

# A Special Place for Special People

By Arthur Eggers

*"Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you."*

**Phil3:15**

## The Prize

God isn't through with what He can do  
In my life as He works his good pleasure:  
He shows me the way;  
He is patient each day;  
The results He alone can measure.  
So look up above and trust His sweet love;  
In His strength I am running to win.  
The high calling I seek;  
The prize is unique;  
Jesus is coming again.

Mary Simpson

## PREFACE

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:** Loving appreciation is to be expressed to God and all of the saints who devoted much of their time in making this book possible. At the beginning Evelyn Fellers transferred sermons from cassette tapes to make the 1<sup>st</sup> draft. When that was finished, Joy Wilson edited it then it was retyped by Evelyn Fellers, JoAnn Clement, and Mary Satness. Several years passed when John Evans took an interest and we put it on the computer so it could be put in book form, then it was edited again by Alene McClain to pick up errors in the scanning process and additions made by the author.

Many hours were spent by these saints and we thank also their spouses for their patience, I am sure my God will reward eternally what they have done for Christ sake.

**PURPOSE OF BOOK:** The purpose of this book is for all God's people to see how plain the scriptures are concerning Christ's Bride. This Bride will consist of people who have been born into the body of Christ and love Him enough to be completely separated unto Him. We are not saying that one part of the body is any better than another, for God calls the whole Church saints, because they all have the holy nature of Christ; but, we must admit that not all of The church is acting in a holy manner. Many fellowship the world more than Christ.

Most men when planning to choose a wife have certain qualities that they look for; such as common interests and character, not just physical attraction. I have listed 5 essential things a man should look for...a woman who, • loves him for what he is, • will be true and faithful to him, • is mature, • has an inward as well as an outward beauty, and • desires only him.

Jesus will find all of these qualities in His Bride; He will not be disappointed. He will have one who loves Him more than anything; and will not flirt with or love the world [1Jn.2:15]. No man would marry an immature girl. In like manner, Jesus will have a mature bride who is spiritually mature enough to reproduce the life of Christ. It is quite evident that most Christians do not meet these qualifications. God wants every believer to grow up [2Pe.3:18]. Many are indifferent concerning the truth. Some believe only what they want to, or what they have learned from others in the past. We must let the word of God search our heart and change our mind to the acknowledging of the truth, [2Ti.2:24-25].

Dear reader, don't just read this book but study it by looking up each scripture with much prayer. Have an open heart and the Holy Spirit will teach you all things.

Arthur Eggers

## REFERENCES USED IN THIS PUBLICATION

- **American Standard Version** (ASV or AV) is a version of the Bible that was released in 1901. It soon came to have other names, such as the American Revised Version, the American Standard Revision, the American Standard Revised Bible, and the American Standard Edition. By the time its copyright was renewed in 1929, it had come to be known by its present name, the American Standard Version.
- **Diaglott** is a two-language polyglot translation, of the New Testament by Benjamin Wilson, first published in 1864. It is an interlinear translation with the original Greek text and a word-for-word English translation in the left column, and a full English translation in the right column.
- **King James Version** (KJV) references are used throughout this publication unless otherwise noted.
- **Revised Version** (RV) (or English Revised Version) of the Bible is a late 19th-century British revision of the King James Version of 1611. It was the first and remains the only officially authorized and recognized revision of the King James Bible.
- **Wuest:** Kenneth Samuel Wuest (1893–1962) was a noted New Testament Greek (Κοινή) scholar of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century...produced his own English translation of the New Testament (the Wuest Expanded Translation – abbreviated WET) based on Nestle's critical text.

**Note:** *Definitions of references pulled from Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, January 2013.*

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## CHAPTER 1, A SPECIAL PEOPLE

*"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 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. I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God **IN CHRIST JESUS**."*  
[Phi.3:7-9, 14]

### HIGH CALLING OF GOD

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There is a high calling of God. It is a special calling, for a special people, for a special place. First, we define who these people are. The word that is translated "*church*" in the Scriptures, means "*a called-out people*." These people have been called out of the place where they were into another place. The **OTHER PLACE** is the presence of God. When a person receives Jesus Christ as Savior, he becomes a part of this Church, a part of the Body of Christ.

