was the litmus test the Ephesian church used? One of the measures we can use to prove a true or false ministry is “Are they in His hand?”

Every true ministry will point you to God and every false ministry will point you to themselves. Their skewed focus is not on Jesus.

What were these false apostles teaching that wasn’t true? Notice God told them that He knew their *works*, labor, and patience. Jesus was not pleased with this as the focus of their relationship with Him.

False apostles come to teach you that the way you’re going to enter into the Most Holy Place will be on the basis of your works, labor, sweat, and toil. Jesus said that He knew the effort was for His name’s sake and was aware that they had patience and steadfastness. Nonetheless, they had left their first love. He then says to them:

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 (Revelation 2:5).

The emphasis here is “*remember therefore from whence thou art fallen.*” Let’s not forget that previously God promised the privilege to eat of the tree of life to them that overcame.

I want to emphasize that while Jesus is challenging them to remember from where they had fallen, He is also declaring to them that they can return to the fruit of the tree of life. Can you see how these two things are connected because they are both related to the garden, the paradise of God, where the whole divine purpose began?

Jesus is not telling them to remember where they fell from last week or the last time they sinned. He’s encouraging them to remember all the way back to the beginning and what exactly caused the initial fall of humanity. This “remembrance” connects perfectly to what He has promised to give them in the paradise of God—the garden. God is showing them the way back to the garden where they could once again have access to the place from which humanity fell.

He is actually identifying a destructive mentality for this first church, a mind-

set that had them thinking they could enter into the Most Holy Place by their strenuous efforts. It would be like entering into God's purpose by feeding on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

We thought that if we could just get enough information about what's right and what's wrong; if we could just become very clear about what is sin and what isn't considered sin; if we would just get all this information right and keep it straight and through our own sweat work this thing out, we would be able to make ourselves like God.

That was the problem with the original couple, Adam and Eve. The serpent came with his mesmerizing hiss and said to Eve, "*in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil*" (Gen. 3:5).

The problem with this kind of suggestion is that it implies that there is something that you must do to make yourself like God. This is the message of a confused, Babylonian church with their false apostles. They have taught us that if we do enough, somewhere along the line God might actually accept us and perhaps even like us. In reality, this is fruit from the wrong tree. We send mixed messages today. We tell people to avoid the evil on the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" and to gorge themselves on the good. However, we fail to see that the "good" on this tree will kill us just as quickly as the evil; it is just more deceptive! It is a substitute religion sewn with withering fig leaves instead of relationship forged in life. "*There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death*" (Prov. 16:25).

The apostle Paul wrote, concerning his credentials, that he was a Pharisee of Pharisees and in touching the law, he was "*blameless*" (Phil. 3:6). He was perfect at keeping rules and regulations. But after meeting Jesus Christ, the bottom line for Paul was that he counted all of his accomplishments and abilities as "*dung*" that he might gain Christ (Phil. 3:8).

The issue is not how much knowledge you have of what's good and evil, but what tree you are eating from. My primary goal is not to learn how to quit sinning. I want to feed on what will cause me to lose the very desire for sin. The biggest factor in the problem Eve had with the serpent was that she listened to his hiss. She gave attention to his words.

God's Rehabilitation

If you simply turn on your television and watch the shows that are dealing with the problems of humanity, especially the talk shows that delve into every flavor of man's difficulties, no matter what the problem may be, the usual analysis given is that a lack of *self-esteem* is the root of our problems. Their answer is to get everyone to like themselves and all problems will be taken care of.

There are many programs of rehabilitation offered in today's society, and

I'm not necessarily against them. They are the best solution the world has to offer. I do know, however, there is something better than rehabilitation, and that's the work of regeneration. In regeneration, God doesn't just re-habit your life or relieve you from socially unacceptable habits, but rather, He *re-genes* you into a totally new life. He gives you a divine DNA.

In rehabilitation, the best we can do is teach a person new habits. Many times the change produced is from one addiction to another. We teach people how to replace one socially unacceptable behavior with a more culturally acceptable habit. People are changed from being a drug addict or an alcoholic into a workaholic, or they become addicted to money, achievement, or power.

God does something so much greater. under His hand we are regenerated, changed from one kind of being into another. He takes us and makes us a brand-new creature in Him. The problem is not just a self-esteem issue; it is an identity crisis!

Revelation is not about rehabilitating or overhauling Adam. It's about how Jesus got rid of the old creature and then raised him up in a new nature.

It is important to note that in Genesis, Adam was created and lived in a garden. By his actions, he turned that wonderful paradise into a graveyard. Jesus came into that same graveyard and through His redemptive work turned it back into a garden. In the garden, Adam has a tree of life, yet he feeds from a tree that produces death. Jesus hung on a tree of death and it became a tree of life.

The old rugged cross has become a mighty tree of life for you and me. Jesus took what had become a graveyard, a garden unkept that had produced only weeds, thorns, and thistles, and became a new seed fallen into the earth to plant a new garden. It is no accident that all of His redemptive work was done in a garden. Genesis recounts:

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made (Genesis 2:1-2).

Right in the middle of this finished work, God planted a garden. He put man and woman in the middle of that garden and said to them, "All you've got to do, in the midst of this finished work, is have *dominion*." This couple, in the midst of this garden, was created in God's own image and the only requirement was that they tend and steward the garden.

When Jesus came into the earth and accomplished His redemptive work, He did it in a garden. We see Him in the Garden of Gethsemane praying until He sweat great drops of blood that fell to the earth and were soaked up by its dust—the same earth that came under the curse and required man to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. The very ground had become cursed; it was unyielding

in its ability to produce anything for man other than thorns and thistles without much labor and much sweat. When Jesus prays until He sweats great drops of blood, that bloody sweat redeemed us from that curse. Because of His sweat, we are no longer under a curse of works and labor, even though this is what these false apostles were teaching.

A crown of thorns was made for Him the night of His offering. That says to me that the work of the cross in this garden is going to redeem an earth that had been cursed to bring forth thorns and thistles. That doesn't just speak of the garden that's in your backyard, but more importantly, the garden that you are and that garden that is *within* you.

As Paul writes, *"We are only God's coworkers. You are God's garden, not ours; you are God's building, not ours"* (1 Cor. 3:9 TLB). God has removed from you the curse that brings forth thorns and thistles in your earth. Those things that have choked out the good seed of the Kingdom are removed by the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, who wore a crown of thorns as a symbol of earth's curse. He wore it there on His head because the place where we need His redemptive power is in our mind and thinking.

The work has been accomplished, but we need to have our thinking changed and our minds renewed to this wondrous truth. The renewing of the mind is not just being familiar with the Bible or even memorizing it. It is, rather, coming into a revelation of the finished work of Jesus Christ and all that He did while He was in the earth.

It is also important to see that when Jesus was crucified, He hung on the cross between two thieves. *"And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on Him, saying, If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us"* (Luke 23:39). This same voice came to Jesus as He was in the wilderness during His great temptation when satan came to Him and similarly urged Him. Notice He is in a wilderness and a wilderness is an unkept garden. He picked up where Adam left off.

And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days He did eat nothing; and when they were ended, He afterward hungered. And the devil said unto Him, If Thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread....And he brought Him to Jerusalem, and set Him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto Him, If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down from hence (Luke 4:1-3,9).

Doesn't that sound like the same approach the serpent hissed at Eve in the Garden of Eden on that fateful day long ago?

Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman,

Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

...And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die... (Genesis 3:1,4).

On the cross, in a garden, Jesus once again spoiled principalities. He beat the enemy on his own turf. He took back that which rightfully belonged to Him. He not only spoiled principalities on the cross, but He also took an old creation down into death.

The End of Your World

Revelation has been used lately as a dissertation concerning the total end of the global situation as we know it. As a result, we have great apocalyptic mentalities fueled by the twin imaginations of Hollywood and terrorist-type preachers who have taught us to think of the end of the world in terms of bombs going off, planes crashing, and people everywhere going through catastrophic circumstances.

A more profound and biblically rooted understanding is that the “end of the world” is the end of *your* world, the conclusion of your identity in Adam. It is the end of flesh and carnality. It is the remedy for the “old creation.”

Just as Genesis begins in a garden, Revelation ends with the description of a city set in a garden place, with a river and the tree of life. God’s plan is a plan of redemption and restoration. In this last garden, there is no mention of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and there is not a hint of the serpent’s presence in this new place.

In this new place, there is a river flowing out of a slain Lamb and the tree of life, whose leaves are used for the healing of the nations. This is a perfect picture of Jesus Christ. He said that He was the true vine of God...and we are the branches.

The revelation of the work of the cross of Jesus Christ will restore us back into this paradise of God. It puts us back in a finished work with dominion.

Paradise Is Not Lost

In Chapter 2 we discussed the interaction of Jesus and the thieves on the cross and how one of the thieves asked Him to “remember him when He was come into His kingdom.” Jesus told him that he would “this day be with Me in paradise.”

The word “paradise” in Greek means “Eden.” It also means “a park or a place of happiness.” The cross is actually the door or the gate to paradise. It opens the opportunity and ability to return to the presence of God and hear His voice, walking and talking in the cool of the day. It restores us back into right relationship and right standing with God through its redemptive work. At the cross, Jesus literally “re-membered” us. He put us back together again and reconnected us to a loving relationship with God.

The angel that God placed at the entrance of Eden was not put there to

keep you out of the garden. It was put there to guard the way to the tree of life. Jesus is the way and His cross became the way back into the paradise of God. This is the way...walk in it. "Remember from whence thou art fallen and do thy first works over."

Eating from the wrong tree causes the fall. Eating from a list of do's and don'ts, eating from a dress code, eating from confusion over whether or not at any given moment we are saved or not...this diet will cause you to fall. So much of what we were taught would produce righteousness actually produced nothing but confusion and anxiety. Yet, we did it for His name's sake.

I tried my best to obey the commandments of ministers and churches as I was growing up. The tragedy was, as soon as I'd get a handle on my flesh and measure up to the standard of righteousness being preached, someone would come along with a new set of rules and would set the notch a little higher. I became so frustrated that I felt like I would never be able to please God and would surely end up in hell because I couldn't keep all the rules.

I don't look back on this with anger or disdain because I've come to realize that I did it all for Jesus' sake. I was pure in my heart before the Lord in all those things. But, thank God, I came to understand that it's not about rules and regulations, fear, and law. It's about a vital loving relationship with the Alpha and Omega.

This was God's grievance toward the church in Ephesus. They had gotten so sucked into their religious labor that they had lost "that loving feeling" they had once had toward Jesus. He was admonishing them to fall in love with Him again. Love is the only thing that never fails. It won't make you lawless, but it will be a greater restraint than law ever thought about being.

When Jesus Christ declared from the cross, *"It is finished,"* He placed us in this finished work and into a garden where all we have to do is tend this finished work. In other words, there's nothing you have to do to get back into this place. All you have to do is live out of the life He's put within you. We're not working to get salvation. We are, rather, working out of that salvation, with fear and trembling.

One of the biggest problems men and women have had is one of "mistaken identity." When the serpent suggested to Eve that she could be like God by doing something more, by eating of the forbidden tree, she should have shut his mouth by telling him that she needed to ask God Himself. Paul writes, *"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"* (2 Cor. 11:3). One of the greatest wars working in our minds in this hour is that we could be beguiled like Eve and led away from the truth of the simplicity of Christ and His completed

accomplishment. However, we must realize that we are secure in Christ and need not be led away by false teachers. As you rest in the knowledge that you've been brought back to a relationship with the Father, you will see an overcoming lifestyle flowing in your life. If you will fall in love again with Jesus, everything will be new.

Mercy Seat

But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain (John 20:11-12).

Please notice that there is an angel at the head and one at the foot of the place where Jesus' body had lain. The ark of the covenant, which stood in the Holiest of Holies in Moses' Tabernacle, had an angel on each side of the ark's golden lid. This was also known as the mercy seat.

Jesus, in His finished work, has become our "propitiation," which literally means "mercy seat." I'm so glad Jesus came as our Mercy Seat and our propitiation. Through Him, the throne of judgment became a throne of mercy.

Notice that Mary, a woman just like Eve, is looking back into the tomb. What was once a grave has become a Most Holy Place. By the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God has opened the way back into the Most Holy Place. John's Gospel continues:

And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him. And when she had thus said she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? She, supposing Him to be the gardener, saith unto Him, Sir, if Thou have borne Him hence, tell me where Thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto Him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master (John 20:13-16).

When she saw Jesus in that garden, she thought Him to be a gardener. In a way she was right—He is the keeper of the Way and the Son of the One who owns the garden!

What Mary saw when she looked into the tomb was a picture of the real mercy seat. Our propitiation, our mercy seat, was not a box; it was a person. Jesus is the reason we have mercy. Judgment was fully satisfied. Inside the ark were the unbroken tablets of the law, signifying that every demand the law had was satisfied. Jesus has perfectly fulfilled every jot and tittle.

Mary saw the outstretched wings of these angelic beings as they overshadowed the place where Jesus had lain. Ages ago, two angels stood east of Eden to guard the way of the tree of life. Here they are in another garden pointing us back into the garden of God. Let us not just look in and see the way,

but enter in. We must walk in and see the folded cloth that wrapped the head, signifying the work of the head is finished, then grab the crumpled cloak that wrapped His body and fold it and lay it next to the head, declaring that what is true of the head is true of His body.

This reality is available to those who overcome. You might ask, how do we overcome? By the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony. Simply say to the serpent's deceiving hiss, "I was created in

Christ; I am not trying to get Adam to behave. I am feeding the new creation and it is made manifest right now in the Paradise of God. I am completely restored to my first Love." If the serpent hisses in your ear, tell him to talk to your husband Christ. He is now the keeper and the guard of the garden.

Chapter 7

Smyrna

And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive (Revelation 2:8).

Jesus Christ is so wonderful. Before He ever puts any kind of requirement or mandate upon these churches, before He ever speaks to the problem areas of their lives, He always gives them a revelation of who He is. This revelation has the ability to supply every need. There is nothing the revelation of Jesus Christ won't remedy. We have a lot of cliches in the Church, and foremost among them is "Christ is the answer." It is a shopworn idea because we never get into specifics; most of us don't have a clue how He is the answer.

Jesus is about to address the church in Smyrna, and I think it's interesting to note that the word "Smyrna" literally means "bitterness" or "the suffering." This is significant since two of the main areas that He is going to address here are their tribulation and their poverty.

Let's go back and look at what Jesus says to this church about Himself, supplying their needs for what He is about to require of them.

He says: *"These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive..."* (Rev. 2:8).

Resurrection Life

The revelation that He wants to give to this Church is, "I identify with you in death and resurrection." Jesus says to the Smyrnans, "I want you to know that I have the power of resurrection in My hands, and I have the ability to give you resurrection life and resurrection power." If that same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead dwells in you, He will "quicken" your mortal body (Rom. 8:11). This is a full-orbed resurrection: I have been resurrected at my new birth, I am being resurrected, and I shall be resurrected.

It's worth underscoring that resurrection is available to all believers now. The missing element in many of our lives is that we don't realize how the power of God (the quickening power of the Holy Spirit) is able to energize us and make us alive in areas of our human weakness and frailty. God is able to energize us and cause us to ascend above the impulses, desires, lust, and weakness that we might have. We need the quickening of the Holy Spirit and the power of the resurrection to work in the places that have been full of nothing but death and decay.

Jesus continues: “*I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan*” (Rev. 2:9). Once again He is dealing with the church at Smyrna, whose name means suffering or bitterness. These are real problems in many areas of the Church. I believe we have emphasized suffering and process to such an extreme that we have made people believe everything that happens to them is the will of God. Many have taught that even if you have sickness or disease in your body, that God originated this to perfect you. I just don’t believe that we have to pay again in our bodies what Jesus paid for in His redemptive work. I believe He redeemed us from sin, sickness, poverty, and death, and I believe that much of the tribulation that we suffer is because we don’t have a real revelation of our full redemption.

He said, “*I know thy tribulation and poverty (but thou art rich)..*” This is the state of many Christians; we stay in a state of suffering because we don’t know we are rich. We perish for lack of knowledge. But Jesus, who was rich, became poor for our sakes, so that through His poverty we might be made rich. Still, there is a suffering we have not been redeemed from. It is tribulation that comes from men persecuting us for righteousness’ sake. Keep in mind, though, that the tribulation in this church is for ten days: “*And ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life*” (Rev. 2:10).

Tribulation and Atonement Day

The Church is in transition from the candlestick to the Most Holy Place, from the feasts of Pentecost to Tabernacles, and from sixtyfold to a hundredfold. It is a people moving from one realm into a realm of a greater dimension of God’s glory.

When John hears a voice like a trumpet, he understands the progression of the feasts in the Jewish culture. The Feast of Trumpets follows Pentecost. In this feast the blowing of trumpets was not done by a fat baby with wings jumping out on a cloud and blowing a horn; it represented a prophetic voice releasing revelation. It announced the great Day of Atonement. The message of atonement is what the Spirit is trying to communicate. The ten days of tribulation is significant as it is exactly ten days from the blowing of the trumpets in the first day of the seventh month until the tenth day, which is the Day of Atonement, a day of afflicting the soul. When we hear the trumpet and have an inward grasping of the atoning work of Christ, knowing that His suffering was enough, then our tribulation and suffering is over.

In the Old Testament, trumpets were used to call a holy convocation, a gathering of an assembly, a Sabbath, or a feast day. When we understand this, then the understanding of these prophetic symbols—especially the announcing

of the Sabbath—give us understanding of Christ’s finished work. On the Sabbath Day we are to rest. It’s one thing to declare that we’re to enter into rest, but it’s another thing to show how the work got finished; this is why we’re looking at Revelation in this light. We want to reveal how the work was finished so that you can rest from your labors.

The Feasts also function as a reminder of how the Lord brought us up out of the land of Egypt.

But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day (Deuteronomy 5:14-15).

According to these verses in Deuteronomy, the Sabbath Day was set aside to remind us how the Lord brought us out of the land of Egypt. It is to be a memorial for us. Holy days and feast days are compounds of Sabbaths. The central theme of every assembly is the remembrance of the Lord’s deliverance.

This is a really important chapter to the Church, because I believe we are in an hour when the Lord is bringing us up out of the myrrh of suffering. Much of the tribulation that we have suffered is simply because our lack of knowledge has caused us to perish. Jesus told Peter that the gates of hell could not prevail against the revelation of Jesus Christ. I’m convinced that the more revelation of Christ we have, the less we are going to have of the gates of hell prevailing over us.

He said, “You are going to have tribulation for ten days.” A secondary purpose for the feast days was to create a space for the holy affliction of our souls. You see, your spirit already received a sacred deposit when you were born again; if you can ever get your soul in the same place your spirit is, your soul will be like the well-watered garden. our problem is not with our spirit, but with our soul in the realm of our understanding. Part of our maturity is that we receive the end of our faith; even the salvation of our souls. I think that as we come into the seventh month—the blowing of trumpets and the ten days of afflicting the soul—there is a release of revelation and understanding that’s coming to our soul, which is going to lift us up out of the realm of bondage. We are going to begin to think differently. When our soul and our spirit come into a place of union and unity, it will make an “*adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body*” (Rom. 8:23) from sin, sickness, poverty, and death. We will see the manifestation of life even in our physical bodies.

Please note that these ten days are not ten literal days in our lives; they simply represent the transition time it takes to come to an understanding of what Jesus' atonement produced. Many have been stuck in this period for most of their lives and have lived like strangers amidst the land of promise. It is time to afflict our souls and exercise our riches in Christ and come out of our stupor.

I'm convinced that maturity is simply getting your soul where your spirit is. The crown of life is the border around the ark; Christ's promise to the overcomers in this chapter of Revelation is "I'll give you a crown of life." A crown is always placed on the head of a king. When the Son of God became flesh, humanity crowned Him with a crown of thorns, but God crowned Him with glory and honor (see Heb. 2:9). Jesus redeemed us from the curse of bringing forth thorns and thistles and from earning our bread through sweat and labor. By replacing the crown of thorns with a crown of life, Jesus has made us kings and priests unto God. Now we can reign in life.

Our Feminine Soul

I think it's significant that it was a woman who first discovered Jesus' empty tomb. To the chagrin of male chauvinists everywhere, Mary was one of the first to carry the message of the resurrection. She was not just sent to the masses, but she was sent to those who were called to be Apostles, and she said to them, "He is risen indeed." This is especially meaningful in light of the fact that it was a woman to whom the serpent came to beguile and deceive in Genesis 3.

Now lest you think I'm dealing with a gender issue, please understand that I want to deal with the feminine that is within every one of us: the soul. The Greek word for soul is *psuche* (psoo-khay). This is a term that has a feminine gender in the Greek. If you think I depend too much on Greek to show us this, let me share an illustration I've preached many places across the country. I say to those in the congregation, "Look over and tell your neighbor, 'Hello! My name is Sue; how do you do? My middle name is Kay.'" Every one of us has a psoo-khay; we all have a feminine soul. King David underscores this in Psalm 34:2: "*My soul shall make her boast in the Lord; the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad*" (emphasis mine). David called his soul a her.

As we look back at Eve in Eden, we see not just what happened but what takes place spiritually within all of us. The serpent never comes to our man (spirit), the word "spirit" in Hebrew has gender also; it is always rendered masculine in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, "spirit" is not denoted in gender as much as it is in the old Testament, except in reference to the Holy Spirit, designated a "He." The truth is that there is a she in every he, and I think this is something we need to acknowledge. It helps me to understand how we males in gender can be part of the Bride of Christ, and how those who are

feminine in gender can be sons of God. It's not so much the gender of our bodies as it is of a description of relationship. I'm a son of God the Father in authority and ministry, and a bride in relationship in intimacy and in marriage to the Son.

I know I've gotten a bit off the subject matter, but I think this brings clarity to what the apostle Paul meant when he said, *"I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence"* (1 Tim. 2:12). I've been in many services where males are in the pulpit where the masculine "spirit" was stifled and the feminine "psoo-khay" was speaking. The words were coming out of his own human genius. It was soulical.

Many times men have sought to put down women, but the reality is they were speaking out of their soulical realm more than the spiritual. What Paul could be saying is that he does not want the soul to usurp authority over the spirit; if you need to know anything you can ask your "husband," who by the way is "at home." Your *husband* is the spirit of Christ who lives in you; if your soul needs to know anything, if you lack wisdom, you can ask of God and He gives to all liberally.

The whole point in the Garden of Eden would have been for Adam (speaking of the masculine spirit) to protect his woman (his soul).

When we mortify the deeds of the flesh through the exercise of our spirit, we truly live.