*"But ye are **A CHOSEN GENERATION, A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD**, an holy nation, **A PECULIAR PEOPLE**; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."* [1Pe.2:9]

### CALLED INTO GOD'S PRESENCE

As believers, we have been called out of a place, but we have been called into a different place. The Church is a body of people who have been called into the presence of God. "(He has) *called You out of darkness into his marvelous light*."

*"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light"* [Eph.5:8]

*"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son."* [Col.1:13]

We used to be in darkness, but now in the body of Christ we are the light of the Lord. This is the place into which we are called by God. When we were sinners, we were lost and undone, without hope; then God spoke to us and called us. Not all sinners listen or heed the calling, but the Holy Spirit speaks to every heart and when we yield, that calling becomes a reality in our hearts and we become a part of a new body called The Church. We are called saints and we become a new creation.

Paul prayed for the Ephesian saints that,

*"The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. ...And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."* [Eph.1:18, 22-23].

### THE CHURCH IS THE BODY OF CHRIST

When we speak of one (The Church), we are speaking of the other (the Body of Christ). The Body of Christ is a body of called-out people who should be separated from the world



and living in the presence of God. It is God's purpose and desire to have a people separated from the world unto Himself. However, we do not see this separation in everyone who call themselves Christians. God does not always receive His purpose in individual saints. I will explain this statement. He has an over-all purpose to have a people like Himself which He will accomplish. He allows each individual to make his own choice.

*"The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." [2Pe.3:9]*

Called to be saints,

*"Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God...unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." [1Co.1:1-2]*

In Revelation 20, we also read that there will be people who will perish and go into the lake of fire. In the same way, God would that the whole Church would come into a special place. However, this "*called to be saints*" will not happen, because the whole Church is not yielded to Him.

The ***called out ones*** at Corinth were a part of this body. You may see these words in italics (particularly in the King James Version); this means that they were added by the translators and are not found in most manuscripts. A better rendering is they were "*called saints*." We learn from 1 Corinthians that some of these Corinthians did not act very saintly; nevertheless, God called them saints ( "*holy ones*"), because He saw them in Christ which is their standing. God was doing a work in them; and, He is still doing a work to make this provisional standing a practical state in the lives of all those who yield to the Holy Spirit.

Called according to God's purpose,

*"God...who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." [2Ti.1:9]*

Isn't that beautiful? He saves people and calls them with "*an holy calling*"; not because of natural goodness or human merit, but according to His own purpose and grace. This holy calling is made real in the lives of those who walk in the light of God's purpose. These are a special people. The phrase, "*us in Christ Jesus*" refers to the new creation.

*"God is faithful by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." [1Co.1:9]*

*"Faithful is he that calleth you who also will do it." [1Th.5:24]*

## FELLOWSHIP WITH JESUS

He has called each of His people into a place of fellowship. Again, not all of God's people come into this place; nevertheless, the calling is there to call His people into a place of fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

*"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:" [Col.1:13]*

Provisionally, the whole Church is seated in heavenly places [Eph.2:6], but there is another side. On the one hand we have been translated and on the other hand we are still on the earth.

## DELIVERED OUT OF DARKNESS

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Where is the power of darkness? Satan is called "*the prince of this world*" 3 times in the gospel of John. [Joh.12:31, 14:30, 16:11]. He is also called the "*prince of the power of the air*" [Eph.2:2]. This one, with his many demons, would do anything to hinder God's people to keep the provisions from becoming practical. Thus, we have to fight to obtain heavenly promises [Eph.6:12]; however, this fight is only if we take our place in the heavenlies where our home and blessings are [Eph.1:3].

Our sonship in Christ is unchangeable but our place and inheritance will vary according to our spiritual conduct. If we obey His Word there will be a closer fellowship. The degree that we fellowship now will be the degree we fellowship with Him in eternity.

*"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship (is) with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." [1Jn.1:3-7]*

Notice the phrase "*in him is no darkness at all.*" So then where is our walk?

*"He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." [1Jn.2:6]*

Is our walk like that of others that walk in darkness?

*"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:" [Eph.4:17-18]*

Why should we return to the carnal life we had before we were saved?