We see this in greater detail in the later part of Revelation. There are two women in the later part of Revelation. One of them is confused and a harlot; the other is a bride. Babylon the Great has corporate/church-wide dimensions (as a confused religious system) as well as personal application, speaking individually of the confusion in our soul (mind, will, and emotions).

It is not only the corporate people, the New Jerusalem, being disclosed in Revelation 21 as the Bride of Christ. We can also see individually that there are things that have to take place within our woman (our soul) as we become married to Christ, the Spirit of God within us. When soul and spirit come into consummation and relationship in marriage, they will produce an adoption redeeming our bodies.

And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body (Romans 8:23).

Jesus Already Drank the Cup

I think this is what the apostle John is speaking of when he says that if you will be faithful unto death, Christ will give you a crown of life. This does not mean to be faithful until someone kills you. I don't want, by any means, to

diminish the great cost that many have paid through martyrdom for the cause of Christ. However, I believe there is another death—accomplished in Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary—that you and I need to be faithful to.

As we've said before, the Harlot (Great Babylon) says, "I sit as a queen and I am not a widow," as she continues to give out her cup full of abomination. This cup is what the Lord is dealing with in Smyrna, as He is trying to get them to understand that you don't have to drink the cup of suffering. If you could understand that Jesus already drank the cup for you, you won't have to drink it again. Like Benjamin in the Old Testament, you will open your grain sack and find the King's empty cup; He has already drank the cup for you.

Benjamin and Joseph's story is illustrative for our purposes. Joseph is a type of Christ, and Benjamin is a type of the sons of God. Joseph's desire is to reconcile his entire family, and be rejoined with his father. He placed his *empty silver* cup in the mouth of Benjamin's sack. I think it's significant that Joseph put it in a sack of corn; corn pictures the death of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "*Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit*" (John 12:24). Silver speaks of redemption; our suffering has already been accomplished, and what these ten days of tribulation spoke of was atonement. He has already drank the cup for us. The gall and bitter vinegar of myrrh was placed to His quivering lips on Calvary. If I ever open the mouth of my corn sack, I will discover the King's *empty silver cup*, never again to put a cup of abomination to the lips of God's people. His suffering was enough!

One of the most frustrating things to me is the fact that we have heard this message, but there are times that it doesn't seem like it's working. The reality is these seemingly fruitless times are the time of tribulation and testing. Are we going to walk away from what we have heard? Or are we going to be *faithful to the death* of Jesus Christ? Are we going to believe that what Jesus accomplished is enough for all of our sufferings? Are we going to discover what He said to this Church, "But you're rich"? I think we live like strangers right in the land of promise, and we don't realize the wealth and riches that we have at our disposal; so we suffer unnecessarily.

Toward the end of Revelation, Christ gives a solemn warning:

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book (Revelation 22:18-19).

This Scripture used to terrify me, and I have tried to honestly approach this book with reverence and handle it right. Even so, the disconcerting thought

would hit me that perhaps I had handled it wrong, even in my best efforts. What I began to discover, though, is that it's not just Revelation that can be mishandled; it's the whole Bible from Genesis onward.

There is only one revelation in the entire Bible, and that is the revelation of Jesus Christ. I began to understand that anything you add to the revelation of Jesus Christ adds the plagues of Scripture. If I were to say that the stripes on Jesus' back are not enough for your healing, and if I preach that God's putting cancer on you to process you, then what I am doing is adding plagues to your life and understanding. I believe there are many weak and sickly among us because we have spread erroneous teaching to the Church. People have passively received everything that has come down the pike as being the will of God for their lives. The reality is that Jesus has redeemed us from sickness; He is not using sickness to redeem me, any more than He is putting sin on me to make me to become more righteous.

There have been times when people pointed to Scripture saying that if we suffer with Christ we will reign with Him, but I discovered that the word "suffer" in Greek does not necessarily denote constant pain and agony; I believe the connotation of this is that if we will shore up and not back down under pressure we'll reign with Him. This means when things come against us that we need to be faithful to the death—the death of Jesus on our behalf.

We are not under-goers; we are overcomers! This is the message to Smyrna. Revelation 12:11 tells us that the saints of God overcome by the "*blood of the Lamb*" and the "*word of their testimony*." We don't have to receive everything that comes down the pike as being the sovereign will of God; Scripture teaches creative human initiative. "*Resist the devil and he will flee from you*" (James 4:7b). If we are in alignment with what God has already purposed in the heavens, we will see it released in the realm of manifestation in our worlds. This is receiving the crown of life and understanding the fact that you really are rich.

I don't want to downplay the fact that there are people who are suffering in a "season of myrrh." Yet the answer is not to remain in those things, but to come into the Day of Atonement, the day of afflicting the soul. We are to come into the realm of understanding, knowing in our souls what has already been accomplished.

The fellowship of Christ's suffering is an identification of the suffering that's already been accomplished. Paul said, "*For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection*" (Rom. 6:5).

I want to be faithful to that kind of death; if I'm faithful to that kind of death, then I'm also going to be faithful to that kind of resurrection.

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be

destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin (Rom. 6:6). The key is truly knowing.

For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him (Romans 6:7-9).

Dwelling in the Secret Place

Scripture says, “*He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty*” (Ps. 91:1). Dwelling in the secret place is not some enigmatic shadowy force with spiritual implications that nobody can understand. To me, dwelling in the secret place is looking in the empty tomb and seeing Christ’s finished work. It is seeing the mercy seat with the cherubim’s wings spread where Jesus’ body had lain. You can trust what’s underneath His wings, because it is His atonement. “*He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust*” (Ps. 91:4). This is not some geographical location; it’s a spiritual reality that you can refuse to budge from.

We’re going to set our roots deep because there is a flood coming out of the dragon’s mouth to try to get us to move out of the finished work and into terror, epidemic, and all that comes to the wicked. But Psalm 91 declares: “*With thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked*” (Ps. 91:8). If you can see yourself in this secret place of the Most High, God will keep you and assign angels to keep you safe. God is inviting all of the churches addressed in Revelation to come under His sheltering wings.

The woman in Revelation 12 is given the wings of the great eagle to carry her to safety in the wilderness. She is fed and taken care of for 1,260 days. This period, three and a half years, parallels the life and ministry of Jesus on earth. When the flood comes out of the dragon’s mouth to try and destroy you, simply feed on what’s under Christ’s wings. When you feed on this “hidden manna,” the Son of Righteousness arises with healing in His wings, and deliverance results.

Remember it was Eve who was beguiled; the serpent never comes to your spirit; he always comes to your feminine soul. I want to be clear here that I am not talking about physical gender, but of the soul, the place where seed thought is conceived. Satan always tries to get her, “the soul,” to doubt the finished work, to move out of God’s sheltering wings to make herself like God.

Earlier we addressed John’s hearing a voice like a trumpet. One of the reasons for trumpet-blowing in Hebrew culture was for calling an assembly, a Sabbath, or a feast day. I want to return to the theme of an assembly:

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in

full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

Let us holdfast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is faithful that promised;) and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching (Hebrews 10:19-25).

Here we are told how to enter the Most Holy Place:

1. We draw near with a pure heart.
2. We hold fast to the profession of our faith, without wavering; this is rooted in His faithfulness.
3. Be considerate of one another, motivating each other to loving actions.
4. Do not fail to assemble yourselves.

These are the foundation stones of New Covenant living. When I read this passage I don't see a blanket endorsement of institutional Christianity, of just gathering in some building somewhere. I do strongly believe in covenant and commitment to a local church. I believe in faithfulness to the local church and to assembling together whenever possible. But I hear in my spirit "there is some assembly required" in this hour because we have lost our way in the Body of Christ. The apostle Paul said that there are many who are weak and sickly among us because we don't discern the Lord's Body.

When looking at the concept of suffering in the church in Smyrna, I began to understand that one of the reasons for blowing the trumpet was to call an assembly. If you can hear my heart today, you are hearing a spiritual trumpet sound to gather a people. God desires to bring together a people who are assembled. Like a bicycle in a box, we have all the parts—if we don't ever put these pieces together, we will never have a vehicle that we can ride. "Some assembly is required." I believe that God has given us everything we need for divine life to the full, and we need to put the pieces together so that we can have a forward-moving vehicle.

Everything we need today is somewhere in the Body of Christ. If each member is freed to function properly, with every joint supplying from their innate ability, there will be no lack among us. I think so many times people sit in a service possessing someone else's healing, miracle, or financial blessing because they don't obey God to move, deposit, give, and minister. This is why there are many who are weak and sickly among us. Sometimes it's not that God hasn't supplied the need, but we haven't come together as the catalyst for God to move through. If we don't assemble, then what we have is a visage that's been marred. Psalm 22:14 exclaims, "*All my bones are out of joint.*"

Jesus screams this from the cross. There are so many people today

proclaiming a “Me and Jesus got our own thing going” message. You can survive, and even receive some perfecting benefit, in such a wilderness experience. But a wilderness is a garden unkept and is no place to live a life. Jesus put us back in a garden. Just like the prophet Ezekiel, we are witnessing bones coming together in the valley. If we do not assemble, we mar His visage; but when we are connected, then we are as the Song of Solomon says—“He is altogether lovely” (Song of Sol. 5:16). But if He’s not all together then He is not lovely at all!

We’re beginning to come together as bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh. Joining and construction is taking place; assembling is going on. I believe as God continues to bring His Body together, there will be a release of the power and divine manifestation to His corporate people. This won’t happen through star prophets or big-named evangelists, but to an ordinary corporate people representing His image to the earth. Christ’s life is brought forth through a people who have gathered together and assembled themselves.

Blasphemy Belonging to Satan?

The next issue that Jesus deals with in Smyrna is the “*blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan*” (Rev. 2:9). Paul writes to the church in Rome:

For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God (Romans 2:28-29).

In this understanding, a Jew is not simply one born into Jewish tradition; the authentic Jews that God is dealing with in this hour are the ones who have had an inward circumcision. Jesus addresses this matter of inward and outward with the religious scholars of His day:

They answered and said unto Him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill Me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to Him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love Me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of Myself, but He sent Me. Why do ye not understand My speech? even because ye cannot hear My word.

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.

He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it (John 8:39-44).

Jesus is saying to these people who are literal physical Jews, “You are of your father the devil.” In the Book of Revelation He tells them that they are the

synagogue of satan.

Jesus is telling everyone that it's not enough to simply be of "right" genealogy physically; everyone needs to be reborn and regenerated in their spirit. The Spirit of God must tabernacle within you, which makes you a synagogue of Christ.

New Birth From Second Death

Jesus concludes His message to the Smyrnans by saying, *"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death"* (Rev. 2:11). The **"second death"** is a complex subject and warrants a book in itself. In the pages we have, I'd like to address at least some of the remarks concern^{ing} it.

The first death was the one that Adam released on the whole human family. *"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead" and "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned,"* as well as *"Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life"* (1 Cor. 15:21, Rom. 5:12, Rom. 6:4).

It is my conclusion that the second death is simply a death to the first one:

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 (Hebrews 2:14).

We were born into Adam, but Jesus Christ holds the keys of hell and death. Jesus dealt with the first death by nailing it to the cross, putting death to death. The first death is one that was pronounced on everyone; in truth, we must all experience the second death as well. The passageway out of the all-encompassing death of Adam is the all-encompassing death of Jesus Christ.

The second death, in my estimation, is the removal of death and hell: *"And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death"* (Rev. 20:14). **Revelation 21:8 corroborates this:**

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

The fearful and the unbelieving are the only ones to be cast into the lake of fire. This second death hurts, but only if you haven't trusted Christ in life. Faith in Him says your death has already been exacted and you have taken part in the first resurrection; on such the second death has no power. From what I see, you

can either identify with what the death of Jesus has already accomplished, or you can go through a death yourself. It would be better for you to receive a revelation of the Resurrected One so you won't be hurt by the second death.

You have already experienced a death that was the wages of sin, and your wages have already been fully met. You have received the free gift of eternal life.

For then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. 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 (Hebrews 9:26-28).

We were all born in sin and shaped in iniquity. We each participated in the death that Adam conveyed upon the entire human family. The only way out of this is through death. We have to find a way to die to the old humanity. The provision that God makes is identification with the cross. Jesus' death was my death.

Hebrews 9:27 says, "It is appointed unto men once to die." You're going to come to this death one way or another. The next verse picks up, "so Christ.." Christ became the fulfillment of the appointment everyone has with death. He didn't just die *for* me; He died *as* me. He was offered once to bear the sins of many, identifying with the first Adam on the cross and the last Adam through His resurrection. When I embrace this, I'm not hurt by the second death.

The True Nature of Judgment

I may draw some fire for this, so I offer it not as dogmatic truth but for your careful consideration simply to stir some thought process and dialogue. I do not claim to have all the truth on the subject, but would like pose these concepts as possibilities in light of a loving and just God. What if the lake of fire is not an expression of God's vindictive wrath through endless torment echoing the corridors of eternity? Because of the all-encompassing nature of the good news found in Jesus Christ, is it possible that even in the lake of fire has a redemptive purpose. Could it be that the lake of fire is a means by which God has chosen to bring man to the end of himself? The lake of fire is designed to destroy death and hell; it's designed to destroy the beast, the false prophet, and satan. All of these exist within every person, hence Paul's warning not to "give the devil a foothold" (Eph. 4:27 NIV).

What if the fire is actually God? The Greek word for brimstone that we find in the Book of Revelation is *theion*, or divine incense. Brimstone was regarded as having power to purify and to ward off contagions.

Theos is also the Greek word for God. Both brimstone and God are derived from the same root word *theo*. Scripture calls our God a "consuming fire" (Deut.

4:24; Heb. 12:29). In reality, the closer to God you get, the less of you there is. What if God's judgment is not all about suffering? What if His justice is restorative, and His redemption is just?

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive (1 Corinthians 15:19-22).

Matthew writes, “*A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench, till He send forth judgment unto victory*” (Matt. 12:20). God's judgments are always without fail oriented to God's glory and victory.

I know I've opened a can of worms and left a lot of questions unanswered. Perhaps in another volume we will explore these thoughts in greater detail, but for now consider the possibility that when Scripture proclaims judgment and suffering for the wicked *forever* that this word in Hebrew and Greek means “for the age” or “age-enduring.” This does not necessarily mean endless; there are many places in Scripture where this is clear. For example: “*I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me **for ever**: yet hast Thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God*” (Jon. 2:6, emphasis mine).

In this case, Jonah's descent lasted three days. Here's another: “*Then thou shalt take an aul, and thrust it through his ear unto the door, and he shall be thy servant **for ever**. And also unto thy maidservant thou shalt do likewise*” (Deut. 15:17, emphasis mine). In this case he did not own the slave for an endless duration; only until his death. Here's a final one:

And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel (Numbers 25:13).

The Letter to the Hebrews says that the Levitical Priesthood was replaced by Melchizedek (see Heb. 7), therefore God's covenant with the Levites wasn't unending; the era of the Law was age-abiding.

In each of these places (as well as many others), it is clear that “forever” need not mean literally “without end.” Jonah was not in the belly of hell with the earth about him for an endless period; he was there three days until he said “yes” to God—then hell vomited him up. I would much rather say “yes” to God now. We have two options: “Do I get on the ship to Nineveh and let God pay the fare, or do I get on the ship to Tarsus and pay my own fare, make a connecting stop in the depths only to go to Nineveh anyway?” We can go the easy way or the hard way, but we'll bow before the Lord either way.

At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the

glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:10-11).

Note that Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days—the same amount of time Jesus said that He would be in hell. Once, when addressing a crowd, Jesus made an enigmatic statement: *“There shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet [Jonah]: For as [Jonah] was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth”* (Matt. 12:39b-40). When you receive the revelation of the three days and three nights of redemption’s work and embrace Christ in trust, hell vomits you up and your torment is over. That is certainly true on this side of the grave. Could it be true on the other side of the grave as well?

Maybe it is possible that we have misinterpreted the Scripture and the intent of the original writers in the New Testament on this subject. In the light of these Scriptures is it possible that God has a higher intention than making people suffer with no chance of ever reversing the decisions in this life? Maybe it is possible that Father will reconcile all things to himself, even the wrong decisions we have made in this life. You decide, I am simply posing some questions.

It is true that we must warn people to flee from the wrath to come. I don’t want to experience hell, no matter how long it is. But we must also reconsider our human notions that God will send men to endless torment for things we wouldn’t even give them jail time for. It amazes me that we disdain a man like Hitler who would burn millions of Jews in the Holocaust, but we embrace a God whom we think will burn billions without remedy for unceasing ages. I think that if He has to, God will leave the 99 sheep and look for the one that is lost because He refuses to lose any. The devil will not be the final victor over humanity—Jesus the Redeemer will be!

And I heard every created thing in heaven and on earth and under the earth [in Hades, the place of departed spirits] and on the sea and all that is in it, crying out together, To Him Who is seated on the throne and to the Lamb be ascribed the blessing and the honor and the majesty (glory, splendor) and the power (might and dominion) forever and ever (through the eternities of the eternities)! (Revelation 5:13 AMP).

After that comes the end [the completion], when He delivers over the kingdom to God the Father after rendering inoperative and abolishing every [other] rule and every authority and power. For [Christ] must be King and reign until He has put all [His] enemies under His feet [see Ps. 110:1]. The last enemy to be subdued and abolished is death. For He [the Father] has put all things in subjection under His [Christ’s] feet. But when it says, All things are put in subjection [under Him], it is evident that He [Himself] is excepted Who does the subjecting of all things to Him [see Ps. 8:6]. However, when everything is subjected to Him, then the Son Himself will also subject Himself to [the Father] Who put all things under Him, so that God may be all in all [be everything to everyone, supreme, the

indwelling and controlling factor of life] (1 Corinthians 15:24-28 AMP).

You can either yield to the second death in Christ and not be hurt, or you can take the path of resistance and suffering. The bottom line: I want to see Christ as the first and the last. I want to see Him as the One alive in resurrection power, able to redeem me from tribulation, poverty, and all of the prisons the devil has cast us into. Prisons don't just exist on our soil; they are entrenched in our minds, in our soulish realm. There are bondages that we have allowed to creep in, whether religious traditions, ideas, or concepts. These shackle us.

But Jesus Christ is so much more powerful. He has come to redeem the church in Smyrna. He has come to give them a revelation of Himself that is able to lift them out of their suffering, poverty, and prisons to have a crown of life and understand what's behind the veil in the Most Holy Place. They will have an understanding of the true life of God, able to overcome, and not be hurt by the second death. Praise His dear name!

Chapter 8

Pergamos

Revelation 2:12-17 says:

AND to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith He which hath the sharp sword with two edges; I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where satans seat is: and thou holdest fast My name, and hast not denied My faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

As we turn our attention to this third church at Pergamos, let's look at what the name *Pergamos* means. Translated from the Greek, it means "mixed marriage" or "much marriage." This understanding reveals that this church is one of mixture and duality. They are somewhere between "Law" and "Grace." They are experiencing a change of thinking about who it is they are married to, Adam or Christ. As with the other churches we've already addressed, the Lord significantly reveals Himself in a manner that will bring about the change required in them. Each new dimension of revelation enables them to change. The enablement to change comes from their enlightenment of Him, His nature, and His person. He identifies Himself to the church at Pergamos as the One who has the sharp sword with two edges proceeding from His mouth. Revelation 1:16 says, "And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength."

Let's look at another Scripture that perfectly relates to this passage. It gives us a clear understanding of the sharp sword. Hebrews 4:12 says:

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

It is apparent from these two passages that the sword that proceeds out of

the mouth of God is not a literal one. It is the act of proclaiming the Word of God that is sharp and powerful.

I want us to specifically see what the Word of God is targeting. If you continue reading in Hebrews 4, you will find that the author is addressing a people who haven't been able to enter into the rest of God. The rest that God desires for His people to enter comes as they are able to see and receive the Finished Work. There is a rest that remains for the people of God and that rest is realized as we enter into the work that Jesus finished at the cross.

I believe that the Letter to the Hebrews was most likely written by Paul. It was written to the "Hebrews," which literally means "those who cross over." The book was written somewhere between A.D. 64 and A.D. 68, just a couple of years before the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed. In Hebrews 1:1-2, the author writes:

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 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.

As Hebrews unfolds, it makes particular mention that God "hath in *these last days* spoken unto us by His Son" (Heb. 1:2). Please note that "hath spoken unto us" indicates a past-tense time frame. God's speaking through His Son had already occurred.

Also, notice that this time is referenced as "these last days." Paul was, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, calling the days in which he was living "the last days." Many of these Scriptures have been thrust into the future by contemporary Bible teachers, but Paul was specific about the speaker and the time frame. The Letter to the Hebrews was not addressing future generations, but the contemporaries of his day.

The True "Last Days"

If Paul were the only one to define his time as being the "last days" then we could possibly think that perhaps he was in error. But because the Scriptures are God-breathed and the men who wrote them were moved upon by the Holy Spirit, other apostolic voices unfold the same thought-line. John writes:

Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us (1 John 2:18-19).

Here we have a second apostolic confirmation coming from the apostle John telling the churches that he had no doubt they were living in the last time and that the antichrist was not someone coming in the future, but was a present

reality in that day.

It is significant to understand that there were “Judaizers” and apostates among them who had begun to declare a mixture of both law and grace—this comes front and center at Pergamos. These men were spreading this doctrine among the early church.

John was not addressing the problem of an individual antichrist, but was speaking about the people of Israel as a whole who lived in their midst. These “traditional” Jewish people were not anti-*God*, but they were definitely anti-*Christ*. In their mind and thinking, Moses’ Law and the temporal commandments it embodied had been deeply and firmly established. They did not experience the indwelling Christ.

Today we still have to deal with those who insist that the gospel be rule-based and performance-based. These are legalists who promote rules and regulations rather than the life of Christ within. I pray this will not upset you, but these people are pro-“God” yet anti-Christ.

A third apostolic witness to the “last days” that indicates their being in the first century A.D. is found in Acts chapter 2. The Holy Spirit had been poured out, and people were speaking in tongues; they were accused by those who stood around as being drunk. The apostle Peter responds with his famous “This is that” message:

But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy (Acts 2:16-18).

This third apostolic voice witnesses to the fact that their day is “the last days.” Peter, of course, is quoting from the prophet Joel and is declaring to those standing by that what they were seeing manifested before their very own eyes was the fulfillment of what God had spoken through Joel years before. The men to whom he was speaking were not ignorant of the Scriptures. It could be that when they saw these people speaking in tongues their minds went to another ancient prophecy: “For with stammering lips and another tongue will He speak to this people” (Isa. 28:11).

The people of “this people” refers to those present and alive during that particular Feast of Pentecost: Jews and Israelites witnessing the fulfillment of Scripture regarding the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. I’m certain their prophets’ words were resonating. They were not unlearned men; they were people who had committed large portions of Scripture to memory. By bringing this passage from Joel to their minds, Peter was giving biblical language to what they were

seeing unfold before their eyes.

Picking up where we left off in Isaiah, we can see a divine indictment against this generation:

To whom He said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear.

But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken. Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it (Isaiah 28:12-18).

God was speaking to Israel of a pending judgment, which I believe occurred in A.D. 70, when the emperor Titus came and literally leveled the Temple until there was not one stone left upon another that was not thrown down, leaving Zion as a plowed field. There was nothing left standing, just as Isaiah said would occur.

Peter, John, and Paul spoke unanimously of the “last days” as having come—in their day. They were not speaking and writing these words to a people to come in some far-flung future era, but they were declaring their message as relevant to their contemporaries.

Let’s revisit Jesus’ own words concerning “the end,” and the foretelling of this same event, the destruction of the Temple. He steps out of the Temple and declares:

Jesus left the temple and was walking away when His disciples came up to Him to call His attention to its buildings. “Do you see all these things?” He asked. “I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down” As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately. “Tell us” they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?” (Matthew 24:1-3 NIV).

The age that was ending for them was known as the Age of the Law and the Prophets. In Matthew 24, Jesus was not prophesying about some end of history, but rather the final closing of the Old Covenant age for those disciples in His immediate hearing. I want to point out most emphatically: *The events Jesus was*

speaking of were fulfilled in the days of the early Church. If we can grasp this, we will be able to loose our “last days” mentality and receive a “new day” mentality.

The New Day

Consider with me for a moment that we are not in the “last days” that these specific Scriptures are speaking of, but we are in a “new day.” What if the “last days” that these Scriptures speak of were not the last days of a global situation, but the “last days” of the Mosaic economy? The “last days” of Israel’s Mosaic system, covenant with death, and agreement with hell that Israel had made and empowered through the Law, which was in fact the strength of death and the sin’s power. That covenant was aging and being rolled up as a scroll because Jesus came to fulfill it and bring into being a New Covenant. He did not come to do away with the Law, but was in actuality its fulfillment in flesh and blood.

The struggle that went on through the early Church, as you can very well see by the dialogue to these churches in Revelation (and especially in Pergamos), was a mixture working in their midst. This mixture was the joining of law and grace in a marriage that was displeasing to God.

If you study Scripture closely, you will find that there was even a struggle in the minds of some of the apostles concerning these things. Conflict arose between Paul and Peter over matters of the Law. They argued before the Jerusalem council over whether or not the rite of circumcision should be enforced on Gentile converts. The consensus gained in the end was that the Gentiles need not be put under Jewish laws in order for them to be saved and enter the Church’s fellowship. But mixture of Mosaic and New Covenant economies continued to be prevalent throughout the early Church. The whole book of Galatians was written to address this problem.

One of the warnings that Jesus gave His followers was for them to beware of the “leaven” of the Pharisees. The disciples knew that He was not talking about an ingredient in natural bread; they understood that He was referring to the doctrine of the Scribes and Pharisees, an unholy mixture of law and grace. We are still dealing with that situation in the Church today.

To understand why this mixture is abominable, you need to see that the Mosaic Law was written to Adamic humanity. It was given to try to get Adam to behave. It was given for the lawless, the unregenerate of the old creation. The New Covenant is written to new creatures in Christ Jesus. This understanding is crucial.

We must determine, in our witnessing or preaching, exactly what it is we are trying to accomplish: modifying the behavior of an old man, or developing a new man?

Is the sword proceeding from your mouth the same one that is proceeding

out of Jesus' mouth? As we have seen in Hebrews 4, the word of grace is a sword that is flowing from the revelation of rest, making it quick and powerful.

I have sat in meetings all over the nation, and I've heard much preaching. All too often it is not sharp, powerful, or life-giving. As a matter of fact, it is often just the opposite—dull and lifeless, a ministration of death.

But the word that flows from the finished work of Christ and the rest of God is the word that can liberate, set free, and change the nations of the world.

Historic Fulfillment

While we are looking at Revelation from the viewpoint of the revelation of Jesus Christ, we must not overlook the fact that this book has great historic value and surprising fulfillment. Many volumes have explored this perspective, but I would like to sketch it out for you here.

I believe that Revelation was written before A.D. 70, and the principal part of this book is dealing with a 40-year period from the time that Jesus prophesied in Matthew 24 until A.D. 70. The internal evidence of Revelation itself is proof enough for me. In the eleventh chapter the Temple is being measured; since the Temple was still standing, the writing of Revelation must pre-date the Temple's destruction in A.D. 70.

Jesus, responding to His disciples' question, "When will these things come to pass? And when will 'the end' be?" said, "Verily I say unto you,

This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled" (Matt. 24:34, emphasis mine). To drive the point home, another translation renders this: "*Remember that all these things will happen before the people now living have all died,*" (Matt. 24:34 TEV).

In Matthew 23, we see Jesus lamenting over Jerusalem. Please take time to read it in its entirety. He is grieving over the Scribes' and Pharisees' self-righteousness and their shallow observance of God's commandments. He says in Matthew 23:36, "*Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation*"

In the next chapter Jesus outlines the "woes" and the timetable more clearly. Let's take a moment to read a portion of this chapter.

And as He sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto Him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for My name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall

betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. 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 cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together. Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: 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. 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. Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled (Matthew 24:33-44).

Matthew 10:23 says:

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.

And Matthew 16:28 says:

Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom.

Jesus set a time period for this pending judgment and destruction; He did not hang it out there for some future generation. He said very clearly that it would come upon some in His audience. They were alive and on planet Earth at

that present time.

The Length of a Generation

He does not use “this generation” in a self-reflexive way; He doesn’t say that it will be the generation that will be alive when they see all these signs. He says plainly that “this” generation, the one alive at that moment, shall not pass until all these things are fulfilled.

I know that many take this passage and say it was some future generation that would see all the signs or they say that the word “generation” does not mean generation, but it means a “race” of people. This is a stretch, however. The word “generation” has never been translated “race.” It always deals with a particular allotment of time, literally, a 40-year period. The biblical pattern for this is the children of Israel, as they emerged from a 40-year wilderness sojourn. As Hebrews says:

Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted Me, proved Me, and saw My works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known My ways. So I swear in My wrath, They shall not enter My rest (Hebrews 3:7-11).

This “generation” grieved the heart of God. Because of it, they did not enter into His rest. That’s the theme of the discourse with the church at Pergamos. It was a church that needed to enter into the rest of God.

There is additional evidence to corroborate that judgment was coming upon Israel in that generation in particular. As He grieved and lamented over Jerusalem, Jesus said:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! (Matthew 23:37)

The Father was speaking through Jesus in that great prophetic Olivet discourse concerning the pending judgment that was to come to the people of God at Jerusalem. If they would not receive the New Covenant of mercy being offered under the wings of the mercy seat, then they would receive the plagues, wrath, and judgment of Revelation as the fulfillment of what Deuteronomy promised those who would not apply the blood of this spotless Lamb. The judgments of this book were poured out on apostate Israel, who rejected the profound rest that was made available at the cross.

A careful study of the Exodus plagues comparing them to the Revelation plagues will show striking resemblances. Their house is about to be left desolate. “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it” (Heb. 4:1).

To those of us who have embraced the Lamb and applied His blood, the plagues of Revelation are but a picture of what we have been redeemed from. We are freed from the curse! No wonder, later in Revelation, the living creature invites us to “Come and see.” When he looked he saw a Lamb as if it had been slain opening the seals of a book. It is the revelation of this Lamb that opens the book and causes the spontaneous praise, “You have redeemed us!” to erupt.

For apostate Israel, an imminent judgment was looming, finally falling in A.D. 70. That is why it says in many places that these are the *last* plagues and the wrath of God is filled up in them. For believers, Revelation is a disclosure of the person and work of Christ, what He suffered and redeemed us from. My prayer is that every person who reads this will not only hear the words “come and see,” but they will respond as John does in the latter part of this book by saying “and I saw”!

Placing the Signs

Jesus gave several signs of His coming in judgment to them. These included false messiahs, wars, natural disasters, persecution, apostasy, worldwide evangelism, and more. Many have taken those signs and made them to be indicators regarding a future coming of the Lord when in actuality they were the signs given concerning this judgment of that great city.

A strange-but-true example of this tactic is used by many traveling evangelists, making pleas for money to build whatever they perceive must be built to bring Jesus back to earth. They tell us that the gospel of the Kingdom must be preached in “all the world” for a witness. But if you look in Colossians 1:5-6, you will see that Paul saw this as a completed task in his own day! He declared:

For the hope which is laid up for you in Heaven, whereof ye heard before in the Word of the truth of the gospel; which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth (Colossians 1:5-6).

Paul declared that the gospel has been preached unto every creature under Heaven. Paul’s letter to the Romans also bears this out, saying, “*First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world*” and “*But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world*” (Rom. 1:8; 10:18).

All of the signs holding back the coming of the Lord as spoken in Matthew 24 have already been fulfilled. The signs aren’t necessarily unique; on any given day, you can pick up a current newspaper and find many of the things Jesus spoke of as signs occurring in our world too. However, the reference in Matthew 24:34 indicates Jesus’ intended audience and timetable: “...*this generation*

shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.” All of those things came to pass in that generation.

Jesus gave that prophecy in approximately A.D. 30, just before He was to be crucified. The Letter to the Hebrews was written around A.D. 67. Remember, 40 years speaks of a generation—this is 37 years into the fulfilment of Jesus’ prophecy to that generation. They saw the crucifixion of Jesus. They witnessed the event that brought the end of the administration of the Law and established the New Covenant in the earth. They saw the dawn of the day that birthed the Kingdom of God. Jesus said to His disciples, “I will not drink wine again until I drink it new with you in the kingdom of My Father” (see Luke 22:18).

What wine was He referring to here? Was it temporal wine, or was it the wine of the Spirit, a new wine never before tasted?

Divine Drink

In Acts 2 we see God pop the cork on an ageless vintage that had never been drunk before, toasting the coming of the King and the coming of the Kingdom. They were not drunk as some supposed, but were filled to overflowing with the Holy Spirit. Perhaps the throne with a rainbow around it, in the fourth chapter of Revelation, is a picture of this New Covenant and its presently reigning King. *“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost”* (Rom. 14:17).

There is a greater fulfilment of the Kingdom of God than we see portrayed in the Book of Acts. That was just the beginning of an available reality, which we have not yet seen manifested in its fullest potential because we have been looking ahead for something that has already come. We have not embraced or walked in our fullness because we have not known or understood the dimensions or power of the life of God that has been readily available to the human family for 2,000 years.

One of the great shocks coming for the Church will be felt as we fully awaken to the reality of what has been available to us all these years, eternal vitality we have not accessed. We’ve lived like strangers in the Land of Promise. The dismay of God’s people will be great as we

realize that we could have walked in much more divine dimension and Kingdom power and we see what God has already done in the finished work. If we will begin to press into it today, the manifestation of all these things will come on a worldwide level and this knowledge will spread as Jesus said it would: *“The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened”* (Matt. 13:33).

A great expansion of the Kingdom of God is underway, and as we see its present reality and its superiority to every other kingdom, it will break in pieces

and subdue every other kingdom that's ruling in our planet. Our world does not have to get worse and worse. I believe it can get better and better. The culture we live in today is based on what we preach and what we believe. Every culture in the world is a result of its theology. If a culture believes in poverty, you're going to see a culture of poverty. If a culture believes in inhumane treatment of humanity, you're going to see a cruel and inhumane government. If a government believes in the presence of God's Kingdom in our midst, you're going to see that manifested through its people.

Of course, greater degrees of the Kingdom of God are coming. Yet we can see this unfolding take place with great leaps and bounds by receiving a change in the way we think. According to the revelation of Jesus Christ, there's no more waiting for some glad morning in the sweet by and by. If we will arise today and begin to employ Kingdom principles in our lives and communities, we will get Kingdom results.

Let's look again at Matthew 24:29: *"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken."* Have you thought on this passage and perhaps questioned how is it that when you got up this morning and looked out your window, it was apparent that the sun had not been darkened over 1,900 years ago, because what you're seeing is clearly a bright sunny day? Or perhaps you saw the moon last night shining brightly in the evening sky, along with millions of stars. Was Jesus really talking about the temporal sun, moon, and stars?

May I challenge you? We must learn to compare spiritual things with spiritual things. When you're reading and studying biblical prophecy, you need to think like God thinks, since the prophetic word is coming from His mouth.

To understand the words of this particular prophecy, it is necessary to look back at the dream Joseph had, which is recorded in Genesis 37. In that dream, he saw the sun, the moon, and the stars bow down to him. Joseph's father asked: *"Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?"* (Gen. 37:10).

The people to whom Jesus was speaking understood the prophetic symbolism of those entities. They understood that they were representations of temporal Israel. Peter, in dealing with the "last days," said, *"This is that which was spoken by the Prophet Joel"* (Ac 2:16,17). Peter also uses similar terminology to Jesus' in Matthew 24. He says:

"And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable day of the Lord come" (Acts 2:19-20).

He was stating prophetically that the things that Jesus had said were beginning to come to pass. It's about to be "lights out" for temporal Israel. The powers that ruled the heavens—the sun, moon, and stars that God used to light the earth—were about to be shaken. An old Heaven and an old earth were preparing to pass off the scene and a new Heaven and a new earth were coming to the forefront. An old Jerusalem, the physical city, was passing off the scene, and a New Jerusalem, the true "Bride of Christ" was making entrance on the grand stage of God's purpose here in the earth. An old temple was being readied for destruction and a spiritual house, built of lively stones, was being raised up. The old spiritual economy was being put away so that the New Covenant might take its place. The old one was going to fade like the closing of a great scroll, and the new one was to be opened like that of a little book:

And I beheld when He had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places (Revelation 6:12-14).

I believe there are several spiritual symbols addressed in this passage. First of all, the fig tree. It is a type of temporal Israel. Jesus cursed the fig tree after He found no fruit upon its branches and discovered that it is unable to produce fruit.

He was not only speaking of temporal Israel, but the inability of the Old Covenant to produce the fruit of righteousness. Under the Mosaic system the final pronouncement was made that there was "none righteous, no, not one." Even Moses, the mediator of that covenant, did not enter God's rest through the works of the Law.

The Wind of Pentecost

The fig tree shaken by the mighty wind was Israel beneath the blowing wind of the Spirit at Pentecost. *"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting (Acts 2:2).*

Some years ago I preached a message entitled "Gone with the Wind." The wind that blew at Pentecost brought the passing of the Old Covenant and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, inaugurating the New Covenant. It blew away an Old Covenant, an old heaven, and an old earth. It shook that fig tree until the judgment that had been prophesied came to pass. In Luke 13, Jesus had given it just over three years to be fertilized and pruned to produce fruit. This represented the three and a half years of Jesus' ministry. The owner of the vineyard gave it three years, after which it was destined to be cut down and tried by fire. The axe was about to be laid to the root. That economy had never

produced fruit, nor could it; it had to be removed and replaced.

Jesus Is Reigning Now!

Revelation chapter 4 is not a view of Heaven “one glad morning,” but a picture of the Kingdom of God and the New Covenant. It was birthed over 2,000 years ago and has been available since that time to God’s people. There is a throne here. There is also One seated on this throne.

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 (Matthew 24:30).

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed (Daniel 7:13-14).

This passage from Daniel brings clarity to its companion passage in Matthew. The coming of the Son of Man is not just a coming to earth. It is a coming to the Ancient of Days.

Jesus appeared before God the Father, the Ancient of Days, and received His coronation and declaration to be King and Lord. There was given to Him dominion, glory, and a kingdom that all people, nations, and languages should love and serve Him.

I don’t believe Jesus is *going* to be King. I believe Jesus is King *right now*! He’s not going to be the Lord at some future date; He’s already been made Lord by the Father. God declared Him to be Lord and King of Heaven and earth by resurrecting Him from the dead. This occurred some two millennia ago, and He is presently reigning.

You may say, “But brother, I thought Matthew 24 was a passage regarding His second coming.” May I remind you once more that throughout Scripture, there are multiple “comings” of the Lord. You see Him appearing before the Ancient of Days in Daniel, coming on clouds. He’s seen appearing to Mary at the tomb. He appears to His disciples in the Upper Room, and He’s seen by over 500 brethren in another place before His ascension. He appears to Saul, who became the apostle Paul after being knocked to the ground and seeing the Light. There are many “appearances” of the Lord, but because we’ve been taught to conclusively and restrictively think of a “second” coming of the Lord, we are unobservant and miss many of His comings. He has come in many ways and in many fashions, and will continue to do so.

Jesus appears in His saints. Of course there is a future appearing and coming of the Lord and a resurrection of the dead, when our temporal bodies will be

changed into the fashion of His glorious body. But we must not limit His appearing to some future event. We must understand that He's alive and well on planet Earth, reigning in His majesty and Lordship. Thank God if you have come into agreement with the dictate of God the Father that Jesus Christ is Lord.

I truly believe that this is the struggle of every one of the seven churches we are looking at in the Book of Revelation. They are each being encouraged to overcome something that is holding them back from the Most Holy Place, from the light being shed abroad by the New Covenant and the throne room of the Kingdom.

Ephesus was having a struggle with works and labor. The second church, Smyrna, was having difficulty seeing that their suffering was completed in Christ. This third church, Pergamos, was struggling with entering into the finished work of Christ.

Each of these churches is being required to undergo repentance—the Greek word *metanoia*, meaning to change the mind—changing their minds in order to transition from an “Old Covenant” mentality into a “New Covenant” way of thinking and living. They were being drawn out of second-dimension thinking into third-dimension thinking, out of a candlestick order into the Most Holy Place.

A New Covenant Generation

I hope you can connect with some of these illustrations and understand what God is doing. In Revelation 4, we see a rainbow around the throne. This is a picture of the New Covenant. The central character in this Covenant is a slain Lamb. The little book that's in the right hand of Him who sits on the throne is the opening of *“the mystery of God, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory”* (1 Col. 1:27b). The message of Revelation 4 is “Come and See.” At the close of Revelation, John says, “And I saw..”

Each of the seals is a progressive revelation of the New Covenant as God has folded together the old scroll and is opening the book of a New Covenant, which reveals a victorious people and a reigning King. Jesus says, *“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”* (Matt. 24:31).

Jesus doesn't say He takes them to Heaven, but rather He gathers them from one end of Heaven to the other. Here the word “gather” is the Greek word *synagogue*. Another way of saying this is, “He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet and they shall synagogue together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

God has moved out of a natural temple and has moved into a “synagogue”

made of human beings. He has made a people who are His, a habitation. This is significant to this generation. The generation Jesus addressed knew only about a physical, natural Temple and various synagogues. They did not grasp the concept of God living within them. Their thinking was the old Heaven and old earth that was passing away.

The 40-year generation that Jesus addressed saw the true Lamb of God taken out from among the sheep and the goats, and heard it identified as the spotless Lamb even by Pilate, who declared that there was no fault in Him.

Let's compare this generation to the "Exodus Generation," the one delivered from slavery in Egypt. This earlier generation was delivered by lambs' blood, which was a type and shadow of the true Lamb's saving blood. The second generation was delivered, not from the physical Egypt, but from the bondage of the Law of Sinai, and from the bondage of sin and death. Paul writes in one of his earliest letters:

Listen to me you friends who think you have to obey the Jewish laws to be saved. Why don't you find out what those laws really mean? It is written that Abraham had two sons, one from his

slave wife, one from his freeborn wife. There was nothing unusual about the birth of the slave wife's baby, but the baby of the freeborn wife was born only after God had especially promised he would come. Now this true story is an illustration of God's two ways of helping people. One way is by giving them His laws to obey. He did this on Mount Sinai when He gave the ten commandments to Moses. Mount Sinai, by the way, is called Mount Hagar by the Arabs and in my illustration Abraham's slave wife, Hagar, represents Jerusalem the mother city of the Jews, the center of that system of trying to please God by trying to obey the commandments and the Jews who tried to follow that system are her slave children, but our mother city is the heavenly Jerusalem and she is not a slave to Jewish laws (Galatians 4:21-26 TLB).

To us who are of the "Jesus" generation, it is very clear that the bondage we've been delivered from is the Law. We've been redeemed from its curse; we've been called out and delivered from that system by the blood of a spotless Lamb.

That first 40-year generation, led by Moses, was delivered at the Red Sea by the waters of baptism. There they were baptized into Moses, the mediator of that covenant, and they were delivered this time by water: "*And [they] were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea*" (1 Cor. 10:2).

The generation that Jesus was speaking to was given 40 years to come out of the old Sinai covenant, out of a bondage mentality and into a New Covenant. They had 40 years to prepare for the destruction and removal of the Temple with its sacrificial system that had been in place for thousands of years. They

were also delivered by water: water baptism. The water that delivers us is the same water that destroys our enemy forever.

The first 40-year generation saw the rock that was smitten by Moses as they journeyed through the wilderness. The second 40-year generation viewed the true Rock, Christ Himself, who was smitten for our sins and our iniquities. He was the true Rock that followed the first generation through the wilderness. *“And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ”* (1 Cor. 10:4).

The first 40-year generation fed on the manna that fell from Heaven. The second 40-year generation heard Jesus say that He was the true bread that came down from Heaven. He was the reality of the type that the first 40-year generation had eaten.

The first 40-year generation saw a serpent on the pole when they were cursed for their complaining and resistance. At Moses’ command, a serpent was raised on a pole for them to look upon and receive their healing. In the New Covenant, to the second 40-year generation, Jesus revealed that He would be lifted up, just as that serpent was lifted in the wilderness. He said that in being lifted up, He would draw everyone unto Himself. He was the serpent on a pole. He spoiled principalities and powers and made an open show of them, in direct parallel to Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness (see John 3:14).

The first 40-year generation watched the ark of the covenant go into the Jordan River on the shoulders of the priesthood as they crossed over that treacherous body of water into the Promised Land. The second 40-year generation witnessed the true ark of God, as John the Baptist drew Him into the Jordan once more and declared Him the *“Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world”* (John 1:29). He was showing that this man, Jesus Christ, was the only way into the Promised Land. The land of promise is not a piece of real estate, but it is the person of Jesus Christ. All the promises God made to the fathers were fulfilled in Christ.

Everything that the first 40-year generation saw in type and shadow, this second 40-year generation, to whom Jesus spoke, would see in reality.