*"Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." [Eph.5:6-11]*

In 1 Corinthians 1:9, the phrase "*ye were called unto*" could be better rendered "*ye were called into*". The Greek word that is translated "*unto*," denotes the accessible place and shows motion in the direction of something. With this in mind, read again that God is faithful, who has called His people from one place into another, into the fellowship of His Son.

*"God is faithful by whom ye were called unto (into) the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." [1Co.1:9]*

God is drawing and wooing His people from one place into another. We return to the same thought that God works in us by the power of His Spirit as we submit to this work, which enables us to walk in light. This is the fellowship that pleases Christ.

We have been taken out of darkness and into His marvelous light. Many of God's people are somewhere between these 2 positions, not yet having come into this deep fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. God's faithfulness draws each one of His people according to His purpose, not because of their own strength or ability.

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## GOD'S WORD ENCOURAGES WALKING WORTHY

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*"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe...in that day. Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power. That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ." [2Th.1:7-12]*

Paul loved these people dearly. He comforted and exhorted them as a loving father. He longed for these saints to come into this special place. God has called each of His people, from whatever place they are, to come into His Kingdom and Glory. He wants His people to experience all that He is ruling and reigning over as well as all the glory which He possesses. But not all of God's people enter into this place, even though the call is to everyone.

### GOD IS CALLING NOW

God has called His people, but some of The Church will go into the early part of The Tribulation period because they have not believed the whole truth. The Scripture tells us that God is no respecter of persons. He loves His people all equally. The calling for one person is exactly the same as the calling for another. But we need to heed that calling and pay attention to what He is doing in our lives. He reveals to His people the wonderful, glorious place into which we can abound. Many of God's people put it off too long. God is calling His people now.

### REST IN GOD'S WORD

In 2 Thessalonians 1:7, we read the phrase, "*you who are troubled, rest with us*". People who are in trouble and going through trials will find the Word of God is the only thing on which they can rest, because the King is coming. The coming that "*shall be revealed*" in this passage is not His coming for The Church, but it is His coming at the end of The Tribulation when He will be revealed and come in a "*flaming fire*." But we are not looking for this coming. Today, this special people are waiting for the trumpet sound and they are spending all their energy getting ready to be caught away with Him when He comes.

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## GOD WILL BE GLORIFIED IN HIS PEOPLE

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Notice that He shall "*be glorified in His saints*" [2Th.1:10]. He shall receive glory. We read the same thing in Philippians 2:

*"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." [Phi.2:10]*

**EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW** Because He came down to this world and gave Himself upon the cross on our behalf, God will exalt Him and give Him a name that is above every name. This is the wonderful glory into which God will bring his Son. Notice that this glory will be in the saints who will be identified when they bow their knees to the Lord Jesus Christ. A special people, brought into a special place, will be at His side when every knee will bow to Him because " *God would count you worthy of this calling*" [2Th.1:11].

What is our worthiness? It is the Lord Jesus Christ, because He is the only one who was ever worthy? As we yield our lives to Christ, God sees His Son living and walking in us, and we are exhorted in Ephesians 4 to "*walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called*" [Eph 4:1]. We do have a calling, and He will cause His people to walk worthy of Him as we yield ourselves to Him for His work in us. This working is according to the working of God's grace.

*"But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."*  
[2Th.2:13-14]

**TRIBULATION IF GOSPEL REFUSED** We praise God for the saints who are going on with the Lord and who have entered into their calling, those who have really believed the truth of the gospel of Christ. There are some saints who stand firm and believe the truth.

*"That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."*  
[2Th.2:12]

God's people are in a different company,

*"But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."*  
[2Th.2:13-14]

Those who refuse to receive Christ will go through the whole Tribulation. These are unsaved people who will receive the Antichrist during The Tribulation. "*But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren.*" He is saying to them, in effect, "*We thank God that you are not in this company who will go through the tribulation. You are not a part of those who will receive the Antichrist. You are in a different company.*"

God has called His people into this special place through the Gospel, into the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus. Notice the word "*obtaining*." He has called His people into a place of **OBTAINING** His glory. He will bring His people into this place as we yield our lives to Him.