Hebrews was penned toward the end of this 40-year time frame. The covenantal transition was nearly complete. The author pleads with his countrymen, assuring them that they are in the very last days of the Old Covenant. The entirety of Hebrews’ legal-style argument is centered in Jesus Christ.

The Struggle Is Reconciled

In Hebrews chapter 1, the writer declares that Jesus is superior to angels. In chapter 2, he shows Him to be superior to Moses. In chapter 3, he says Jesus is

superior to Joshua and that there is a rest that's better than that which Joshua provided. There is now a heavenly Joshua on the scene, and His rest is available to the people of God.

In this context, the author writes concerning the rest that some must enter, embracing the Word of God that is quick and powerful. It is here that there are direct parallels to how God is dealing with the church at Pergamos. They are receiving the revelation proceeding out of His mouth as they come into a New Covenant mentality and out of the confusion of "mixed-marriage." They will no longer walk in the duality of two covenants. They will no longer have to struggle with the duality of two natures, that of Adam and Christ. No more double-mindedness and instability; they will move into the reality of what God has promised: the white stone and the new name that no one knows except the one who receives it.

In the Old Testament the white stone was one of two stones of judgment in the breastplate of the high priest. They were called urim and Thummim; their names mean "light" and "perfection." If you were brought before the priest for judgment by urim or Thummim, they would draw stones. If they pulled out the black stone you were condemned as guilty. But if you received the white stone you were acquitted. (If you would like a more in-depth look at the white stone, I recommend reading David Chilton's *Days of Vengeance* and the notes in *Dake's Annotated Bible*.)

The New Covenant High Priest Jesus Christ and those who minister from the order of Melchizedek are bringing forth the white stone, the light of perfection made available by the sacrifice of Christ. "*For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified*" (Heb. 10:14).

By the new birth, which we have received through Christ Jesus, we have been given a new name, a new nature, and we've been declared not guilty. It is out of that new name that we walk and demonstrate what has been done within us.

We not only get a new name and new nature, but the privilege of eating the hidden manna. A commemorative portion of manna was kept in a golden pot inside the ark of the covenant, residing in the Most Holy Place.

For us, this ark is Christ. Inside of the ark of the covenant were the unbroken tablets of the Law. Jesus completely and totally fulfilled that Law and then took those things and nailed them to His cross to redeem us from serving out of the oldness of the letter and freeing us to serve out of the newness of the Spirit.

When we feed on Him, the true hidden manna, we will be nourished and stand firmly as sons of God, without rebuke, before a decaying world system.

His Bride Sanctified

God instructs the church at Pergamos to eat the hidden manna. They had some in their midst who held to a certain doctrine instructing them to eat things sacrificed to idols. God is telling them they have to change their spiritual diet; they are either going to eat the words of the sword proceeding from His mouth or from the doctrine of Balaam. Balaam's biggest failure was that he was a prophet for hire. He had been hired to prophesy a curse upon a people who were not under a curse. The tragedy of our day is that there are still voices among God's people who are not sounding the true and powerful word flowing out of rest. There are many words oozing from pulpits all over the land that are bringing people under a curse who are not under a curse. Anytime we preach the Law, we set people up for failure. (See Galatians 3:10.)

Every time we preach the Law, we put people under an old curse. We set the table with idol's food and put a stumbling block underfoot. Balaam taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to be sexually permissive. It was his intention to bring them into actions that would cause God to curse them.

Like Pergamos, we have preached a double-minded message—in union with Christ and Adam concurrently. But the reality is, we've been espoused to one husband. In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul admonishes them:

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 (Ephesians 5:25-27).

Jesus isn't *going* to sanctify His Bride—He already has! He's not going to marry us; we are Husband and Wife. He's not going to get the Church ready sometime off in the future; He did this at Calvary. As the spear of a Roman soldier opened the side of the second Adam, blood and water released a cleansing flow over His Bride.

If the blood and water from Jesus' side couldn't do it, I doubt our preaching will. Washing with the water of the Word brings us into understanding of what Jesus has already done. Cleansed in knowledge and reality, we can experience this purity and draw near to Him in a fruitful fellowship.

Notice as He hangs on the cross, Jesus sees His mother beneath Him. He calls her "Woman." He does not call her "Mama" or some other term of endearment. In "Woman," Jesus employs a prophetic signifier—is it possible He is trying to give her strength by reminding her of the ancient declaration that the seed of a *woman* will bruise the head of the serpent? It is as if Jesus is saying, "This seed is before you; the fulfillment is right here." He says to John, "Behold

your mother!” He leans back and cries, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” Is it possible that Jesus Himself is following the injunction to *“leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife”* (Mark 10:7)? A deep sleep fell on the first Adam; when he awoke, he had a bride. Jesus fell asleep in death and three days later awoke to a Bride. I don’t think it is an accident that the first one to the tomb was a woman. This presents a glorious “wedding album” view of our union with Christ through His death, burial, and resurrection.

We have erroneously preached that Jesus is “coming back for a Church without spot or wrinkle.” That is not what the Word says. It actually says that by the very work of His sanctifying and cleansing word, He will present a Church full of glory. His Word exerts its power over the Church to the point where He presents her to Himself—glorious. *“He gave Himself for her that He might present her to Himself holy and without blemish”* (see Eph. 5:25-27).

Through giving Himself in death, Jesus has purged the Church, and we are holy. It is true that we are not walking in the reality of the fullness. But we must declare to each other what is already true of us, so that the truth will make us free and we will continue to walk out of the purity that has already been provided by Jesus Christ.

If we can be liberated from the “one of these days” mentality, we’ll realize that we are already married to Christ and begin to act like a wife, rather than one who is uncommitted.

When I married, I gave my wife my name. When she took my name, she received the privilege and the power to write checks and make withdrawals from my banking account because she bore my name. It is the same with the Bride of Christ. If we could understand that we are now one with Him, we could make withdrawals from spiritual riches and operate in His name, and we would see much greater miracles and the fulfillment of many things we’ve desired to see transpire.

If we are not married to Him, if we are not now in union with Him, then what we have produced is not legitimate; instead of producing spiritual sons and daughters, we have produced bastard children! If you are going to birth divine heirs, you must have a vital union and marriage with Him. If I am not married to Christ now, I have no right to intimacy.

The author of Hebrews declared that we have arrived to Mount Zion and the city of the living God, to the innumerable company of angels and to the blood of sprinkling. He tells us over and over that we’re here, now (see Heb. 12:22-23). There’s so much that God would speak to us if we will just transcend the “one of these days” mentality and realize our present inheritance. We ought to be able to experience, enjoy, and walk in our full identities.

A Disarmed Enemy

There's one other thing that I want you to see concerning this church in Pergamos:

I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where satans seat is: and thou holdest fast My name, and hast not denied My faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where satan dwelleth (Revelation 2:13).

Historically, there was a host of religious activity in Pergamos. There was an altar to “Zeus the Savior.” Medicine and science were worshiped there, its sacred symbol a serpent. People from across the Roman Empire came to seek healing in this pagan temple; the shrine area was inhabited by thousands of harmless snakes. Pergamos was also the center of emperor worship. Noted for its great wealth and culture, Pergamos boasted an immense library of 200,000 volumes.

The word “Nicolaitan,” which I addressed in the Chapter on Ephesus, comes from a word that is the linguistic equivalent of “Balaam.” Both are related to the mixture of law and grace prevalent in the early Church. The Nicolaitan doctrine was originated by Nicolas, who was once a deacon. He brought apostasy to the church by preaching a mixture of law and grace. (*Days of Vengeance* by David Chilton shines light on this as well.) Satan is identified as being connected to the synagogue all through these churches. The foremost enemy of the early Church was the powerful Judaism of the day. This religious establishment was constantly bringing the early believers before magistrates and religious leaders, persecuting and martyring them because of their stand for Christ. If Christians were perceived as enemies in a city, they were killed. This is evident throughout Paul's life, as he was imprisoned and accused of being against the Mosaic system.

The power of satan and seat of satan can be seen vividly in Colossians 2:15 (NIV):

And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

The Amplified Bible renders the first part of this verse, “[God] disarmed the principalities and powers..” If you are going to successfully affect the power of the enemy, his authority, his seat, and his throne, you are going to have to know his weapons.

I have shared in many places and heard people say that they were not ignorant of satan's devices, but if you poll them as to what satan's weapons are, I can guarantee you will get 100 different answers. If, however, we see that God has disarmed satan, it would behoove us to understand what he was armed with. God disarmed these principalities and powers so that we might discover what

weapons cache they held against us. The next verse in this same passage reads:

Having cancelled and blotted out and wiped away the handwriting of the note (bond) with its legal decrees and demands which was in force and stood against us (hostile to us). This [note with its regulations, decrees, and demands] He set aside and cleared completely out of our way by nailing it to [His] cross (Colossians 2:14 AMP).

The weapon the enemy used was the handwriting of ordinance against us. It is the Law, the handwriting upon the top of Mount Sinai, where the finger of God literally wrote on stone tablets like a doctor writing a prescription.

Well, this medicine has long since reached its expiration date! In the New Testament, God is not writing on tablets of stone, but on the warm medium of our hearts. Under the Old Covenant it was commands of performance; under the New Covenant, we find validation and motivation in Christ's loving sacrifice. Under the Old Covenant, the whole world stands guilty. But God included all under sin that He might have mercy on all.

In the New Covenant, He gives us a white stone, a new name, and an acquittal. He's given all these things because He took all of our hostility and alienation and nailed it to the cross with Him. He was not just crucified for me, but as me. He was made to be sin so that I could be made the righteousness of God.

The Weapon of the Tongue

The only power the enemy has is the power of accusation and condemnation. He comes to condemn, and, with words of attack, he attempts to destroy your faith. He tries to persuade you to back down from your profession of faith and to make you a doubter and not a believer. He is the accuser of the brethren.

A very popular Scripture being employed these days becomes even more powerful in light of what I'm sharing with you. Isaiah says:

"No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall utterly condemn. [for your] righteousness is from Me" says the Lord (Isaiah 54:17 NKJV).

The weapon that's formed against you is the weapon of a tongue of judgment and condemnation. It is the law used by the accuser of the brethren. Many times when you are in a place where God desires to use you as an instrument of His hand, the first thing the enemy does is to say, "Well, you know you're not good enough. If you were just a little holier."

I think the greatest hindrance to our seeing miracles and healing are the words of judgment that the enemy brings. Sometimes he'll say, "If you didn't have sin in your life you wouldn't have this disease," or "You know, this could be God punishing you with this sickness."

When Jesus healed, He removed sin-consciousness from the mind of the one He was healing. Like the man He healed who was sick with palsy, He said, *"Thy sins be forgiven thee"* (Matt. 9:2).

The moment Jesus removed the awareness of sin, He was setting them up for a miracle. I believe that's why Jesus responded to the questioners of a man's blindness that it was not a matter of the man's sin nor his parents', but that it all related to the glory of God.

Scripture declares that if there are any sick among you that it is proper for them to call for the elders of the church that they might anoint them with oil and pray the prayer of faith. This passage also addresses the sin issue. It says that if this person has committed any sin it would be forgiven them. This is important because the consciousness of sin in the mind blocks and hinders people from receiving a miracle. The moment you get rid of the consciousness of that sin, you have released them to receive a miracle.

In Christ, We Are the Righteousness of God

One of the very first pieces of the whole armor of God that needs to be put on is the breastplate of righteousness. With that implement of warfare, you are able to quench the fiery dart of the enemy. This dart is the accusation that comes by his use of an antiquated Law. He is trying to charge and prosecute you under a system that has passed away. He is not abreast of the new legislation that is in place with the inauguration of the New Covenant.

Lest you think that I am trying to promote sin or a careless lifestyle, please let me say that if you truly understand your new identity in Christ, you will act out of that knowledge. Sin will not be a lifestyle for those who know who they belong to and who they are. *"The just shall live by faith"* (Rom. 1:17). The more you know who you are in Christ, the more your life will reverberate this reality.

Sin-consciousness is not just the bad feeling that you have after wrongdoing. *A sin-consciousness is who you perceive yourself to be.* I prefer to build up people in faith rather than deteriorating their confidence by dwelling on whom they are not. When they begin to believe who God has said they are, they truly become believers. *They will then act out of the faith of who they believe themselves to be because of their birth in Jesus Christ.* I sometimes wonder about those in ministry who habitually accuse the people of God. They are reinforcing the power of the enemy and are the "Balaams" who stand in the midst of God's congregation and put His people under a curse. God's people are not under a curse, but are under a banner of blessing.

Some have terrorist preachers come into their midst, allowing them to browbeat the people by belittling. And they have the nerve to call this "revival"! After three or four nights of this kind of meeting, most of the people within

earshot will doubt they're even saved! Scripture admonishes us in Ephesians 4:29, *"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."*

I'd much rather minister a word that declares the people of God to be the righteousness of God until they are built up in their faith. In the process, they will begin and continue to live out of this continuously renewed understanding. They will serve because they have a newness of life. But words that erode faith and confidence make unbelievers out of the hearer. Whatever is *"not of faith is sin"* (Rom. 14:23).

In our old way of thinking and preaching, after one of those "terrorist meetings," everyone was so beaten down that they felt they had to get saved all over again. This looked like a successful revival because so many "came to the Lord." I see this happen over and over again, and I actually began to discover that this kind of habitual mishandling of God's workmanship is actually setting up God's house for spiritual failure. Rather than securing God's people in their faith and enabling them to walk out of it, the measure of faith that had come with their salvation came under attack because they couldn't keep the rules that these men were setting before them. Many are now like Humpty Dumpty because of their perceived failings. After his great fall, all the king's horses and all the king's men couldn't put Humpty Dumpty back together again. I believe multitudes have fallen prey because of this kind of corrupt communication.

I choose to reject the error of Balaam. It is my desire to be a priest who comes with a white stone. In the Book of Ezra, there were priests who stood up with urim and Thummim and declared the genealogy of the people and told them that they could, in fact, eat the things from the Most Holy Place.

These sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but they were not found: therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood. And the Tirshatha said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy things, till there stood up a priest with Urim and with Thummim (Ezra 2:62-63).

I want to encourage you today and tell you that you can eat the hidden manna. You can feed on the finished work of the cross. I don't want to be an Old Testament prophet who speaks from a judgment seat. I want to speak from the mercy seat. I want to speak to your potential and not your problem—not calling your sin to remembrance but calling forth your righteousness. Once faith comes, you become obedient to the faith, and your conviction is not of sin, but of righteousness.

And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged (John 16:8-11)

NKJV).

Pergamos, you are no longer in the duality of marriage to Adam and Christ. You have been acquitted. A white Stone with a new name and nature are yours. You have taken His name, no longer to be cursed by the Balaams of our day. When Balaam saw Israel in their tents he could not curse what God had blessed. When Israel was a camp at *rest* they were camped in the shape of the cross. The cross has removed the curse. If God has blessed, who can reverse His blessing?

Chapter 9

Thyatira

AND *unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and His feet are like fine brass (Revelation 2:18).*

The word *Thyatira* literally means “the incense of affliction.” The very first thing we see in this passage is that Christ reveals Himself to this church as the aroma of one who has already been afflicted. Paul writes, “*And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour*” (Eph. 5:2). The fragrance of Christ’s offering must ascend into our nostrils. The revelation it brings to the believer is imperative, as it will cause us to receive and understand that His suffering was sufficient for us.

Secondly, Jesus reveals to this church that He has “eyes...like a flame of fire.” The very same description of His eyes are found in later in Revelation:

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 with 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 (Revelation 19:12-14).

The imagery portrayed here reveals that the one whose “eyes are like a flame of fire” is the same one whose “vesture is dipped in blood.” He is the one who has redeemed you, washed you with His blood, and caused you to walk in “fine linen, white and clean.” The death of Christ has exacted this privilege for you.

John brings our attention to His feet, which are like “fine brass as if they were burned in a furnace.” This particular image is identical to the one we examined in Revelation 1. It is noteworthy to recall once more that before Jesus commands any of these churches to repent, He first gives them a revelation of Himself that will help them make the changes He desires of them. *Outside of the revelation of Christ, no real change can come to us.*

I pray that the eyes of our understanding will be enlightened and that we might be able to “behold Him,” grasping a greater and fuller revelation of Christ. This is the greatest need of the Church in this hour.

Not Law, But Love

As I look at this imagery, it takes my mind back to the three dimensions of the Tabernacle of Moses and the metals contained there. In the Outer Court

there was brass, in the Holy Place there was gold, and in the Most Holy Place there was even more gold. These three distinct dimensions reveal Christ. If Christ were to recline over this Tabernacle, you would find that His head of fine gold would rest in the Holy of Holies, and His feet like fine brass would lay in the Outer Court. It is worth noting that the furniture of the Tabernacle was arranged in the shape of a cross.

Why did Jesus use brass when speaking of His feet? Brass symbolizes judgment. Jesus walked through the furnace of affliction and the fires of divine judgment to secure our liberation and redemption.

The outer Court had a brazen altar and a brazen laver. The brazen altar was where the sacrifice was offered up to the Lord and where God's judgment was meted out. Christ is revealing Himself to the church in Thyatira as the one who met all the judgment the Law required. He is the one who stands before them and shows them His feet like fine brass, which have been refined by the fire of the furnace.

This brazen altar is an Old Testament picture showing what happened at the "walk of blood," the place where blood was shed and sacrifice made for sin, for you and as you. The brazen laver is the next station, and it speaks to us of water baptism. Baptism is your identification with Jesus' death. As you are submerged in the waters of baptism you are announcing to Heaven and earth, "I was crucified with Christ and I'm now being buried with Him in baptism so that I might be raised into the newness of life." This understanding brings us to the verse in Revelation 2:19, which says, "*I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.*"

In some scriptures "works" are referring to strain under self-effort and carry a negative connotation. But in this verse God is acknowledging some good things about this church and their works and loving service. I'm not against works, but I am against the concept that teaches that works produce salvation and faith. It is exactly the opposite.

When you truly embrace Christ and His sacrifice in trust, you will understand that He has already walked through judgment to satisfy the penalty for humanity's sin. His feet have been through the furnace and He has become a sweet-smelling savor offered to God like incense. When this precious fragrance hits your nostrils and your spiritual senses are awakened by the scent of this sacrifice, you will begin to walk by faith and work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. You will begin to operate from a different dimension, one of charity and love. The greatest motivator, according to the New Testament, is not one of fear, nor one of condemnation, but rather, one of faith that works by love. Scripture tells us that "*the love of Christ constraineth us*" (2 Cor. 5:14).

The New Testament teaches us that the greatest influence is not the Law, but Love. When we truly fall in love with the Lover of our soul, we will act rightly under love's compulsion. Out of a sincere love for God, we will move in a walk that flows out of charity. This kind of relationship with Him causes works to follow the community of saints. I don't think God would have us just sit back and abstain from any type of works, but if we can receive this divine principle, it will produce works that flow out of faith, hope, and love.

From Faith to Faith

Paul writes in Romans 1:17 that *"the just shall live by faith."* If you truly believe you've been made righteous and that you are the righteousness of God in the earth, you will do righteous things. You will walk by faith and not by sight. The sad thing is that much of what is being taught in the Church today has not made believers of us, but unbelievers. Sin-consciousness has run rampant. Because we operate out of who we believe we are, the works that have followed us have not been of faith or love.

While growing up as a classical Pentecostal, I sat under many preachers who were more intent on "naming our sin" than they were in ministering edifying grace. As a young man in those "revivals," many of the things I was told were sin could not be found in the Scripture. I remember so vividly in those meetings how I started out sure of my salvation and full of faith in Christ, but by their end, I doubted I was even saved. Their words made an unbeliever out of me. They preached so much about what I was not that it disqualified any faith I had working in my heart towards the grace of Christ. They never had a real vision of this realm where "His feet are like fine brass" and all they knew to minister was condemnation. They were constantly trying to modify the old behavior rather than celebrate the new. As a result, Galatians 3:23 was fulfilled in my life: *"But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed."*

As they preached to me the do's and don'ts (and actually it was mostly don'ts), they dragged me back under Law and shut up my faith. This kind of "ministry" (so-called) puts a veil over our faces so that we cannot see reality. Not only has the Law been abolished, but also the humanity to which it referred. Christ was God's method for taking care of who I used to be in Adam. Remember, the Greek word for "revelation" means to unveil or uncover. Revelation is about removing the veil of the Law that has kept us from seeing Christ's dazzling glory.

When the law is preached it shuts up faith:

But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ (2 Corinthians 3:14).

When the authentic gospel is preached, it reveals the righteousness of God from faith to faith. Then you begin to understand that you have been made the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus, not based on your performance, but on Jesus' holy sacrifice. Old Testament righteousness was based on works and your ability to perform and keep the commandments of God. New Testament righteousness is based on the sacrifice of Christ and is called a "gift."

I believe that is the savor of incense that the Lord wanted the church at Thyatira to understand and embrace. Remember, God has already smelled the incense and it was sweet to His nostrils. As this revelation is breathed in, works are breathed out. James 2:18 says, "*Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.*"

I am convinced there is a faith that works through love, and when you truly believe in what Jesus has accomplished, works will flow from the heart as the fruit of our union with Christ. Think about what would happen if we would take a different approach in our meetings and begin to address one another as "saints" instead of "sinners." Calling each other "beloved in Christ" and "holy brother, partaker of the divine nature." This sets the bar higher than disqualifying folks by insisting on "naming sin" and constantly bringing their mark-missing before their faces. People would walk out of those meetings with a new sense of a God-given confidence and would truly "walk by faith and not by sight."

If you were to ask church folk what they believe, most of them could tell you what they *don't* believe in. This is because many services are geared toward what we deny and condemn. If you don't believe in anything, you are probably an unbeliever. I think if you leave a service with a bunch of stuff to do you probably didn't hear the gospel. If you leave with something to believe and affirm, you probably heard good news. If you believe that you are the righteousness of God, this is what you will act on. Revelation 2:20-21 says:

Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

Following the revelation of Himself to this church at Thyatira, He begins to address their problem. He tells them that He has something against them and how this woman, by the name of Jezebel, has seduced God's servants to commit fornication and to eat things offered unto idols. He also wants people to see and repent of fornication. But, before we get bogged down into thinking of some act of physical fornication, let's examine this further.

Sanctified by the Offering of Jesus

First, let's look at the fact that this church is being ruled by a woman named Jezebel. Now I am not against women in ministry. I believe God calls and uses women in ministry; my own mother is one of the pastors I sit under in my local church. The fact that Jezebel is a woman is not the problem. The problem in Thyatira is what Jezebel is doing and how her influence is causing them to do those things that displease the Lord. I'm certain that God would have been just as displeased if Jezebel had been a man. Let's look at this from a spiritual standpoint.

We are triune in our make-up; we are three-part beings. We are a spirit, we have a soul, and we live in a body. We are created in the likeness and image of God. God deals with all three dimensions. The salvation Jesus Christ purchased for us is meant to be realized in every part of our being: our spirit, our soul, and our body. Paul writes:

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 (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

The work of God has brought us to the place where we behold the feet of brass and the finished work of Christ, causing us to understand that the first thing that happens to us is that our spirit receives salvation. The soul is not the first element to taste the saving power of Jesus Christ. We are first born in our spirit. our spirit is made alive, regenerated; resurrection life enters in. Following this, there must be an outworking of this life in our soul. Hebrews 12:23 tells us that we have come to *"God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect"* (emphasis added).

That is a powerful statement! The spirits of just men made perfect! Jesus says, *"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect"* (Matt. 5:48). We could probably have a great debate over the nature of this perfection, but Jesus admonishes us to *be perfect*. As I have meditated upon this Scripture, the Lord spoke to me through another passage, changing my thinking about perfection. I began to understand that my perfection is not based on my ability to perform; it flows from God's sacrifice, just like my righteousness. Hebrews speaks to this clearly:

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. ...Then said He, Lo, I come to do Thy will O God. He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (Hebrews 10:1,9-10).

He is telling us how we became sanctified and who it was that offered up Himself for our sanctification. Hallelujah! It continues, *"For by one offering He hath*

perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (Heb. 10:14, emphasis added).

Perfection will not come by keeping the law or by observing and adhering to a set of rules; it will not come by religious calisthenics. We have been sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus and that one offering has forever perfected those who are in Christ. I know that to most people this is a revolutionary concept, but it is the Word of God.

A Mind Transformed and Renewed

I know what goes on in the mind when we hear these words. Questions begin to come, such as, “If these statements are true, what about what’s going on in my life?” “If I’ve been perfected then why am I not acting like I’m perfect?” But Scripture has told us that we’ve come to the spirits of just people made perfect. Our spirit is as perfect as it will ever be when it’s created in Christ and made new. The truth we must grasp is that there must be an outworking of that perfection and salvation that is within us. We must work out our salvation with fear and trembling. Work it out to where? You must work it out from your spirit into your soul and ultimately into your body. As our soul comes into the knowledge and understanding of what’s been accomplished in our spirit, our soul will be like a well-watered garden. We will receive the end of our faith, the salvation of our soul.

Let’s define some of the differences here. In the Greek language, the word “spirit” is the word *pneuma*, and the word for “soul” (as we’ve already noted) is *psuche*. These are two different words that are never interchanged. They are always used to describe spirit and soul. We interchange those words in the Church today as if they talk about the same entity, but they do not. The word “psuche” is feminine in gender. It speaks of the realm of the mind, the psyche. The words *psychology*, *psychological*, *psychic*, and *psychogenic* come from the Greek base word “psuche.”

God has already done a great work in your spirit. The problem is, our minds have not been totally renewed to the work accomplished in our spirits. That’s why Christ comes to Thyatira and says, “You must get hold of the savor of the incense of His suffering. When the aroma of this sacrifice fills your being, your mind will be renewed in that area of truth.” Paul reminds us: “*And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind* (Rom. 12:2).

Jesus is addressing a church that has been under a message of conformity. They’ve been brought under laws, rules, and regulations, which haven’t produced perfection because they can’t. So He admonishes them to not be *conformed*, but rather *transformed* by the renewing of their minds. The word “transform” in the Greek is *metamorpho*. The word “metamorphosis” comes from this Greek word. It means “a complete change of character, purpose,

and/or circumstances.” In a biological sense, it’s the process that causes a caterpillar to turn into a butterfly. The mystery of this process is that what’s *inside* that caterpillar has the power to change it from an “earthbound” creature into a “free to fly about” butterfly. Similarly, New Covenant truth will cause you to understand what’s already inside of you. Christ has the power to transform you, not from the outside in, but from the inside out. It is the opposite of outwardly mandated conformity. Please allow me to quote Romans 12:1-2 from the Wuest translation:

I, therefore beg of you, please, brethren, through the instrumentality of the aforementioned mercies of God, by a once for all presentation to place your bodies at the disposal of God, a sacrifice, a living one, a holy one, well pleasing, your rational, sacred service [rational in that this service is performed by the exercise of the mind].

Take careful regard to the next part:

And 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, by the renewing of your mind, resulting in your putting to the test what is the will of God, the good and well pleasing and complete will and having found that it meets specifications, place your approval upon it (Romans 12:1-2 Wuest).

In this passage, Paul is telling us that transformation is the assuming of an outward expression that comes from the inside. I believe the whole mystery of the gospel is “*Christ in you, the hope of glory!*” (Col. 1:26-27). If people only knew that the inward power of this Christ is greater than anything they’ve ever experienced in their souls alone! The power that works in their spirits is the deposit of the Christ who lives and dwells inside them. This is the reality of transformation; it comes from the heart and not from the works, labor, and sweat of the outer realm. It flows out from the recognition of the One who is already inside you. We, therefore, must renew our minds, not by just filling our minds with Scripture, but by coming to the revelation of who we are in Christ.

We preachers have been part of this problem by holding to an Old Covenant mentality of behavior modification, instead of encouraging the maturity of the new creation. Perfection actually means “to be complete or mature.” We need to recognize the perfection that’s already dwelling in the spirit and encourage its manifestation in the soul. As we come into the revelation of our real identities, we will begin to walk out of them. We’ll know even as we are known of Him.

God is definitely interested in saving, not only our spirits, but our souls and bodies so that we can be presented wholly blameless in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Dead to Our Tyrannical Spouse!

Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?

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. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. 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, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter (Romans 7:1-6).

This passage has been used in many sermons to discuss the problem of divorce in our society and in the church. Paul's main point, however, was not concerning issues of marriage, adultery, and divorce. He was using the marriage metaphor to illustrate how they had become "dead to the law" and therefore annulled and free to come into union with another. The "another" that we're to be married to is Christ. He is the second husband in this text.

As long as our first husband "Adam" is alive, we would be called an adulterer. The law would have dominion over all whose first husband Adam is still alive. But we are given the good news that we have become dead to the law by the "body of Christ" and are free to be in union with Him, are no longer bound to our now-deceased husband "the law." The Lord Jesus would not marry us if our first husband Adam was still alive or He too would be called an adulterer.

I have given a message titled "Torn Between Two Lovers." In it I illustrate that from God's viewpoint, there have only been two men in the earth: The first, Adam, who was temporal, and the second, the Lord from Heaven. If you only have these two men to choose from, it's not too hard to figure out who the old creation would be. In Romans, Paul is telling us that the Law has dominion over someone as long as they live. If the old creation is still alive, then the Law has dominion over us. If we are still preaching to the old creation we are preaching to the wrong person. Paul tells us we are dead to the Law and alive unto God through Jesus Christ. If we reckon the "old man" to be dead, we will be free from the Law.

Let's compare Jezebel to one of Revelation's other leading ladies, "Babylon, the Great." Both are harlots. "Babylon," whose name means "confusion," says in her heart, "I sit as a queen and I am not a widow" (see Rev. 18:7).

She is refusing to reckon her “first husband” dead and therefore she believes she will see no sorrow. As a result of this thinking, she gives the church a cup full of suffering and blasphemy. What is the cup of blasphemy? It is a message that leads the church to believe that the suffering of Christ was not enough. This blasphemy leads the church into great, needless suffering. The truth is that the first husband you were married to is dead. You may say, “If this is true, why are some motions of sin still alive in my members?” They may be in your members, yes, *but they are not in your nature*. These motions are empowered by the Law. The more the Law is preached, the more sin is stirred up and revived in your members:

But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.

For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died (Romans 7:8-9).

Because we have become dead to the Law by the body of Christ, we can now get married (joined in holy union) to the Lord, who has been raised from the dead. When we fully recognize our union with Christ, we will bring forth the fruit of that intimacy and relationship.

Jezebel was accused of seducing them to commit fornication. We have been so programmed to point the finger at the church down the street as being like Jezebel and Babylon the Great. Of course there may be harlot systems “out there,” but please consider that the mother of all harlots just might rest between our ears! Our souls are led into fornication because we don’t fully reckon our old selves to be dead. As a result, we have a fling with Adam. You are either going to be in union with Christ and bring divine fruit or you’re going to consort with Adam and bring forth temporal fruit. The immorality of Jezebel’s seductive teachings brought them into adultery and relationship with two “lovers” in the spiritual sense.

Babylon’s confusion is not just on doctrinal issues, but also lack of closure where the death of the old nature is concerned. This has brought the church into much confusion and suffering. This is why water baptism is so important: It is the reckoning and public declaration that we accept the death of who we were.

It is analogous to when someone in your family passes away. It takes having the funeral and the burial to come to some kind of closure so that you can deal with the death experience, which is so often a shock to our minds and emotions. I am attempting to share as boldly as I can that you “*are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God*” (Col. 3:3)! The Lord wants you to receive this truth and accept it. He also wants you to understand how it came to be. He wants to take

you through a walk in the “Outer Court” and show you how His feet became like fine brass and how that death was exacted at the cross of Calvary. We were crucified with Him, buried, and raised to life anew. Remember, the cross was God’s way of getting rid of the problem that plagued humanity, the one we refer to as the “old self.” But until you can see this, find closure, and reckon it to be so, you will continue to live with the bondage and memory of the former self.

Cleaning Out the House

I’m so thankful I didn’t have to stay with Adam. He was abusive, a wife beater. He brought me nothing but heartache, pain, and discouragement. He was ruining my life. At first I could not receive that he was dead. But when I began to understand that it was really true, I was free to serve Christ, not out of the oldness of the letter, but from the newness of spirit. I could get to know Him in love and not fear.

The struggle we may have in our lives is because the “law of her husband is present.” Allow me to use a personal example: My wife is compulsively neat. She’s a very neat and orderly housekeeper; she loves to keep everything in its place. When I first met her I was totally opposite. I was sloppy and disorganized, not much into order. As I have lived with her over the last 30 years of marriage, however, much of her neatness has rubbed off on me and I have changed dramatically in these areas. I do a lot of traveling, so much of the time my wife is not around to see if I hang up my clothes or not. If I wanted, I could be as sloppy as I was before. Yet because I have come into the habit of hanging up my clothes and keeping my things neat, the “law of my wife” is present with me. When I’m in that hotel room, even though I could throw my suit over a chair, I hang it up. Why do I do that? I’ve lived with her a long time, observed what pleases her, and made her ways my ways. The law of my wife was present. I think that’s a fair example of what has happened to us even in these spiritual areas. We have lived with Adam so long. We’ve lived with sin-consciousness so long that once we are born again, even though our old life has been put to death and we have become married to another, our habits and ways have not yet become converted to the new union. They are the motions of sin that are in my members.

Let’s say, for illustration purposes only, my present wife were to pass away. God forbid that would happen because I love her dearly. But if it did, and I were to remarry, and I came into that relationship with the “baggage” of my previous marriage, this might cause some problems. This would be particularly true if my new wife had different habits and ways. That relationship would most likely suffer.

The same is true of our relationship in Christ. The habits of our former

relationship with Adam may still be with us. These learned behaviors can be put away when we come to closure in the knowledge and understanding that our old man is dead, not to return again. You will clean out the house. You will get rid of their clothes; you will take the picture down off the wall; and you will begin to adapt yourself to this new relationship.

We are adapting now, converting everything about us to the new creation in Christ. The more we are in love with Him, the more we walk in the newness of the spirit and not the oldness of the letter. We begin to see the motions of sin that have been alive in our members begin to fall away from us. Renewing our minds with the truth of our union with Christ will produce the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

Power Over the Nations

This Jezebel, spoken of in Revelation 2, seduces the servants to commit fornication. When you commit fornication and have a fling with the flesh, you give birth to Adam's babies, so to speak. You will give birth to hatred, malice, envy, strife, and divisions. The children born from our union with Christ are: love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, and kindness.

Jesus says to this church in Thyatira, "If you don't repent, if you don't change your mind, I will kill your children with death." I don't think that means that God is going to come on the scene and literally kill babies. What He's saying is, "I'm going to come on the scene and kill everything that you have reproduced out of an illicit relationship. I'm going to destroy all hatred, malice, envy, and strife."

He also tells them that He is going to take her (Jezebel) and those that commit adultery with her and cast them into a bed of great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. I don't think God delights in inflicting pain upon people, even on those who are evil and do wrong. Many times our own actions inflict pain upon us. When we sin willfully, once we find out we're in Christ, we forsake our own mercy and a whole lot of things that have given us pain are a "self-made bed." My mother used to say when I was growing up, "If you make your bed, you'll lay in it." God may cast us into that bed, but many times the bed is a bed of our own making. That bed can bring us into much tribulation. Much of what we suffer is the result of not recognizing that His suffering was enough.

Jezebel was also guilty of idolatry and causing the servants to eat things sacrificed to idols. Idols in our present-day culture are not so much the golden statue set before us to worship. Today ideas, concepts, and even mind-sets have been taught to us by a "Jezebel" creating idols in the chambers of our minds. The word "imagination" comes from the word "image." We have images in our

thinking that have been set up in our minds by the teachings we have received from ministry. Even well-meaning spiritual fathers have not taught us our old self is dead, but “we’re dying and that somewhere in the future God is going to do something for us.” A lot of these teachings have produced tribulation in our lives. Many such concepts have crippled us and caused us to be spiritually impotent. In Revelation 2:26, Jesus promises: “*And he that over-cometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations.*” As we overcome, and keep *His works* unto the end, we are given power over the nations. “*And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of My Father*” (Rev. 2:27).

This is a multifaceted passage with many potential applications, past, present, and future. For our purposes, the nations God wants to give each of us rule over are:

- Imagi-nations
- Condem-nations
- Denomi-nations

There are multitudes of nations that God would break with the rod of His authority. This authority is rooted in Jesus’ finished work; this is what breaks the war machines of all nations doing battle between our ears and before our eyes. There is a great battle that rages in the chambers of our imagination and in the areas where we have eaten things that have been offered unto idols in the courts of our imagery. God is going

to break these things, not by some devastating world event, but by the rod and authority of *His power* and the truth that comes by keeping His works unto the end. Jesus promises the church at Thyatira the gift of the morning star—the gift of Himself:

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 (2 Peter 1:19, emphasis added).

We must walk away from our fling with the flesh. We must deny Adam any more power over our lives. We must not allow the woman to usurp authority over our minds, our hearts, or our spirits. We must not operate out of carnal thinking. We cannot be like Babylon who declared that she sat as a queen and was not a widow. We cannot continue to give the people a cup of suffering; Jesus’ cup was enough. When we see this, we will no longer be seduced by the fornication of Jezebel. We will be free to be married to another.

Chapter 10

Sardis

AND *unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith He that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and holdfast, 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. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy. He that over-cometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches* (**Revelation 3:1-6**).

Now we have moved to the church in Sardis. “Sardis” means “red” or “remnant.” The Lord reveals Himself to this church, the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars. The sevenfold Spirit of God is our empowerment to walk in the Spirit. The seven stars were the seven messengers of the seven churches. The message to this church is that everything needed to empower new life has been made available not only to the sevenfold Spirit of God, but from the kind of ministry it takes to produce this. Genuine works of love flow from this.

This church has a reputation for being alive, yet they’re dead; that’s the same problem that we find today in our culture. A church divinely alive but put under the laborious pressure gets worked to death—not so much literally, but spiritually. Perhaps, they’re trying to produce perfection by the works of the Law rather than through the energies of the resurrected Christ.

Jesus admonishes Sardis, telling them to be watchful and strengthen the things that remain. He said, “*I have not found your works to be complete or perfect before God*” (see Rev. 3:2). I believe He is encouraging them to be deeply rooted in their new creation identities and produce works that are a result of faith. Peter echoes this when he says, “*I now write unto you. [to] stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance*” (2 Pet. 3:1).

Jesus tells Sardis that they need to keep their garments. He said that the overcomers will be clothed in white and accepted. I believe He is dealing with a people who are walking in a faith-filled righteousness based in Christ. “*For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of*

God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21).

Jesus did absolutely nothing wrong and had no fault on His part; He was made to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God. It’s easy for us to receive the first part of this, but it’s quite hard for me to grasp the latter. At the end of the day, it is pure gift.

And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged (John 16:8-11 NKJV).

In this text there are three dimensions of the work of the Spirit. The first is to convict unbelievers of sin. I don’t know that I ever heard anyone teach on this second dimension: the work of the Holy Spirit to convince and convict the believer of *righteousness*. I am asking the Lord to release through these pages the conviction of righteousness so strongly that the reader will never again waver in his or her absolute acceptance by God. Only the Spirit can communicate this to your heart. The third dimension we must be convicted of is judgment that is past and not in our future, because the prince of this world has already been judged. It is tragic to me that we put more emphasis on trying to convince and convict believers of sin than we do of righteousness.

I believe this is one of the first things we must teach new babes in Christ when they are born again. We must be given the sincere milk of the Word. Scripture says that those who are unskillful in the Word of righteousness are those who need milk. I believe if we took new believers and told them they are in Christ and have been made the righteousness of God, this would be infinitely more worthwhile than telling them they are sinners in Adam. We could tell them that the robe of righteousness was put around them and they don’t have to do anything to make themselves righteous. All they have to do is maintain, keep guard, and watch the garment, keeping it unwrinkled and unspotted.

Healing the Place of Intimacy

I am reminded of the story in Luke about the woman with an issue of blood for a dozen years, spending all of her funds on doctors who couldn’t heal her. (See Luke 8:43.) I believe this speaks of the Church. She is not bleeding from the nose; she is bleeding at the point of intimate relationship. Her weeping womb is a tragic declaration that she has not received seed, for the first sign of conception is that you stop bleeding. This is a picture of a bigger problem: a righteousness issue. *“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away”* (Isa. 64:6).

The Hebrew word in this text for “filthy rags” refers to menstrual flux. She

is bleeding to death, much like the church in Sardis, who is ready to die over this matter of righteousness. It is an “issue of blood,” because she doesn’t understand what the blood of Jesus has done! She goes to many physicians and spends all she has on religious prescriptions. They give her self-help pills and Old Covenant formulas that have so many side effects that she doesn’t get better; she gets worse. Religion then continues to treat the side effects. When she finally spent all she had and was still unhealthy, she found the only issue that mattered was the need to touch Jesus. Here’s the tragedy and the beauty: under the Mosaic law, a woman couldn’t even touch a man during her uncleanness: *“And if a woman have an issue, and her issue in her flesh be blood, she shall be put apart seven days: and whosoever toucheth her shall be unclean until the even”* (Lev. 15:19).

She was supposed to go around declaring, “I’m unclean, I’m unclean!” That system would not let her confess, “I’m righteous, I’m righteous!” because it always focuses on you instead of on Him. I think it is interesting to note that Jesus was not on His way to heal her. He was on the way to the house of Jairus whose only daughter was dying; she was 12 years old. She had been alive about the same length of time as this woman had been bleeding. Before Jesus can heal the next generation, He must deal with this issue of blood in the Church.

Titus encourages older women to teach younger women to love their husbands. (See Titus 2:4). Before the Lord can bring the next generation into the Church, He must deal with this righteousness issue. God will not let us teach the world the thing that has been killing us. Many of our children have become casualties to the side effects of our religious rhetoric. But I ask you: What is more important than your only daughter? Many have been victims of self-righteous ideas. “You need to cut your hair! Get rid of that makeup. Wear your hair like this! Don’t wear jewelry. Women shouldn’t cut their hair. Women shouldn’t wear pants. Don’t go to movies.” Don’t, don’t, don’t, don’t!! Most of these have no New Testament basis; they come straight from “Don’t-aronomy.” It is a temporal attempt at righteousness—God calls this filthy rags!

Away with it; the issue is intimacy with Him. All of this other junk says it is illegal for you to touch Him. When the woman with the blood issue finally was desperate enough, she said, “I don’t care if you have another formula or not. I don’t care that the Law says I am disqualified. Right now I have to touch Him.” When she does, Jesus turns and says, “Who touched Me?” They answered Him, “This place is crowded; everyone is touching You.” He said, “I perceive virtue is gone out of Me.” (See Luke 8:45-56 AMP).

Under the Mosaic paradigm, He had just become unclean because of her uncleanness. By contrast and in fact, she became clean by the virtue flowing out of Him. An incredible exchange took place. He said to her, “Your faith has

made you whole.” Once this woman is healed, some people come to Jairus (who is with them) and tell him, “Don’t bother the Master; your daughter has died.” What terror must have gripped Jairus. Jesus countered this thinking and said, “She is asleep, only believe.” (See

Luke 8:40-42). Get it? Only believe! When this issue is settled in this woman the Church, Jesus will go to a sleeping generation with the power of resurrection and bring her to life. He may have to put all the doubters out of the room first but He will awaken another generation. Jesus then tells them to bring Jairus’ daughter some meat to eat. Notice He doesn’t say bring some milk. Milk belongs to those not exercised in the word or righteousness. The righteousness issue has been settled here—the woman and the young girl are now whole.

Resurrection Life Is a Person

You must understand that this is true of you. The righteousness you have is a gift. You have been washed, cleansed, and made holy. I can call you: holy ones, saints of God, and partakers of the divine nature. You need to be watchful and remember some of the things that you have heard; they will keep you from allowing the garment to be spotted by the flesh.

When a person receives a real revelation of the righteousness of God, it will keep them living above that which is earthy, and they will stand before the Lord with works that are not a result of human labor and sweat. They will be works that result from knowing who you are. When a temptation comes, we simply say, “That’s not who I am. I’m standing before the Lord in white; I’ve been given a linen garment that I’m going to watch, guard, and keep. I don’t want to have it spotted, dirty, and filthy; I want to stand before the Lord in white.”

I want to see resurrection life energize every area of my life and every area of my body. I felt like the Lord gave me an insight into the story of Lazarus. I was reminded how Martha and Mary came to Jesus, who had been gone for about four days, and now Lazarus was dead. It’s astonishing that Jesus is the only one I know who can be four days late and still be on time. Lazarus represents a picture of the whole human family, a people who have been dead for four days.

Scripture says that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years is as one day. Jesus came about 4,000 years into human history. By the time He came on the scene, everyone was dead in sin; by now we stunk.

Mary and Martha hired mourners, and they came out to meet Jesus as He was returning from His journey. They said to Him, “Lord, if You had only been here, Lazarus would not have died.”

I know, that even now, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto Him, I know that he shall

rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, 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. Believest thou this? (John 11:21-26).