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## GO AFTER THE PRIZE

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*"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." [Phi.3:14]*

We are called to "*press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling.*" This is not just an ordinary calling, but a "*high calling.*" Through salvation, everyone is called to heaven; but this is a different calling, a higher calling. In Philippians 3:14, the Greek word translated "*high,*" in another place is translated "*the brim,*" as of a cup. It implies the very top edge where nothing can be higher. Think of it! It is above all! Nothing can be above it! It is the highest place; it is a special place into which God has called us. To conclude the thought that it is merely a heavenly calling and all believers will come into this special place, look at the statement Jesus made using this same word "*above*":

*"He that cometh from above is **ABOVE** all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is **ABOVE** all" [Joh.3:31]*

**THE HIGH PLACE OF FELLOWSHIP WITH JESUS** In John 3:31, the word translated "*high*", is here (in Phi.3:14), and in 4 other places, translated "*above*". Jesus came from the throne of His Father, and that throne is **ABOVE ALL**. We are speaking of a position of which nothing could be higher and this is the place to which we are called. This is the same thought as is in Philippians:

*"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is **ABOVE** every name:" [Phi.2:9]*

It is above all. If it is only a calling to salvation, why would Paul spend so much effort pressing toward it? He knew that he would go to heaven because he had received Christ, and he was sure of that position. This is a higher position, a special place, for a special people. It is a special place for a called-out people. It is a place to press toward!

**A GOAL TO FIX OUR EYES ON** In the phrase "*I press toward the mark,*" the Greek word here translated "*mark*" literally means a "*distant object on which the eye is kept fixed*" or "*a goal.*" There is a definite goal on which Paul had set his heart's desire. We also should set our eyes on this goal, and press, lean, and push with all our heart toward this mark, this high, special calling of God in Christ Jesus.

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## GOD'S PEOPLE ARE IN A RACE

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The Greek word translated "*press*" means "*to put pressure toward, to lean toward, to put in rapid motion, to pursue with an eager heart.*" The same word is rendered "*follow after*" in Philippians 3:12. This life is seen as a race track and we see a prize at the end of it. We set our eyes on that prize and go after it with our whole heart. But to "*follow after*" is done by the power that Christ has established in our heart. To gain this prize we lean toward it, we press toward it, and we exert all the effort of Christ that is within us. The word "*prize*" here has the thought of "*a special gain or a medallion.*" When we begin to run, this prize sometimes appears to be so far away that it doesn't seem real; but as we press on, and get nearer, we see it clearer and it becomes more and more precious and dear to our hearts.

**NOTHING SHOULD HINDER GOD'S PEOPLE** Paul said, "*If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead (ones)*" [Phi.3:11]. Everything that comes into our life becomes a means

of attaining this resurrection. The word translated “*of*” should be rendered “*out of*” or “*from*” and the word “*resurrection*” is literally “*out-resurrection*”. This indicates that this special out-resurrection is out from among the dead ones. These dead one are saints that have gone by way of the grave. Paul could not have meant dead sinners because sinners are in hell. But this is to be a special resurrection out from among other resurrections.

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## THE FAITHFUL OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS REFUSED DELIVERANCE

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*"Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment." [Heb.11:35-36]*

This speaks of the Old Testament worthies, some of whom are mentioned by name in this **HALL OF FAITH** in Hebrews 11. They were willing to give themselves completely, to suffer and to die, in order to obtain a better resurrection. This resurrection took place when Jesus arose from the grave (recorded in Mat.27). Tombs were opened and many were seen after His resurrection. However, it is not stated that everyone came out of their graves. Have any in our generation surpassed the suffering that they suffered? Think about it. We moan and groan over the little things in our lives, but we have suffered little in comparison with others. We recognize the truth of the statement in Hebrews 11 that the world was not worthy of their sufferings:

*"(Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." [Heb.11:38-40]*

### HAVE A BETTER PLACE

The Old Testament saints cannot come into their promise until God's people of the New Testament come into theirs.

New Testament people have a better promise and hope. They have a better prize to win. The out-resurrection saint will sit on a throne when Jesus comes again. God is no respecter of persons. It is a place for God's people, and is obtained by yielding to Him and letting Him draw them into this place. God's people must press toward the prize! The enemy does not want God's people to have this prize. He would like to ruin their testimony and set their eyes on a lesser place. Don't let the enemy rule you. Set your eyes on the prize, and God will take you all the way.