John 11:35 recounts that Jesus wept. I don't believe He was weeping because Lazarus passed away; the Jews came and said, "Oh how much He loved him." I believe He was weeping because of their lack of faith— not just in a future resurrection, but in the present reality of resurrection. When Martha affirmed, "Oh, I know my brother will rise again at the resurrection in the last days," Jesus disclosed that the resurrection is not just an event; it is a person. He affirmed the future resurrection in saying, "Martha, you know there is a resurrection for those who are dead, that will hear the voice of the Son of Man."

Like Mary and Martha, our problem is that we can only see one resurrection somewhere in a distant future. Jesus brought the resurrection out of the future and into the now with Lazarus. He said, "The hour is coming Martha, of resurrection, but now it is here in Me." Resurrection and the life is a person.

Oh! How we need to hear some "now" preaching. We need to embrace resurrection life today. I believe if the Lord were standing here today as He did in front of Martha and the group, He would probably weep again.

The Lazarus Call

Jesus told them to take Him to the tomb where Lazarus had been buried, and there He spoke. His words there so impacted my spirit that they became my apostolic mandate in this particular season of writing. The first thing Jesus says to them is, "Take away the stone." The Holy Spirit quickened me and revealed that this is a type and a shadow of the Law. In order for resurrection life to be manifested in the people of God, you must take away the stone tablets of the old order.

I believe this is what was empowering death in Sardis; the stone was still there. The Law bars people from the flow of resurrection life. The Lord began to make this real to me—in my life and ministry, I was not to roll the Law out of the picture to release dead, stinking flesh. If you roll the stone away from people who are dead, you are just going to let the stink out. But if you roll the stone away from people who are imbued with resurrection life, they will come forth from the tomb to follow Jesus from that day forward.

I believe Jesus is issuing the Lazarus call to the human family— "Come forth!" I want to shout from the highest building: "Roll the stone away so that life can manifest!" The second thing Jesus said to Lazarus was, "Loose him and let him go." I believe that my Apostolic mandate in this season is to facilitate the removal of grave clothes that have been wrapped around the Body of Christ. Man-made religious bondage is nothing more than grave clothes and filthy rags

that have kept us in bondage to the realm of death. Veils are being removed:

And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 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 (2 Corinthians 3:13-18).

When the veil is taken away, we can see what is abolished. We must unveil the faces of those in Sardis who are ready to leave the realm of death in response to the Lazarus call.

Jesus promises Sardis, “*I will not blot out your name out of the book of life, but I will confess your name before My Father and before His angels*” (Rev. 3:5). I don’t just think God has someone’s name written somewhere in a great big book on a planet called heaven because He can’t afford a computer. I believe that this symbolizes your changed name and nature, empowered with the life of the Lamb. The name the Lord confesses is a new name denoting a new nature. I think it highly possible that God only blots one name out of the Lamb’s book of life, and that name is Adam; he does not possess the life of the Lamb. Then He writes only one name in: Christ. Since we are called by His name, we are all included.

Let us put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh; what an outfit!

I desire to be like Paul:

And be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness; which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead (Philippians 3:9-11).

Knowing Christ in the power of resurrection will bring life to the dead. “*Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty...*” (2 Cor. 4:1-2). Oh, beloved, when you walk in a message of mercy and New Covenant life you walk in an understanding of God’s righteousness. You will not be faint like the church in Sardis; you will not be ready to die. The life of God will so energize you that resurrection life will flow from your very being.

Chapter 11

Philadelphia

AND to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth (Revelation 3:7).

Philadelphia. It literally means “brotherly love.” This is the only church Jesus speaks to in Revelation that He has nothing against. I believe the primary reason for this is that they have learned the greatest commandments: Love the Lord thy God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength and love your neighbor as yourself. What this church learned early on in their development is that all service must flow from love; it is by love that we serve God and by love that we serve one another.

Love, not fear, is the motivating factor of folk who have a New Covenant mentality. We do not serve because we are cowering before the anger of God; we serve because we are motivated by love. Love is a greater compulsion than the fear of man.

Cosmetics

One of the objections I frequently get when people hear me teaching this New Covenant gospel of grace is: “You are giving people a license to sin.” First of all, I would say that people have been sinning without a license for years. Secondly, I would remind them that the Word flowing from rest will discern your heart.

Recently I was in a meeting and said, “Imagine for a moment: If you were not a follower of Jesus and you were not under the constraint of law...what would you do?” I received responses like, “If I were not a Christian, and you made me angry, I would probably hit you, curse, or tell you off.” My response is this: “What you would do if you weren’t restrained by rules or Christianity is what’s really in your heart.”

Most of the Church world practices restraint, rather than manifesting real change. I grant you that it’s better to practice restraint than to go ahead and hit someone or tell them off; every sin carries its own ramifications and judgment. This isn’t to say that God would judge you. You could kiss a rattlesnake or wrestle an alligator if you want, but every action carries consequences. It’s not necessarily that God is judging you, but your own disavowal of mercy brings the judgment of your actions to you. The law of sowing and reaping is in effect, and

I believe what Jeremiah said: *“Your own sin reproves you and your own iniquity will judge you”* (Jer. 2:19).

One of the primary things that the Lord would like us to change our mind about is our thinking that “God is the source of my pain and sin is the source of my pleasure.” We have it so backward. People run from the perceived source of their pain. If a person perceives God to be the source of their pain, they will run from God and will run to get pleasure from sin. If they perceive that sin is the source of their pain, they will run from sin and discover that God is the source of their pleasure.

I believe that God’s ultimate intention for us is not to just practice restraint, but to experience real deliverance through a changed nature. He wants to change our hearts and not just our actions. He wants to change why we do what we do. I don’t want to just stop sinning; I want to lose the desire for it. Grace is a divine influence that motivates me to change from the inside out. Paul says in Romans 12:2, *“Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind”* Paul isn’t suggesting the avoidance of movie theaters or certain clothing styles, things the Church has latched onto as being worldly. Paul is addressing this whole cosmetic religious system. The word “world” here is *eon*, which pertains to the evil age of the Law.

Another word translated “world” in the New Testament is *cosmos*, which is where we get our word “cosmetic.” It is the paint of Jezebel’s face, a cosmetic queen religion that puts on its precious Jesus face and fluffs and buffs itself with the conformity of a passing age, making it look holy outside. It is the wide phylacteries and long showy prayers of the Pharisees, a flat facade. Paul wants to see change from the inside out. That is the difference in the message of being conformed and transformed. The butterfly was inside of the caterpillar all along. He didn’t receive something from outside; he blossomed from within.

Change Through Love

The change God wants to bring to us is one where we don’t act because we “have to,” but because grace has begun to work in our hearts. Grace is not just something that covers over anything we want to do. Grace is a divine enabling influence upon the heart. When sin abounds, grace super-abounds! This is where God has the ability to come in and touch the heart and produce real change. He has a way of working in us, both to will and to do of His own good pleasure. We can have a change of heart, and not just a change of action.

If you refrain from committing adultery because the Law has constrained you, I’m sure your spouse might say, “Well, I’m thankful that he is not committing adultery, but I would rather he be faithful because he’s in love with me.” I want love to be the motivating force, since I believe this is a higher form

of living. The real deliverance that God wants to bring is a change of the heart. Paul says, *“I’m beseeching you, brothers, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service”* (Rom. 12:1). God is looking for willing vessels. I don’t have the power or strength to change myself, but I will present my body as a living sacrifice that You can live, move, and work through me.

Jesus addresses Himself to the church in Philadelphia as “the One who is Holy and the One who is true.” Our holiness is an emanation of the One who resides in us.

This church in Philadelphia, the one Jesus has nothing against, has discovered an outward flow of the King’s life within them. Jesus calls them “the one who has the key of David.” The key of David is the authority of a king:

And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open. And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father’s house. And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father’s house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons. In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, shall the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall; and the burden that was upon it shall be cut off: for the Lord hath spoken it (Isaiah 22:21-25).

This is a powerful picture of the person and the work of Jesus Christ. He is the king, key, and door. He is the nail fastened in a sure place, cut off from the land of the living; when He was cut off and the nail was cut down, He removed the burden of the whole system of human works and labor, because He became the place where all the burden and pressure and work hung.

He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare His generation? for He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of My people was He stricken (Isaiah 53:8).

He was not cut off for His iniquity, but for the “transgression of My people.” Isaiah goes on to ask who shall declare His generation. Later in that same chapter, it says He will “see His seed” and He will prolong their days (Isa. 53:10). This people are the believers who are birthed as the result of the King’s passion. We have been made *“partakers of the divine nature”* (2 Pet. 1:4) so that the King’s life and activities now flow from us.

Beware Performance-Based Living

In Matthew 16, Jesus is addressing His disciples on the heels of the miracle of the seven loaves of bread where He fed 5,000 people. Jesus said, *“Beware of the*

leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees” (Matt. 16:6). His disciples thought that perhaps He said this because they had forgotten to take bread. As the chapter unfolds Jesus explains Himself. He said, “I’m not talking about *temporal* bread.” They began to understand He was referring to the teachings of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. I believe that the Lord wants to warn us about the teachings of the religious in our midst.

Several things should be observed about the teachings of the Pharisees. First, they flowed from Law and legalism; their lives were based upon performance. They would offer long prayers, in essence saying, “I thank my God that I’m not like this sinner.” It could only address the very perimeter of the human condition. When Jesus came on the scene in Matthew 5, He began to teach them, “You’re blessed if you’re hungry for righteousness.” Jesus was helping them make a transition in their minds from Old Covenant thinking to New Covenant thinking. If you look at the context of Matthew 5, many in His audience already thought they were righteous because of their performance.

When Jesus speaks He says, “*Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and the Pharisees, you will not enter the Kingdom*” (Matt. 5:20). Your external life might reflect righteousness, but your heart is far from it. That’s why Jesus would say that if you look upon a woman to lust after her, you’ve committed adultery already in your heart. Jesus is looking beyond the works-based religious system into something that flows from the heart.

If you’re in Adam, you’re a sinner; if you’re in Christ, you’ve been made alive. The righteousness that exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees is what we received as the free gift of God. When we really believe this and begin to live by faith, we see that Christ is living His life through us. We need to realize that Jesus is not reigning from a Victorian chair on a planet three miles south of Mars called Heaven. He is reigning in our life right now. When a person says they are making Jesus Lord of their life, they are inviting the King to establish His government in them.

The next thing Jesus would warn the disciples about would be the leaven of the Sadducees. The salient key here is that the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection. This spirit is still prevalent in the Church today. Even though many churches teach physical resurrection, they don’t have a revelation of present-day resurrection power in the life of the believer. Scripture says, “*If that same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead, dwell in you; it will quicken your mortal body*” (Rom.8:11). That is a present reality. When the very life of God is imparted to the believer, it is a different kind of life, incorruptible.

Many today are bound to a religious system that doesn’t believe in a present resurrection, so they resort to their own strengths and abilities. Paul writes to

the Philippians, “ *That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection* ’ (Phil. 3:10) and “*Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh*” (Phil. 3:2-3). I don’t think he is saying that you can’t have confidence in your pastor or other ministers; I think he was saying he did not have any confidence in his own human ability to perform. He goes on to say, “If you want to know what my credentials are, I was of the Tribe of Benjamin, circumcised the eighth day of the stock of Israel. I was a Pharisee of the Pharisees. Concerning the Law I was absolutely blameless.” Paul says that he had to count all of that as dung to gain Christ and be found in Him. He said:

[For my determined purpose is] *that I may know Him* [that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His Person more strongly and more clearly], *and that I may in that same way come to know the power outflowing from His resurrection* [which it exerts over believers], *and that I may so share His sufferings as to be continually transformed* [in spirit into His likeness even] *to His death*, [in the hope] (Philippians 3:10 AMP).

The Key to the Kingdom

There is a life that flows from resurrection that is not life-as-usual. It is a God-kind of life that lives inside the believer as Christ expresses Himself through them. Let me pose one of Jesus’ pointed questions to you: “Who do you say that I am?” Is He some historical figure, some Prophet raised from the dead or do you, like Simon Peter, have a revelation that can only come from God? Simon Peter answered, “Thou art the Christ; You’re the Son of the living God.” He said, “You’re the Messiah, the one that all the Law and Prophets spoke of.” Jesus answered and said to him:

Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven (Matthew 16:17-19).

The revelation of the Christ contains the keys of the Kingdom. We must build the Church on a revelation of Him. He was the fulfilment of all the law and the prophets. Government as we know it is passing away and being replaced by the governance of God:

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there

shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this (Isaiah 9:6-7).

The gates of hell cannot prevail against a revelation of Jesus Christ. It's not us doing the works, but it's the Father and the Son living and flowing. Jesus said the Kingdom does not come with observation. The word *observation* literally means *observances*, things like the keeping of rituals and prohibitions. The Church is being built, not on performance-based religion, but on the power of the living Christ to live His life out through us. When a church is full of brotherly love, faith works through this love instead of fear. Old forms of government are fading in the birth pains of the dawning of the Kingdom of God's dear Son. A new Governor is now in charge—He is the Holy Spirit and He has taken up residence in you. You are the Governor's mansion!

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. 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 will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which He spake unto them. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before Me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come

that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly (John 10:1-10).

Here in Philadelphia, Jesus is the Key of the kingdom, and He is the door that we must enter through. John 10 is one of the most misunderstood pieces of the New Testament. We interpret the "thief" as the devil, when in reality, in John 10 the devil is never mentioned. What He does say clearly is that Jesus Christ is the door. The thief in John 10 is the mind-set that says there is some other way of entering the Kingdom besides through Christ. In this context the illicit means of entry is the Law or religious ordinances. The whole end of the Law is that there is none righteous; no, not even one. So when you think there is some other way to enter into the sheepfold than through the door of Christ, you are counted as a thief and a robber. Jesus said, "All that ever came before Me were thieves and robbers." The Gospel of John says, "*Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world*" (John 1:29). In this he tells you that Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ, and the Law came by Moses (John 1:17).

The challenge in John's Gospel is to look away from Moses and look unto Jesus. He is the author and finisher of your faith. People think they can enter the Kingdom through works-based labor and sweat. People who have been raised in legalism realize at some point in their life that "religion robbed me and it was a thief to me; it brought death to me spiritually, mentality, and physically; it stole from me, robbed from me, and killed me." I believe some of the most disappointed people in the world are those who turned to what they thought to be Jesus, and they ended up getting religion. They reached for reality and they got religion. They walked down a church aisle to get rid of one set of burdens, only to exchange them for another set. They do not know that Jesus has come so that we might have a door and an access into the Kingdom of God that's not based upon our human labor, sweat, or performance. It's based upon the door that He is and the key that He has given in the revelation of Himself; those who have a revelation of Jesus Christ will experience the Kingdom of God. This revelation is not just some historic occurrence, but a presently reigning Jesus Christ in a people.

Rule With Christ!

He also warns them, "Let no man take your crown." Jesus is King and He is reigning in you. He has made you an heir and joint heir with Him; you have the right to reign with Him in life! Revelation states that He has made us kings and priests unto our God. As sons of the King, we have a crown and the right to operate in Kingdom authority, exercising binding and loosing powers. God has extended His name to operate Kingdom business on earth.

O Dear Ones, let no one take your crown; let no one deceive you from the truth. You don't have to wait to reign and rule with Christ today. It's just as simple as yielding your life to the present reign of King Jesus.

Jesus promises Philadelphia: *"To those of you who have kept the word of my patience, I will keep you from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try the world"* (Rev. 3:10). I believe that these early churches were facing some of the most impending tribulation. He was saying to them, "If you will preserve yourselves in what I have taught you, it will keep you through the hour of temptation and testing." I believe this has relevance to the Church in any generation. I'm not talking about a seven-year event, but the hour of testing and tribulation in our own lives. A whole lot of testing and tribulation that we go through is self-inflicted. Walking in the truths of His Word will preserve us and keep us. If we would just simply walk in the words of Jesus and the life of God that's within us, it would certainly save us from a lot of pain.

Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I

have loved thee (Revelation 3:9).

Here there is an anatomy of the synagogue of satan. They are the shadow-side of those indwelt as temples of God; these are people in whom the devil lives and reigns. This parallels Paul's statement: *"He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; whose circumcision is that in the flesh, but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly who has had a circumcision in the heart"* (Rom. 2:28). I believe these passages are a confirmation of everything we have said up to this point. God is asking, "Who's living in your house? Are you a synagogue of satan or are you a synagogue of the Lord Jesus Christ? If you are a synagogue of satan; it matters not what your genetic background is; you're not a Jew." All the promises belong to the seed of Abraham, and Abraham was the father of faith. He talked about Abraham's seed in the Book of Galatians.

For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondmaid and one by the free woman [Gen. 16:15; 21:2,9]. But whereas the child of the slave woman was born according to the flesh and had an ordinary birth, the son of the free woman was born in fulfillment of the promise. Now all this is an allegory; these [two women] represent two covenants. One covenant originated from Mount Sinai [where the Law was given] and bears [children destined] for slavery; this is Hagar. Now Hagar is (stands for) Mount Sinai in Arabia and she corresponds to and belongs in the same category with the present Jerusalem, for she is in bondage together with her children. But the Jerusalem above (the Messianic kingdom of Christ) is free, and she is our mother.

For it is written in the Scriptures, Rejoice, O barren woman, who has not given birth to children; break forth into a joyful shout, you who are not feeling birth pangs, for the desolate woman has many more children than she who has a husband [Isa. 54:1].

But we, brethren, are children [not by physical descent, as was Ishmael, but] like Isaac, born in virtue of promise. Yet [just] as at that time the child [of ordinary birth] born according to the flesh despised and persecuted him [who was born remarkably] according to [the promise and the working of] the [Holy] Spirit, so it is now also [Gen. 21:9]. But what does the Scripture say? Cast out and send away the slave woman and her son, for never shall the son of the slave woman be heir and share the inheritance with the son of the free woman [Gen. 21:10]. So, brethren, we [who are born again] are not children of a slave woman [the natural], but of the free [the supernatural] (Galatians 4:22-31 AMP).

Abraham had two sons; one came from a natural seed produced in human strength and ability; God said, "That's not the son who is going to be heir." The true son that God gave him was Isaac, and Isaac came by a supernatural birth. Paul writes in the Galatians 3:29: *"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."* So there is a seed of God, a true Jerusalem, which is free. The free Jerusalem is not a place, but a people. So the comparison goes in this text to the church in Philadelphia; either you're of the synagogue of satan

or you're the temple of God. John tells us:

Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God: and I will write upon him My new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches (Revelation 3:12-13).

You believers are not the synagogue of satan; you are the temple of our God. You're an overcomer not based upon your performance, but based upon the blood of the Lamb and the word of your testimony. Not only are you a physical temple of God, but you are a spiritual temple of God. You're the temple where God lives and the place where God has chosen to put His name, to write His nature on you. As we look at this text, we will see that the New Jerusalem the Scripture talks about is not a place, but a people. He uses three different words to describe the city of God in Revelation 21:2-7:

And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold,

I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son.

This powerful text gives us three things that identify the same people. First of all, he says that the Spirit carried him away to show him the Holy City, the New Jerusalem. I want you to note that it was coming *down* out of Heaven from God. Then he describes it as a bride adorned for her husband. Finally he says, "Behold the tabernacle of God." John uses three icons to describe the exact same thing—city, bride, and tabernacle. And yet, the three are one. The Bride of Christ is not a place; it's a people. In the New Covenant the tabernacle of God is not a building, but it's a people. Finally, we have the New Jerusalem, those who have the nature of God and the name of the City of their God written upon them. These are the same people who are in Revelation 21; they are coming out of the invisible realm and into the visible. They are coming out of the realm of shadows into the realm of manifestation. They are from above and not beneath. God is living in the midst of this holy people; He will wipe away all

tears from their eyes and there will be no more death, sorrow, crying, or pain. The former things are passed away. The curse is removed!

“Behold, I make all things new.” When you were born again, you were born from above and you became a new creature in Christ; old things passed away and everything became new. In Christ the blessing of God is yes and amen! John further confirms this:

And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife.

And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal (Revelation 21:9-11).

When he went up in the Spirit, he discovered that he was looking at the Bride, the Holy Jerusalem in the wake of the old Jerusalem. There was a passing of an old Heaven and an old earth, and the dawning of the new heaven and the new earth where righteousness dwells.

John tells us something important here. “*And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb*” (Rev. 21:14).

Compare that with the second chapter of Ephesians:

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit (Ephesians 2:19-22).

I think it’s incredible that we make this comparison. This suggests to us not to look for some physical building, but instead for a Church that has been built upon apostolic and prophetic truth and foundation. The foundation built upon apostolic foundation is not just in its beginning stages; the building of that house and temple is almost to completion. As I look back at the Scriptures I think of people who are waiting for God to build a geographical Tabernacle so Jesus can come and reign; I’m going to tell you that it’s not a temple in the Middle East that excites me, it’s the temple of God that you and I are! When you look at every temple or tabernacle in Scripture, the moment it was completed God filled it with His glory. The building is under construction and is built upon the foundation of the Apostles of the early Church, and that building has been fitly framed together to build a habitation of God in the Spirit. You and I are that habitation of God. We are the New Jerusalem!

But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly

Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel (Hebrews 12:22-24).

Chapter 12

Laodicea

AND *unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write;*

These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God (Revelation 3:14).

As we begin this Chapter on the last church that Jesus addressed in Revelation, it is worth noting that He reveals Himself to this church as the “Amen,” the faithful and true witness. He is the one that you can count on. He reveals Himself to this church as the beginning of the creation of God. Jesus is the source by which God created all things, visible or invisible. He’s the federal head of a new race. He’s the firstborn from among the dead; the first fruits of them that slept; and the beginning of the new creation humanity.

We are not an old creation, being modified in our behavior. We are not Adam trying to find a new behavior pattern; we are a brand-new species in Christ, and we have been re-gene-rated. We have been born from above and have a new divine gene in us.

The word *Laodicea* literally means “the justice of the people,” coming from a root word in Thayer’s Greek Lexicon meaning to deal with a suit at law, a judicial hearing, judicial decision or sentence. It also infers a condemnation or the execution of a sentence or punishment.

I believe that the primary thought to this church is that in Christ their judgment had already been fully met. The revelation is further confirmed when He said, “I’m the Amen, the so be it, the final word, the faithful and true witness, and I am the beginning of a brand-new species.”

The most well-known injunction from Jesus to one of the churches in Revelation occurs next. He says, “*I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth*” (Rev. 3:15-16).

He addresses this church saying, “I want you to either be hot or cold.” Being “hot” can be seen as being on fire for God in the Most Holy Place. Being cold is the realm of the Outer Court. I do not think there is anything wrong with any of these realms, and I believe we must experience all three, with all their attendant feasts.

We still need to preach salvation and water baptism, and being filled with the Holy Spirit. Those things are necessary; but I also believe there is a message

that's being declared: "Let's go onto the fullness of God." I don't think there is anything wrong with the other realms; but when you've been in the Outer Court of salvation for 15 or 20 years or you've been in the Holy Place of Pentecost for the same amount of time, you've been there way too long and it's time for you to "come up hither."

When you are in the Outer Court, you are a baby concerning the revelation of Jesus Christ. When you are in the Holy Place, you are an adolescent; 16 going on 35 with just enough information to be dangerous. I think it's amazing when we receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit; we set a sign out in our church parking lots that says we're "full gospel."

The truth of it is that we've only experienced the realm of the Holy Place or the realm of Pentecost. We are only two-thirds gospel at best. There's a whole other realm in God beyond the rent veil that is yet to be experienced by the Church.

God is calling us to a higher vantage point. While most people think the next chapter in the Church's life is being "raptured" out, I don't think Jesus wants a geographical relocation. He wants a church who is willing to climb into the mercy seat.

I think the church in Laodicea is backed into a Holy Place corner. Jesus is saying, "I want you to be hot (Most Holy Place) or Cold (Outer Court); you've got just enough of both realms to keep you stuck in the middle." God said that when you are in that particular dimension, you won't go forward and you won't go backward. You've been stuck in one location for far too long. You are lukewarm.

Now, think a moment about what you have seen manifested throughout the time you have been alive on planet Earth. What you have known as being the cutting edge move of God has mostly been the Feast of Pentecost. There have been some who have ventured out further from that; but very few, maybe a remnant who have reached beyond the second dimension into the Most Holy Place and caught a glimpse of what is behind door number three.

When Paul said "*all have sinned*" in Romans 3:23, that word "sin" means to miss the mark, or come short of the glory of God. We need to understand that the glory originates from beyond the veil, and it comes from the cloud that comes from the mercy seat. If we thought the second dimension of Pentecost was the mark, then we are going to miss the mark and come short of the glory or manifest presence of God. But dear saint of God, there is a people who are going to press beyond and catch a vision of that realm. They're going to see such a manifestation of the glory of God, and the whole earth will see His glory, as He declared.

This is confirmed when Jesus later addresses Laodicea: “*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). I believe that door is the door that’s opened in the fourth chapter of Revelation: “*After this 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 shew 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). I believe there is a people who will hear His voice and will open the door. That door leads to the Most Holy Place, where the throne of judgment has now become a mercy seat.

When Jesus said, “*Behold, I stand at the door, and knock*” in chapter 3, a *door* opened in chapter 4. (See Revelation 3:20 and 4:1.) It was not a different door. Look again at Revelation chapter 3. He says, “*To him who overcomes, I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne*” (Rev. 3:21 NKJV). Then in the beginning of the next chapter, He said, “*After this there was a door opened and I saw a throne*” (see Rev. 4:1-2). The two things that connect this chapter are the *throne* and the *door*. It’s not the Church flying to glory somewhere.

John is writing to seven literal churches that were in existence at that time. He’s trying to get them to make the transition from an Old Covenant mentality to a New Covenant mentality. The Kingdom was birthed over 2,000 years ago, and many have yet to press into its fullness.

He is showing them that if they press into this realm, they’re going to see the manifestation of the Kingdom of God; not only in a physical realm, but in their lives and hearts. They will find a place where they are seated together with Him, in His throne, and that together they have become heirs of the grace of life, ruling and reigning with Him. That is not to say they are kings over countries and cities, but they have learned how, through the power of the King who lives inside of them, to exercise dominion over the areas of their life that have kept them held back. This is a company who can say that God “*bath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*” (Eph. 2:6).

Jesus not only challenges them to open the door that He is knocking on, and to press into that dimension, but He says, “*To Him that overcomes, I will come into Him and will sup with Him and he with Me.*” This is incredible. If He were inviting us to breakfast, He would be bringing us to the Outer Court realm or the Feast of Passover. If He were inviting us to lunch, He would invite us to the Holy Place or the Feast of Pentecost. Notice the word “feast” because a feast is an event and place where you eat. The third meal of the day is supper; as if I were going to invite you to sup (notice He did not say invite to sip, but to sup)

with me; when I think of supper I think of the third meal of the day or the third feast. That feast would be the Feast of Tabernacles.

In this chapter Jesus is offering several types and shadows to declare the same thing. He's inviting you into the Most Holy Place. He's inviting you to sup with Him in the third Feast of the Lord, the Feast of Tabernacles. He is declaring a vital message: It's time for you to move on beyond the realms you've understood, and now launch out into the deep, into a new dimension of God that is going to be a full manifestation of God's glory.

In Luke 14:16 there is a story that I believe corresponds to this particular invitation: "Then said He unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many." I believe this is what Revelation is about. God, through this book and with the help of the Holy Spirit, is giving us a hand-delivered invitation into a greater realm than we have ever experienced. He is bidding us not to breakfast, not to lunch, but to supper—not to the Outer Court, and not to the Holy Place, but into the Most Holy Place. Luke 14:17-18 says:

And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.

The NIV reads, "I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it" (Luke 14:18 NIV). He is saying that you have invested your time, talent, and treasure, in a certain field of ministry. The area has become the thing that will not allow you to go into another dimension in God; you are staying with what is familiar to you.

It is always scary when God begins to call us into a deeper realm. I remember when I was born again as a young man; we were at that time a part of the Nazarene Church, and I can remember after about a year and a half of hearing "You must be born again" that we began to get hungry for something else. Something in our spirit was saying there is a deeper and greater realm available. There was a desire deep in us, although we did not know what it was. We came into contact at that time with some folks who began to invite us to tent revivals. At those tent revivals things were being preached about receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and we found ourselves in a new, scary, and unknown dimension. It was at one of those tent revivals as a young man that I received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and found myself speaking in tongues. As I sat there, the Spirit of the Lord overwhelmed me, and I began to worship the Lord in another language. I was engulfed by the presence of the Lord in that realm. I thought, *My, my, there is so much more in God than I have been told.*

We went back to our Nazarene Church not too long after that. While we thought they would be excited for us because we had received another

experience in God, we found that many would reject us, and we ended up receiving the right-foot of fellowship. We didn't have to leave the church; we were practically pushed out because we were in a field that they had never seen. We moved into new territory and they began to tell us that what we had received was not of God. There are many good, well-meaning people that are part of the first dimension who will always try to hold you back from going into the second dimension. The same holds true for those who have grown up and been with you in your Pentecostal experience, who will try to get you to make an excuse and hold back as they face this third, unknown dimension with you.

There are many people making excuses as to why they are not coming to the supper. God is saying, "Excuses are not going to hold up; I'm going to have My supper attended if I have to go out into the highways and the byways. I will bring people to My Feast, if I have to take it into the streets." In the Old Testament the Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated in the streets as they came out of their sealed houses and began to dwell in booths. What that says to me is that God in this third dimension is going to touch even those in the streets. Publicans, sinners, prostitutes, drug dealers, and the like are going to come into the Kingdom of God by the droves. But oh, Saint of God, He is giving you a hand-delivered invitation to come to this third Feast! Please don't make excuses and be so committed to that little piece of ground that you have camped out on—press on!

The second excuse that held them back is when another said, "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused." This second group of people speaks of ministry. The oxen are a type of ministry; as Paul said: "Muzzle not the ox that treads out the corn" (see 1 Cor. 9:9), and five denotes the fivefold ministry in Ephesians 4. He is saying here that there are those in ministry who have proven themselves in second dimension gifting. You may have become famous, and even though you know there is a greater dimension in God, you're making excuses why you won't come. I believe the Lord would say to you, "Burn your plow and kill your cow and offer that thing as a sacrifice, and come into a higher dimension."

It is sad to say that there are men who have the ears of multitudes who know and have a revelation of what is being said here; but they are afraid they will lose the people and "their" ministry in this dimension. They're afraid they will lose their yoke of oxen. We must be like Elisha—when the call to follow Elijah came, he left the familiar yoke of oxen and his father's house for a higher calling.

The third group that misses the Feast says this, "*Another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come*" (Luke 14:20). This third group of people speaks of

those who are in covenant marriage with their denomination or doctrine. Because they are in covenant with that, they cannot come. It goes on to say:

So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper (Luke 14:21-24).

The word “poor” does not simply denote a lack of finances. He is speaking of those who have come to a place where they recognize a need for more in the spirit; Jesus said in Matthew 5:3, “*Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven*” Jesus is talking to religious people who have lived under an Old Covenant for so long that they don’t even recognize the spiritual deficit they are in. He is also talking to people right now who don’t recognize their need. They are people who think they are rich and don’t need anything. That’s what He says to this church; “I have somewhat against you because you say I’m rich and increased in goods and have no need of anything.” Until you recognize that desire in your heart and that spiritual deficit, you will never be able to burn your plow, kill your cow, and sell your field and press on into this greater supper that He is offering to you. You’ll never be able to press into the Kingdom fully as long as you don’t know that you are in need.

It is also interesting to note that Jesus writes in another place and says, “It’s also hard for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.” I don’t believe He is saying that it’s hard, if you have money in the bank, to enter into the Kingdom. He is speaking to those who think they are rich in their own human performance and ability, and to those who think they don’t need anything deeper where God is concerned. Those who are totally satisfied with where they are spiritually and who think they are wealthy, and yet don’t know the spiritual poverty that they truly are in. For these people, it is hard to enter into the full manifestation of the Kingdom of God.

He also says to that same group of people, “If you don’t hunger and thirst after righteousness, you will never be filled.” I want to draw attention to Jesus as He was talking to the Scribes and Pharisees who were under the Law; they already thought they were righteous.

From God’s point of view, there are only two ways to be declared righteous. First, did you keep every one of the Laws, rules, and regulations of the Old Covenant? If you keep all of them then you are declared righteous, but if you break one, you are guilty of all of them. In Matthew 5, Jesus is trying to show

these religious people who were convinced of their holiness to come to the Bread of Life. The only other way to be declared righteous is in the New Covenant, where righteousness is called a gift. All you do to receive righteousness is believe on Him whom God has sent.

For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth (Romans 10:3-4).

Jesus was the greatest teacher of the Law who ever walked on this planet. When He comes on the scene in the Gospels, Jesus is really not at the point of teaching the New Covenant completely. He is giving them the Law because it is still in force until the cross. The Scribes and Pharisees at this point are really not teaching the Law the way the Law was to be taught. If they had taught the Law in its purest form, it would have condemned and judged all of them. When Jesus comes on the scene, He begins to point out that even with their best performance they needed to get thirsty for righteousness.

Under the Old Covenant, righteousness was performance-based; in the New Covenant, righteousness is sacrifice-based. As Jesus is speaking in Matthew 5, He is not trying to be difficult...He is trying to be impossible. The whole purpose of Matthew 5 and much of the teaching of Jesus is to show you that under the Law, according to Romans 3:10, *"There is none righteous, no, not one."* Not even Moses, the mediator of that Old Covenant, could make it in by the works of the Law. He died short of the promise.

The whole purpose of Jesus' teaching was to conclude all under sin, so that He might have mercy on all (see Rom. 11:32). When Jesus was done teaching the Law (see Matt. 5), He revealed that everyone was convicted and guilty based on the Law. Remember, this word "Laodicea" means to be brought into a court of justice. They had been brought into a court of Law, right in front of Jesus Christ; indicted, convicted, and found to be none righteous, no, not even one.

The purpose of the Law is to bring you to Christ, so you can realize that by the works of the Law no flesh can be justified (see Rom. 3). It is at that point that each of us thirsts for a savior.

He goes on down through Matthew 5 and speaks to the common folks who are there standing listening to this dialogue. *"Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of Heaven"* (Matt. 5:20). This would be like saying to a Catholic, "Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Pope, you will in no way enter the Kingdom of God" or to a Protestant "Unless your righteousness exceeds that of Billy Graham, you will in no way enter the Kingdom of God." What this does for the common person is make him or her stand there and say, "Well then, I'm totally

disqualified, because I'm not as good as that person." That's the whole point; Jesus is including "all" under sin—the common people plus the Scribes and Pharisees.

As Jesus teaches the pure form of the Law, He's trying to show that not even the Scribes and Pharisees are meeting the criteria. He is showing them that all are included under sin, and as He teaches like that, these holy dudes are standing and thinking, "I've never committed the act, but I have thought about it." Jesus is causing the whole world to shut their mouth and become guilty before God. *"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God"* (Rom. 3:19).

We have taught those verses of Scripture and used them for too many years to preach the Law to people who are no longer under the Law. The next few verses in Matthew 5 bring this home, saying, "If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off; if your eye serves as a trap to ensnare you, poke it out" (see Matt. 5:29-30). I've never been to a church yet where they did any of that; I have never been to an eye-poking or hand-cutting service. What we do when we get to that text is that we say Jesus meant that spiritually. He was quoting what the Law demanded under the Old Covenant, however. It was designed to let them see that they needed a Savior. It makes me want to stop and say, "Thank You, Lord, for saving me, not just from sin but from the curse of the law and from the wrath of God according to Romans 5."

As I look through the rest of this story, where He is inviting them to come to His supper; the next group He invites is "the maimed, and the halt, and the blind." That simply says, the people He is inviting to this third supper are people who are tired of a performance-based religious system and a covenant that cannot produce righteousness. These are people who have been maimed by all the struggles of trying to do it all by the works of the Law or trying to do it by man's traditions and rules. They have sat under ministries that chopped their feet off, poked their eyes out, and cut their hand off to where they cannot travel on the highway of holiness. I thank God for this New Covenant that is being birthed, where Jesus says, *"Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ...For My yoke is easy and My burden is light"* (Matt. 11:28,30 NIV). I don't think He is talking just to sinners about their burden of sin. I think He is speaking to religious people—those who have carried the load of a performance-based religion. He is saying to all who are heavy laden and burdened down, "Come to My supper; come into this third dimension where you can come in and sit with Me on a mercy seat, not a judgment seat."

Some may ask, "What is on the menu for this marriage supper of the Lamb

that He is inviting us to? What's for supper?" We're coming to a Feast where there is Lamb on the table. We are feeding on the death of the Lamb; He's what's on the table. Every time we come to the table, we partake of the bread and the blood. What we are feeding on at this Feast gives us rest from all the struggle, labor, and attitudes of impoverished labor. Feeding on the Lamb means we are feeding on the revelation of what the death of Jesus, the Lamb of God, exacted. When you receive the revelation of Jesus Christ. It's only when you feed on that Lamb that you understand not only that it has been finished, but you understand *how* it got finished. When you live out of that understanding, it brings you to a place of rest and spiritual maturity. The whole purpose of Jesus' dissertation in Matthew 5 is the inclusion of everyone: the poor, the rich, the holy dudes, Jew and Gentile. He concludes they are all under sin, because there is no one who has fully kept the Law the way it was given, and the way Jesus taught it in Matthew 5.

We could make the comparisons in today's religious settings, especially those of us who have sat in the realm of legalistic Pentecost where we were almost mutilated with the teachings that came out of a misunderstanding of Pentecost's purpose. We could never get good enough or perform well enough to satisfy the teachings that came from that realm. Jesus nullified this mind-set for all time by piling expectations of Law-keeping beyond human capacity and putting the icing on the cake with: "*Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect*" (Matt. 5:48)! Who do you know that meets that kind of criteria? The answer to the demand to be perfect is based only on a sacrifice: "*For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified*" (Heb. 10:14).

However, we see His counsel to this church in Revelation, those who think they're rich, increased in goods, holy in their own efforts, self-righteous. They don't even realize they are miserable and blind. He says to them, "*I counsel thee to buy of me gold, tried in the fire that they mayest be rich in white remnant that thou mayest be clothed, and the shame of thy nakedness does not appear, and to anoint thine eyes with eye salve*" (Rev. 3:18).

I believe the gold has been tried in the fire and is behind door number three. Everything in that third dimension is pure gold. He is saying something like He said in Second Peter 1:3-4 (NKJV), "[He] *has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness...[and to] exceedingly great and precious promises.*" He has made us partakers of a divine nature. He has given that all to us, and made us rich in Him. "*For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich*" (2 Cor. 8:9).

Oh, that our eyes would be anointed with the salve that He is offering so our understanding could be flooded with light. Perhaps we are like the apostle

Paul, blind for three days. Could it possibly be that we are blind to the three days and nights because of the work of the cross and the three dimensions of God? I don't think it was an accident that Paul had an encounter with Ananias, whose name means grace. Grace will open your eyes.

By having the eyes of your heart flooded with light, so that you can know and understand the hope to which He has called you, and how rich is His glorious inheritance in the saints (His set apart ones) (Ephesians 1:18 AMP).

Let Him anoint your eyes with eye salve that you might see. Let Him clothe you with His robe of righteousness that is a gift of God. The door is now open, and the invitation is now delivered. You've been invited to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Don't be like so many and make excuses; be willing to leave behind things that were good in other dimensions and realms but now hold you back from your call to a higher realm. Please be willing to move on with God, and not just camp out in what you know. Trade your robe of self-righteousness for His righteousness. Let Him anoint your eyes that you can see what's behind this door. Let Him give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Jesus Christ so your eyes can be flooded with understanding. Come to this supper—the door has been opened and the way has been made.

Esther is a great prophetic picture of this. The Book of Esther deals with two different queens: one named Vashti and the other was Esther. The king gives a great feast to all his nobles. Just like the Church at Laodicea, he's given out an invitation to a great supper. In Queen Vashti we see the cosmetic Church, the harlot system; she does not come at the king's commandment to this feast. She is so busy having her own party and doing her own thing. She is not interested in being part of the whole assembly; she just wants her own "party."

You can read the whole story yourself, but here is a part of what was said about this queen, who would not come to the feast. Esther 1:15,17,19, says:

What shall we do unto the queen Vashti according to law, because she hath not performed the commandment of the king Ahasuerus by the chamberlains? And Memucan answered before the king and the princes, Vashti the queen hath not done wrong to the king only, but also to all the princes, and to all the people that are in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus. For this deed of the queen shall come abroad unto all women [the Church that follows her], so that they shall despise their husbands [Jesus the head] in their eyes, when it shall be reported, The king Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she came not. If it please the king, let there go a royal commandment from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, that it be not altered, That Vashti

come no more before king Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she.

Let's not miss the supper that God has invited us to, nor cause other people to miss out because of our stubbornness to stay where we are in "our ministry." Vashti refused to come at the king's commandment. She was a lot of fluff and buff and had the glitz and the glamour, but she was without substance.

Esther was waiting in the wings. She had been raised by a Benjamite messenger, who was her uncle Mordecai. I believe there is a Church now in preparation who has been raised by Benjamite messengers. I think it's awesome to see that Paul was from the tribe of Benjamin, and he preached the finished work greater than any other apostle in the New Testament, with the exception of our great apostle Jesus Christ. There is a Church in the earth right now, and they have been under the tutelage of some Benjamite messengers, or if you will, apostolic ministry that declares, teaches, and preaches nothing but the finished work of Jesus Christ.

They have a Church in preparation and they are waiting in the wings. They may not be the most fluffed and buffed group of people, recognized by the religious community. They are a people who have revelation of the times that we are in, however, and there are many things weighing on their shoulders. They are like Esther who was going to be responsible for seeing her people set free from a decree to destroy them. Remember the end of the story? There is a hanging. This gallows built by Haman (religion) to hang you on will be revealed as the place where your enemy is hung. Your hanging is not in your future; it was completed in the work of the cross. The hanging is not your future; the Palace and the Kingdom are what is in your future!

When the King saw that Vashti would not come to this feast, he made a decree that she would not be brought before him again; but another one would arise, a replacement, who would be after his heart. I pray that you can hear what the Spirit is saying here. As the story goes on, Esther is kept, groomed, and is in waiting. Many have been kept and have been waiting for this day we are in; we are living in the chambers of the King now, and living outside of the throne room. Remember, this Church has an invitation into the throne room. I pray as you hear these words that something in your heart makes you desire to go in and see the King.

As Queen Esther said, "I'm going in to see the King, *it is not according to the law* but I'm going into his chamber and into the throne room, and if I perish, then I perish." I believe as we enter into that throne room, we will see the King hold His golden scepter of righteousness out to us and say, "Ask of Me and I will give unto you the half of My Kingdom." I believe it is His purpose to come into such union with a people, that we may rule and reign with Him, and enjoy the fullness of the Kingdom of God as we have never seen before.

Are you going to be a vashti, satisfied with where you are at and thinking this Feast is about you? If so, you will never enter the chamber of intimacy and know that the King's intention is to parade you in front of all of His nobles as His crowning jewel. You're not hot or cold, but just lukewarm; not being in the Outer Court or Most Holy Place, but stuck in the second dimension. Are you satisfied with your feasting there? I pray not. The King says to that group of people: "I'm going to spew you out of My mouth."

To those who will heed the call to arise and let the Holy Spirit anoint their eyes with revelation, becoming hungry for a supper...To those who will burn their plow and leave behind their field, and dare to hear the call...God is opening a door to the heavens, and there is a voice saying,

"Come up hither." Won't you respond to this handwritten invitation of the Holy Spirit, now?

Chapter 13

After This

AFTER this 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 shew 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 (Revelation 4:1-2).

Anytime you see the phrase “after this” it would behoove you to ask, “after what?” This Chapter will give us an “eagle’s-eye” view of the ground we’ve covered.

Revelation is a book about revealing Jesus to the Church and ultimately, the cosmos. The Church was in the candlestick located in the second room of the tabernacle. The message to them is, “Come up hither.” I believe this is such a key message for this hour, because the word that God is speaking to the entire Church is: It’s time for you to move from the second dimension of the Holy Place (Feast of Pentecost) into the third dimension, the Most Holy Place (the Feast of Tabernacles). It is a revelation that God is giving the Church in each generation. It was a transitional message to move them from an Old Covenant mentality to a New Covenant one. The message is *repent*, a Greek word that means to change the way you think. If you repent, you will enter a throne room with a rainbow, powerful symbols of the New Covenant and the present reality of the Kingdom.

I believe there are people who are going to move into the fullness of the Most Holy Place, not just positionally but experientially.

The first church He deals with is the church at Ephesus. First, Jesus tells them to change their minds about what false apostles have taught them; they had taught them works and labor. They needed to change their minds and remember where they fell from. This was a move away from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which had produced nothing but sweat and labor for them. They needed to feed from the Tree of Life; because He said, “to him that overcomes I will give to him to eat of the Tree of Life that’s in the midst of the paradise of God.” (See Genesis 2:9). We return to our first love.