### One With Jesus

I once belonged to Adam's race, was born beneath the curse,  
Was hopeless, lost and in disgrace, it could not have been worse.  
But Christ became a curse for me; and died upon the cross,  
Obtained eternal victory o'er Satan, sin and dross.  
The old man came unto his doom, by death upon the tree;  
With Christ was buried in the tomb, he has no pow'r o'er me.  
I am a new creation now, in Christ my living head;  
Before His feet I gladly bow, as risen from the dead.

C. E. Foster

## CHAPTER 2, RUNNING THE RACE

*"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain." [1Co.9:24]*

### THIS RACE IS FOR ALL GOD'S PEOPLE

How many people like and understand sports? We know from the illustrations Paul used in his epistles that he understood them and was aware that his readers were also familiar with them. In 1 Corinthians 9, he mentioned several different types of sports. God does not want us to be ignorant concerning the race for the greatest prize of all. We must not be ignorant of the fact that there is a race to be run and a prize to be won; and, this race must be run according to God's rules.

The Greek word that is translated "race" is the same word from which we get our word **stadium**, although a stadium is a place where the race is run rather than the race itself. The same word is also translated "furlong" 5 times in the New Testament, and has to do with size or length. God has put every member of The Church on a race track. If you have received Christ as your personal Savior, you are on this race course. God has given each of us a certain length of time in which to run on this track. Some have longer than others, but no one knows how long his time will be. This time is determined by the foreknowledge of God, who knows our attitudes, our life, and the thoughts and intents of our heart. Because we do not know how long we have, we need daily to run well and exercise that we may win the prize.

### PAUL SET ASIDE EVERYTHING

#### TO WIN CHRIST

*"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 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. 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." [Phi.3:7-14]*

#### TO BECOME ONE WITH CHRIST

*"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." [Joh.17:20-24]*

## NOTHING MORE IMPORTANT

Paul says that all things that he had counted gain, he now counts as loss, that he might win this race. But the running is not easy; it is a suffering, rigid way, with many stumbling stones. To run on this racetrack, one must have not just a vague longing but a strong, vehement desire to win the prize that causes us to draw on every ounce of spiritual energy and all the endurance that can be mustered.

Nothing must interfere with running this race. Sometimes it seems we are treated unfairly, but we must not let this stop our running. This world is not fair, but this world is our racetrack. We are not to look at the people running alongside us or listen to what they are saying. Anyone who ever won a race did so by keeping their eye on the goal and nowhere else. We cannot be watching our feet or the racetrack; we must keep our eyes on the goal, Jesus Christ. He also is the prize to be received at another time.

## A RACE WITH RULES

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*"And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore run, not as uncertainly." [1Co.9:25-26a]*

Here we see the knowledge of the runner. He knew the game and the rules. Paul said to the Philippians that he had learned over the years to depend upon, and draw his strength from, the Lord Jesus Christ. Every sport has manuals to read and rules that must be learned; and, any runner who does not follow these rules is disqualified. In this race we are running, our manual is the Word of God; anyone who does not learn its rules and run according to them is disqualified.

## JESUS CARRIES US

*"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." [Gal.6:14-16]*

The rule is: **I DO NOT GET THE GLORY; AND IF I BOAST AT ALL, I MUST BOAST IN THE CROSS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.** He receives all the praise and all the glory. I am crucified unto this world. I am in this world, but not of this world. I am on a racetrack in this world, but the world is not conquering my life. It is Christ, the prize that is controlling my life, not the racetrack. What counts is my place in Christ. If I allow things of this world to interfere by looking at the sights around me, that would have an effect on my running for the high calling of God, I will lose the race. It is as simple as that.

## A NEW BEGINNING

*"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." [Gal.2:20]*

*"Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same things." [Phi.3:16]*

So let us run according to the rules, let us mind the same things. These rules should govern our whole life. We learn to live each day according to the rules. When we set our



sight on winning the prize of the high calling, these rules change our attitude toward others also. We discover that what people think about us, or what they say to hurt us, will not affect us because we have our eyes set upon the prize. But, sometimes we do feel hurt at things others say or do. It may happen at a time when we momentarily take our eyes off the prize. But when we again set our eyes on the goal, we will be right back on the racetrack.

## A FIGHT OF FAITH

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We learn from 1 John that the unction of the Holy Spirit teaches us all things [1Jo.2:20]. It is by the Word of God that we learn the rules, and the need for the Holy Spirit is great because He teaches us the Word. We need to be filled with and led by the Holy Spirit. God uses Spirit-filled teachers to instruct us, but it is the Holy Spirit who makes our heart to understand the Word and does the work that transforms our life into the image of Jesus.

*"I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air." [1Co.9:26]*

Now Paul has changed the sport from racing to fighting. He wrote to Timothy admonishing him to: *"Fight the good fight of faith"* [1Ti.6:12]. We are not just shadowboxing. This is a real fight. We do not hit just anyone, but we hit our opponent (enemy). We need to know who our enemy is. If we do not, then we are merely beating the air. People are not our enemy, our enemy is Satan. Paul said, in effect, *"I am not just shadowboxing, I have an enemy: I know who the enemy is, and I know the tactics he uses."*

## THE FLESH NEEDS TO BE UNDER CONTROL

*"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." [Eph.6:12]*

*"For the good that I (the new creation) would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I (the old creation) do. ...when I would do good, evil is present with me." [Rom.7:19, 21]*

*"But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." [1Co.9:27]*

In 1 Corinthians 9:27, we see what might be called the body building of the racer. A better translation of the Greek in this verse is: *"But I take my body and I treat it severely, I lead it as a slave, (I make a slave out of my body), lest when I have proclaimed this message to others, I myself would be disapproved or disqualified from the race."*

## BATTLE OF THE 2 CREATIONS

There are 2 **I**'s living inside the believer:

1. the **SPIRIT OF ADAM** (old creation or old man) that drives me in one direction and
2. the **SPIRIT OF CHRIST** (new creation or new man) that leads me in another direction.

The **I** which has my body under subjection will be the direction that my life goes. If the **Adamic life** in me is doing the driving, corruption will be seen in me. But if the **new creation life of Christ** is mastering my body, or has my body under subjection, the righteousness of God will be seen in me.

## SUBJECTION TO THE NEW CREATION

That is why Paul said the only thing that matters is the new creation, as we read in Galatians 6:15,

*"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."*

It is this new man that must be governing our body, bringing it into subjection if we are to win the prize.

- If our body is under subjection to the **OLD CREATION**, we will be lazy on the racetrack; we will be contentious, perhaps even trying to trip up other runners and our own running will be hindered.
- If the **NEW CREATION** has our body under subjection, we will have our eyes set upon the goal toward which we are running. So, we need to bring our body under subjection, treating it harshly, and exercising it with spiritual exercise, making it a slave.

There is a beautiful picture of this in Joshua 9.

After the city of Ai was conquered, a group of men from the neighboring city of Gibeon, who were frightened when they saw the power of the Israelite army, came to Joshua and told him they were from a far country and desired to make a treaty with them. But God had given the Israelites definite instructions to destroy **ALL** Canaanites and make no treaties with them. The Israelites, however, immediately made a treaty with the Gibeonites without asking direction from the Lord. Later, when they discovered they had been deceived, they told the Gibeonites that they would honor the treaty but made them "*hewers of wood and drawers of water*" for the house of the Lord, to bring water for the laver and for washing the sacrifices for the tabernacle and to bring wood to burn the sacrifices.

This represents the victory we have in our body when we bring it into subjection by making it serve the new creation for God's sake, for the cleansing of others and for all things pertaining to God. We must learn to bring our body under subjection, lest while we are preaching this wonderful gospel, we ourselves should be disqualified from the race.