He tells the church at Smyrna that they need to change their mind about suffering and poverty. When you receive a revelation of His suffering, and you understand that His suffering was enough and we are rich in Christ. This church had tribulation for ten days. This speaks of the days between the blowing of

trumpets in the seventh month, counting to the Day of Atonement, a time of afflicting the soul. When you come to a revelation of the atonement's benefits, the affliction of the soul yields to the fullness of what His suffering produced.

The church at Pergamos had a problem with a prophet-for-hire. He was trying to curse a people who were not under a curse. When this church began to feed on the hidden manna, they began to repent and change their minds about the mixture that was in the church. They stopped preaching the curse and started feeding on what was behind door number three.

Jesus tells the church at Thyatira to move away from Jezebel's teaching, for those who keep *His works* will overcome. We saw that Jesus' feet were like fine brass that were burned in a fire; that's what He had revealed to them. Brass speaks of judgment. He is simply saying, "My judgment was enough, and everything that you need has been supplied by My work on the Cross."

He says to the church at Sardis: "I haven't found your works to be perfect." By the works of the Law, there is no flesh that will be justified before God. He tells them to be watchful and to guard their garment. This is a garment of righteousness, which is the result of Christ giving you the gift of righteousness.

He speaks to the church at Philadelphia; they have the key of David and the reigning King living inside of them. We discussed in this chapter how Peter found out that the revelation of Christ was the key to the Kingdom. The Revelation of Jesus Christ and the finished work is the key that brings us into the Kingdom where the gates of hell cannot prevail against it.

Finally, we dealt with the church at Laodicea, which means "the justice of the people." We saw that our judgment and justice is already past and has been fully met in Christ. We need to get hungry and thirsty to move into another dimension, because if we are stuck in the middle, God is ready to spew us out of His mouth.

Jesus is addressing us, right in the fourth chapter of Revelation, "After this.." After what? After you overcome, you will discover the victory in everything He admonished the churches to do. You will find once you change your mind about these things that this new outlook will open the door into the third realm of the Most Holy Place.

And So!

Revelation had relevance to the early Church; if it did not, John would not have written it to the churches in Asia. Jesus is speaking through John and telling the churches: "Here are the things you need to change your mind about if you're going to move into a New Covenant mentality." Jesus teaches that we don't put a piece of new cloth into an old garment or new wine in an old wine skin. I don't think that means you can't sing charismatic songs in a Presbyterian

church. I think the New Covenant is not a patch on the Old Covenant. The New Covenant is not a hopped-up Old Covenant with extra bells and whistles. It is not Jesus plus the Law—it's a brand New Covenant!

Everything in this fourth chapter of Revelation points to the transition that the Church was making. Here we are 2,000 years later and the Church is still carrying the baggage of an Old Covenant, and has not fully come into the revelation of Christ. Jesus is presently reigning on planet Earth, and we must press into this Kingdom reality.

The Scripture says *in the ages to come*, He will make known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God. The Spirit of the Lord put this one in my heart: The word “church” comes from the word that literally means to be called out; we are *the called out ones*.

What are we called out of? This early Church was being called out of darkness into His marvelous light. They were being called out, not so much from the secular world as they were from the religious world of the Mosaic system. Just as Moses led Israel out of the wilderness, *“Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come”* (1 Cor. 10:11 NKJV).

What age was he talking about? The end of the age of the Law. The Church was alive and well on planet Earth in about A.D. 70. As they were coming out of their wilderness (remember, it was 40 years prior to this), Jesus gave the prophecy and said, *“This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled* (Matt. 24:34). A generation is 40 years. Everything that happened to the first generation that was led by Moses, in their wilderness journey, was only a type and shadow or an example for the second 40-year generation, which would be those who were coming out of the bondage of an Old Covenant. For 40 years, from the time of Jesus' prophecy in approximately A.D. 30 until A.D. 70, when the physical Temple structure is destroyed, and the power of the holy people is broken; the elements and the Temple were burnt and melted with a “fervent heat” (2 Pet. 3:10). During this 40-year transition period, they were called the Church, because they were literally *coming out* of an old realm of thinking.

Now, let me make this comparison: The first 40-year generation saw a lamb taken out from among the sheep and the goats, and the blood put on the door post and a lamb taken inside the house. The generation alive during Jesus' earth walk saw the real Lamb of God taken out from among the sheep and the goats, when John the Baptist said, *“Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world”* (John 1:29).

The first 40-year generation was baptized into the sea, which speaks of water baptism. The second 40-year generation were baptized into Christ. Moses'

generation walked in a 40-year wilderness journey; they saw manna fall in the backyard, and they ate of that manna. But, Jesus comes on the scene and said to them, *“Your fathers ate manna in the wilderness and are dead, but I am the true bread that came down from Heaven”* (John 6:49-51).

So while the Moses generation saw the physical picture, Jesus showed this generation the reality. The Old Covenant is the shadow; the New Covenant is the reality. The whole Book of Revelation is about removing the shadow and replacing it with the reality. The word *Revelation* itself means to unveil. The veil that must be removed from our minds is the veil of the reading of the Old Covenant—which is done away in Christ. Thus the purpose of this book: It is the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

The Moses generation, the children of Israel, loathed the light bread (manna) and because they were not on the correct diet of the finished work, serpents came among them and they were bitten by the serpents and dealing with snake issues, so many of them died. God told Moses to take a brass serpent and put it on a pole and hold it up, and then He would cause the snakes and the bites that have taken place to not harm those who would fix their eyes on the brazen serpent on the pole. Jesus says to His 40-year generation, *“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, and if I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me”* (John 3:14; John 12:32). Jesus showed us that the real serpent on the pole was the work done on the cross in His person when He spoiled all principality and power. He defeated death, hell, the grave, and the devil.

The first 40-year generation led by Moses saw the children of Israel cross over the Jordan River by focusing on the ark that was being carried by the priesthood. The ark opened the Jordan River and let them cross over into a physical promised land. It rolled the water clear back to a city called Adam. However, John the Baptist carried the real Ark, which was Jesus Christ, into the real River Jordan, and showed us that the way into the real promised land was through identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The promised land this time was not a place, a piece of property, or a planet; but the *Promised Land* was in fact Jesus Christ Himself.

We saw in the Scriptures where Moses meets with Jesus upon the Mount of Transfiguration. Elijah and Moses appeared with Jesus on that mount; they spoke with Him concerning His decease. It is interesting to note that the word “decease” here is the Greek word “exodus.” Here we have the leader of the first exodus leading them out of a physical bondage, and here’s the leader of the second exodus, Jesus, who through His death, was leading the children of Israel (and all humanity) out of the bondage of the Law and the Mosaic system and

the bondage of sin. Let me mention as well that Moses himself did not make it, physically, into the promised land by the works of the Law. God was showing us that not even the mediator of that Covenant could make it in by the works of the Law.

Moses only asked God for two things: “Let me see Your glory” and “Show me the promised land.” (Exod. 33:18; Deut. 34: 1). It was on the top of the Mount of Transfiguration that God answered both of those prayers. Moses saw right into the face of Jesus Christ, seeing God’s glory fully, without a veil over his face (see 2 Cor. 4:6). He saw the end of the old humanity and the end of the Old Covenant.

Moses’ second request was answered, to see the Promised Land, because as he peered into the eyes of Jesus, he discovered that the Promised Land is not a place, but a person. If you are in Christ, you have become a Land that flows with milk and honey.

Peter and the guys with him knew this transfiguration event must have something to do with the Feast of Tabernacles because their idea is to build three tabernacles on the spot, one for Moses and one for Elijah, the representatives of the law and the prophets, and one for Jesus. God says, “This is My Son, hear Him.” It is not Jesus plus the law and the prophets. It is Jesus plus nothing. I am afraid that even among deeper life circles and Feast of Tabernacles folk, they still want to mix the two covenants. But Jesus’ death was the end of the law and the prophets: *“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth”* (Rom. 10:4).

That does not mean we don’t have New Covenant prophets; it simply means they speak from the mercy seat instead of the judgment seat. They speak to your potential instead of your problem. They will mentor you instead of torment you. Their prophetic word is a more sure word because the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy.

So when John the Revelator hears a voice behind him, and he turns to see the Church represented by the candlestick behind him, he is not saying this is the end of the Church. But, he is simply saying that the Church is no longer in the wilderness, they are in Christ, in the Kingdom, and it is in Him that we live and move and we have our being.

When you get to the fourth chapter of Revelation, many contemporary scholars tell you that the “rapture” takes place—somewhere between the last verse of chapter 3 and the first verse of chapter 4. I beg to differ with that theology, because they are not “raptured” out at all. Some argue the reason for that thinking is that the Church is never mentioned after the fourth chapter of Revelation. The reason it’s not called the Church after that is because the

Church is no longer in the wilderness. They have moved into the Kingdom realm. They have simply taken a different expression. From the fourth chapter on they are still very much present. Sometimes they are called the Bride, the Lamb's wife, the Kingdom, or the City of God. She is not called "Church" because she is no longer just "called out"; she has now been "brought in" to a promised land called Christ. Living in a house we did not build and eating from vineyards we did not plant, we must shift our thinking from a coming-out mentality to a going-in mentality. The Church does not leave here in this chapter; she has finally become relevant. She simply takes on another expression.

You will see several icons or symbols that suggest that the Church is still present on this planet. It is a sad thing that theology (what men say about God) teaches us that more people will be saved while the Church is off in glory someplace stroking harps without the Spirit of God being on this earth. If the Church has been taken, then the Spirit of God would be removed from the earth also for a seven-year tribulation. They say the world would be evangelized by 144,000 Jewish evangelists without the help of the Holy Spirit. I think that's an absurd interpretation of Scripture. To say that God would save more people without the Holy Spirit and the Church being here than He would with the Holy Spirit and the Church for over 2,000 years is bizarre. Some even go so far as to tell us that more people will be saved by the blood of a red heifer than were saved by the blood of Jesus. That is an insult to the blood of Jesus. Many believe in a restored natural Temple with a return to animal sacrifice, when in fact that was what God was trying to move the early Church away from. There is a restored temple all right, and that temple is you and me. God doesn't live in the Middle East; He lives in you. *"Know ye not that you are the temple of the Holy Spirit?"* (1 Cor. 3:16).

The opening of the fourth chapter of Revelation is not the end at all. It's just the beginning of a people who are no longer in the wilderness, and a people who will harvest the vine of the earth. They will thrust in their sickle and see one of the greatest harvests that history has ever seen. It does not end with gloom, doom, and despair. It ends with a manifestation of the Kingdom of God, because He must reign until every enemy is put under His feet, and the last enemy (death) be destroyed. First Corinthians 15 tells you how it ends; it ends when Jesus has delivered up the Kingdom to God, and God is all and in all. The Amplified Bible renders this beautifully:

After that comes the end (the completion), when He delivers over the kingdom to God the Father after rendering inoperative and abolishing every [other] rule and every authority and power. For [Christ] must be King and reign until He has put all [His] enemies under His

feet. [See also Psalm 110:1.] The last enemy to be subdued and abolished is death. For He [the Father] has put all things in subjection under His [Christ's] feet. But when it says, All things are put in subjection [under Him], it is evident that He [Himself] is excepted Who does the subjecting of all things to Him [Ps. 8:6]. However, when everything is subjected to Him, then the Son Himself will also subject Himself to [the Father] Who put all things under Him, so that God may be all in all [be everything to everyone, supreme, the indwelling and controlling factor of life] (1 Corinthians 15:24-28 AMP).

There are several things that tell us that the fourth chapter is dealing with the New Covenant. As you open the book you will see several things that are mentioned.

First, you see a throne room: a symbol of the Kingdom of God and the present reign of Jesus Christ. There is a trumpet voice calling us up to that place. Two thousand years later, we are a Church. Are we in the wilderness? It's up to you. Do you want to die in the wilderness or do you want to move into the fullness of the expression of our King Jesus Christ?

Father says, "Moses, My servant, is dead and the heavenly Joshua, Jesus, has arrived. It is time to cross over." Don't listen to the spies who say we cannot make it. Focus on the ark. The Jordan has been rolled back to a city called Adam. There is now a priesthood shouldering an ark standing in the river until all Israel passes over. I want to leave behind the bondage of everything I learned in Egypt and move into the present reality of the Kingdom. Several things that would indicate this is in fact a present reality of the Kingdom of God. John said:

Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald (Revelation 4:2-3).

The second thing that tells me this is moving from an Old Covenant into a New Covenant is how He uses the symbolism of a rainbow. The rainbow is the symbol of covenant. When God delivered humanity in Genesis He brought them out of the ark of Noah; He judged the earth and put a rainbow in the clouds and said that it was His covenant that He would never again destroy the earth after this fashion. In the Old Covenant He destroyed the earth and washed the earth in a flood. In the New Covenant He washes it with His blood.

Noah is a powerful picture of redemption. God's method of getting rid of an entire old creation was to put them in an ark. Every ark is a picture of Christ. It was made from wood. Wood is a symbol of humanity. Christ became human and was cut down out of the land of the living to be our vehicle out of a world dominated by sin and the curse. What makes this boat float is the blood that seals us in and seals out the world. In this ark called Christ there are animals of all sorts, clean and unclean. What kind are you?

God puts us in the ark called Christ, and then pours out all His wrath on it. We didn't escape the wrath; we were in the thing the wrath fell on. We were in Him at Calvary. The New Testament parallels the ark of Noah with water baptism.

Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 3:20-21).

We did not escape; we were crucified with Christ. Our identification with Him in water baptism is our vehicle out of the old world. It is not an accident that the ark comes to rest on a mountain called Ararat. *Ararat* means "the curse is reversed." It is not an accident that the ark takes off in the month of Passover and lands in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day, which is the month of the Feast of Tabernacles. The ark had three stories like the Tabernacle—the Outer Court, Holy Place, and Most Holy Place. Its dimensions were 30 cubits, the number that means the blood of Christ, by 50, the number meaning Pentecost, by 300, the number that means divine completeness. It had one door. His name is Jesus. There was one window out of which flew two birds. One was an unclean bird that flew all the way through the Scripture and landed in the Book of Revelation where Babylon had become the hold of every foul spirit and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird. But the dove only had to fly to the Book of Matthew where it lands on Jesus, the olive branch, being baptized by John the Baptist. When the dove lands on Him it is God saying, "Right here is the new world; right here is where the curse is reversed. Right here is where I put My rainbow and My covenant of peace. I will never again destroy the earth like that again because if you are in Him you have landed in a new world with a renewed mandate to have dominion and subdue the earth."

"Oh, come and see" are the words coming from the living creature. I hope you can hear it. Everything about this throne room is screaming New Covenant!

Next you see 24 seats or thrones. There are 24 elders sitting in white raiment. They wear crowns of gold, which corresponds with the 24 courses of priesthood that David had established. David is a picture of our heavenly David who established His kingdom. I think it is interesting that David's kingdom was a 40-year reign from the transition from Saul, the man of flesh that God had rejected. Saul was a type of flesh trying to produce, just like we are coming from a flesh-based Adamic realm, trying to produce something into the Kingdom of God. King David is now reigning as he establishes the courses of priesthood after the order of Melchizedek. We don't bring any longer the blood of bulls and

goats, but we bring the offering of praise. I believe all of these things speak the New Covenant.

After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things (Acts 15:1617).

Then you are going to see four beasts that are full of eyes that are before and behind. One is like a lion, one like a calf, one like a man, and one is like a flying eagle. These four faces are symbols of Jesus Christ and His nature. They are all pictured in the four Gospels. Those four faces, just like the four Gospels, are saying: “Come and see this Christ who is the King of Glory.”

They also are the four banners of the innermost tribe of Israel, when the camp was at rest. Blessed be God that we are a camp at rest! If you could have flown over the camp of Israel when they were leaving the wilderness and looked down on their positioning, it would have looked like a cross within a cross. They were camped, three tribes on the north, three on the south, three on the east, and three on the west. The furniture inside the Tabernacle was arranged in the shape of a cross. God was giving us the message of the cross, even clear back in that day. When a person preaches the message of the cross, you will have a camp at rest. While they were the camp at rest, those four symbols became the banners over the tribes that were camped the closest to the Tabernacle of Moses.

All of these things speak of the New Covenant. When you open the fifth chapter of Revelation, there is a little book that is opened. That little book is a picture and type of the New Covenant. It was in the hand of the One who sat on the throne and it was written within and without; it was literally a New Covenant being opened. John said, “*I wept much, because no man could take the book and open the book and loose the seals thereof*” (Rev.5:4). The Angel came to John and said, “John, don’t weep any longer; there is a Lion out of the tribe of Judah that has prevailed, and He will open the book.” Jesus is that Lion. The text said: “*Behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes*” (Rev. 5:6 NKJV). The Greek word for “midst” is *meta*, meaning to be amid, in accompaniment or joined together or to occupy. The Lion of the tribe of Judah was in union with these elders.

The Lamb is the central figure to this New Covenant. It is the revelation of the death of the Lamb that opens the seals of the book and releases the flow of the New Covenant to operate. When we truly see it was the Lamb that was slain that opens the seals of the book and releases this New Covenant to operate, will

we really be able to move into this experience? It is the revelation of this slain Lamb that must become the key.

The message of these four living creatures is “Come and see.” In the latter part of the Book of Revelation it says, “and I saw.” I believe it is His invitation for you. Only when you can say, “I saw,” will you really be able to move into what this New Covenant is all about, and into the full manifestation of the Kingdom of God.

In the Song of Solomon there are three rooms as well. There are the courts of the King, the banqueting house, and the bedroom. In the Outer Court He takes her for a walk and shows her the courts of the

King; it takes her breath away. In the second chapter He brings her into the banqueting house and stays her with flagons of wine; that speaks of the second dimension, because wine is always a symbol of the Holy Spirit. The word “banqueting” is a word that means to be effervescent like shaking a bottle of champagne and popping the cork. That’s what happens when a person gets filled with the Holy Spirit. He shakes your bottle and pops your cork and you begin to bubble over in the house of wine; you enjoy the Holy Spirit in the second dimension. He takes her into the third room, which is the bedroom, and she says, “Behold our bed is green with life.”

Everything about this points us to the fourth chapter of Revelation. First, the bed is the place of rest; the only time you can truly rest is when you understand *how* the work got finished. Second, their bed was green; this room in chapter four had a rainbow around about the throne, “in sight like an emerald.” An emerald is green. It also speaks of the place of intimacy.

It is my prayer that you will enter into a new level of intimacy and you will be able to embrace Him in a love relationship like you’ve never embraced before. In this mercy seat, two become one. When He takes her into this green room, He restores her soul. Psalm 23:1-2 says, “*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.*” In this vital union and restoration, conception will take place and you will bear the seed of the King and give birth to His baby, the full-grown man-child.

This is more than a theology; it’s a relationship. Revelation is more than a book; it’s a divine romance that unfolds. All of these things are available to you if you will change your mind and overcome; He will bring you into this dimension of rest and peace and intimacy. “*But my horn shalt Thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn: I shall be anointed with fresh oil*” (Ps. 92:10).

The word “fresh” is the Hebrew word for green. He will give you a new anointing. It’s going to be an anointing of life, rest, and peace. It is an intimacy that will bring a full restoration to our soul. In this hour we have people always

declaring a new anointing coming in the next year. We hear this every year from various people. What this means to them is that God is going to repackage and redo some old thing that He has done, doing the same old thing over and over, but with a new flair. I'm not faulting the fact that there are people who need to be brought up to speed and up to date with what the Spirit of the Lord is doing. There are people in different stages of this journey; what God is doing in one group of people, He may not be doing in another group.

In this fourth chapter of Revelation, one of the earmarks of those who are seated with Him in the throne is that they are part of the Melchizedek priesthood. This ministry that's flowing from the throne and out of the Kingdom of God is going to be a people who are full of eyes. We are going to be a people who have a vision for every realm. We have eyes before and behind. We can see what God has done and what God is doing. We can see within and without. We can see what has been done for us internally and externally. We can see the death side of the cross and we can see the life side of the cross. We can see the Outer Court and we can see the Most Holy Place. As a result of this fullness of vision, this living creature is involved in every realm.

We must be a people who have a vision for every realm. Let's not leave anybody behind. Let's not call a repackaged thing a new anointing. When God said in the Old Testament, "Behold, I do a new thing," the new thing that God was talking about was the New Covenant, which was the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. It's not a new thing that God decides to do every five or ten years. God only did one new thing and that new thing is the New Covenant. It is the new cloth of the Book of Matthew; it is the new wine and the new wineskin. It is the new song of the Book of Psalms. According to Psalm 149, it is the new song that flows from Zion, not from the Old Covenant at Mount Sinai.

We have not come to Mount Sinai to the God who says, "Stay away"; but we have come to Mount Zion, which is the New Covenant. *"Let them praise His name in the dance: let them sing praises unto Him with the timbrel and harp. For the Lord taketh pleasure in His people: He will beautify the meek with salvation"* (Ps. 149:3-4). When you really see this New Covenant work and the person of Jesus Christ, it will practically wrench the praise from you. The result of seeing this throne with a rainbow and a slain Lamb is that the song of redemption is being sung.

And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation (Revelation 5:9).

Chapter 3 is not the end, and chapter 4 is not a trip to Heaven. It's the beginning of the birthing and the manifestation of the Kingdom of God in a people. It has been available for over 2,000 years and it is a present reality. Here

we stand over 2,000 years later, waiting on God to do something He's already done. I am convinced that it wastes time asking God to do something He's already done or asking God to do something He's told us to do.

This is not the disappearing of the Church, but the coming forth of the Kingdom and the appearing of Christ in a people who will manifest the glory of God, so they will see His Kingdom established in the earth and in their lives. They will be able to truly do what the promise of God to the overcomer in the Church of Laodicea is: They will rule and reign with Him, and He will grant them to sit with Him in His throne. Together we will rule and reign in life and see a people stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.

There is a rainbow in this chapter that's round about the throne, and it's likened to an emerald. God has taken the string off from His bow, because He said, "I will never be angry with you again."

This is a powerful word! It's hard to close a book on this subject; but dear one, just know that the curse has been reversed in Christ, and you are a new creature. You're not an unregenerate person, trying to overhaul your behavior, but you're a new creation in Christ. The Book of Revelation is not about gloom and despair; it's not about devastating, scary things. It's a message of good news because it is the message of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God that will ultimately break in pieces and subdue every other kingdom.

I trust you are hearing a voice saying, "Come and see." I hope that your response as you close this book is, "and I saw, and I saw, and I saw."