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## EXERCISING FAITH WINS THE RACE

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If we are to run this race successfully, we must learn how to exercise our body. Paul wrote to Timothy: "*bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things*" [1Ti.4:8]. If physical exercise profits us somewhat, how much more will godliness, which brings us into the place where we are made a love-slave to Christ. Our whole purpose, as we run on this racetrack, is to magnify the Lord Jesus Christ. When Paul was in prison his life certainly was not easy. He was surely suffering but he also wrote this in a letter to the Philippians:

*"For I know that this (the trials mentioned before) shall turn to my salvation (deliverance from jail, not from the lake of fire) through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death."*  
[Phi.1:19-20]

*"And we know that **ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD TO THEM THAT LOVE GOD**, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" [Rom.8:28-31]*

**FOLLOW CHRIST** *"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" [1Co.11:1].* We, who are on this racetrack, should have this same attitude regardless of the circumstances and temptations surrounding us. Paul could have looked at his circumstances in that Roman jail, and just given up. But instead, he wrote (from his cell) of his hope that Christ would be magnified in his body, whether by life or by death. We are called to suffer with Christ as Paul did there in jail. Regardless of our circumstances, our whole attitude and motive for living on this earth should be that we may win Christ and bring our body as a love-slave to Him.

There is a great conflict in our life between the old and new creation. While here on this earth, let us recognize that this is a fight...a race to the finish. We are on this racetrack and our whole desire should be to win Christ!

*"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." [1Jo.2:15]*

**THE WORLD IS NOT OUR HOME** We should use this world while we are here, but we must not let the world use us. Sometimes it appears that some of God's people are slaves to this world instead of the world being used by them.

*"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, **LET US LAY ASIDE EVERY WEIGHT**, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." [Heb.12:1-2a]*

Let us lay aside everything that would sidetrack us. These witnesses ran the race of faith, simply believing God. Today, we also have a race to win and we must lay aside every weight and sin that would trip us up on this racetrack, because the lighter we are, and the less we carry, the better we can run. We must strip down, as the racers do who wear lightweight clothing, and take off all the weights from our feet. Many of God's people carry heavy weights such as homes, automobiles, leisure-time amusements, or anything that diverts the mind from the things of God or hinders them in running well. Let us lay aside such things now, and run with patience the race, looking unto Jesus. In the next section, notice where the real battles are fought and the real victories are won.

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## THE JOY SET BEFORE US

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*"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." [Joh.15:11]*

*"Who (Jesus) for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." [Heb.12:2b]*

Jesus looked on the other side of the cross because certainly there was no joy in having thorns pressed down upon His head, or nails driven into His hands and feet, nor in the mocking of the people who shouted at Him to come down from the cross if He were the Christ. As they derided Him and tried to divert Him from completing His mission, so they

will try in every way they can to hinder us as we run this race. Many of the things they say will seem to make sense to the natural mind, but we must not listen to them. Christ certainly had the power to come down from the cross, but He could not do so and still pay the price for our redemption. He said He could call 12 legions of angels to aid Him, but He did not do so because He was looking at the prize, His Bride. We also, without bothering about what others think or say, must keep our eyes on our prize, our Lord, our Husband!

**TIME IS SHORT** There is soon coming a day when the trumpet will sound and Jesus will return for His own to take them to be with Him, and they will receive a crown. Let us set our eyes upon Jesus and only then will we be able to run with patience the race that He has set before us.

### All That I Am

All that I was, my sin, my guilt, my death, was all my own;  
All that I am I owe to thee, my gracious God alone.  
The evil of my former state, was mine and only mine;  
The good in which I now rejoice, is thine and only thine.  
The darkness of my former state, the bondage all was mine;  
The light of light in which I walk, the liberty is Thine.  
Thy grace first made me feel my sin, it taught me to believe;  
Then in believing, peace I found, and now I live, I live.  
All that I am, e'en here on earth, all that I hope to be,  
When Jesus comes and glory dawns, I owe it, Lord to Thee.

Horatius Bonar

## CHAPTER 3, RUNNER QUALIFICATIONS

### IT IS GOD WHO APPROVES

It is God who approves or disapproves His people: "*But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth*" [2Co.10:17-18]. We cannot glory in anything except in the Lord Jesus Christ, because He is the only one to receive any glory or honor. We do not approve, commend ourselves, or exalt ourselves. If there is any approval, it is the Lord who does it all.

### JESUS IS LORD

*"Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me. For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. 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."* [2Co.11:1-3]

Some of the Corinthian saints had accepted some other teachings. There were some who came from Judea to Corinth, and brought doctrines that were not the Truth. They also said that Paul was not an apostle, and that it was foolishness for him to set himself up as an apostle. The word "*jealous*" means "*full of zeal*."

The “you”, that is to be presented to Christ, is the whole Church, the Body of Christ, every born-again believer who has been espoused to Christ as a chaste virgin, having given themselves wholly to Him.

Many in The Church today have given themselves to lords other than Christ. Every place there is a denominational headquarters there is another head. Denominations, as a whole, are holding to heads other than the Lord Jesus Christ. We can have only one head, and that is our Lord Jesus Christ. It is hard enough to be submissive to one husband, much less to 2 or 3. Being espoused to one husband is God's perfect order and will, and He would have the whole Church come into this place.

### **SIMPLICITY—DESIRING TO PLEASE**

Simplicity implies a singleness of mind, a mind brought into harmony with our Lord. Paul used the same Greek word in Colossians:

*"Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in **SINGLENES**s of heart, fearing God:" [Col.3:22]*

Every servant should have a single heart toward his master. The corruption of Eve came about because she was not yielding to her husband, her master; and, is an example of The Church not yielding to Christ. Much of The Church today is not yielding to Christ in mind or heart.

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### **THE SERPENT'S GUILF**

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*"Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" [Gen.3:1]*

The serpent was saying (by implication), “Is it true that you shall not eat of every tree of the garden? God has given you a beautiful garden and everything in it, yet He is holding out on you. Is it true that you cannot have everything?” In the same way that the serpent beguiled Eve, so he attempts to beguile The Church from the simplicity that is in Christ.

The serpent appealed to Eve's natural thinking. Eve's first mistake was not in eating the fruit. She should never have discussed anything with the serpent; rather, she should have sent him to her husband. God told Adam what to do or not do, but not Eve:

*"Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." [Gen.2:16b-17]*

When the serpent began to talk with Eve, he first asked her a question. He provoked her into reasoning things out. Satan endeavors to use this same trick on all believers. He wants us to question God's Word...it is one of his favorite wiles. To the natural mind reasoning things out makes sense; however, God's Word was not given to the natural mind but to the Spiritual mind.

Had Eve sent the serpent to Adam, then Adam could have given him the Word of God and it is the Word of God that defeats Satan. Instead, Eve answered the serpent:

*"And the woman said unto the serpent, we may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." [Gen.3:2-3]*

## ERROR BRINGS DESTRUCTION

*"We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." [Gen.3:2b-3]*

Eve first misquoted, and then added to, the Word of God. God had told Adam, "*Thou shalt not eat of it*", but Eve added, "*Neither shall ye touch it lest ye die.*"

## THE SERPENT LIES

*"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." [Gen.3:4-5]*

First the serpent questioned the Word of God, and then he blasphemed by challenging its truth. He said, in effect, "Eve, God is holding back on you because He knows that when you eat of this tree you will be like God. You will be exalted and lifted up, you will be **IMPORTANT.**" We must depend upon the Holy Spirit to guide us into seeing and doing things according to God's ways not our own.

*"But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." [1Co.2:10]*

## ERROR/LIES CONTINUE TODAY

We can see all of these things in The Church today:

1<sup>st</sup>: We have denied the headship of Christ; and

2<sup>nd</sup>: We have added to the Word of God; and

3<sup>RD</sup>: We have a desire to be **Big** and **Important**, to **Be Somebody**, to build big buildings and to do great things. This desire has been the same all the way down through the ages. We read that after the flood, the people decided to build a tower to heaven and attain an important name, but God did not allow them to complete it. Humans have always wanted to **MAKE SOMETHING OF THEMSELVES.** It is this same spirit that manifested itself through Eve in the garden.

As Paul feared, so it has happened in Christendom, that the minds of believers have been corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. It has hindered our being a chaste virgin unto Christ.

## SOME BELIEVE IN ANOTHER GOSPEL

*"For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him." [2Co.11:4]*

Who was this "*another Jesus*" that was being preached? Another Jesus is another lord. Another gospel is a gospel that does not give Christ all the glory and honor. Paul

preached the wonderful gospel of the grace of God to the Galatians, yet some of them rejected this truth.

### GRACE AND PEACE FROM GOD

*"Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: to whom be glory forever and ever." [Gal.1:3-5]*

This is the Christ whom Paul preached and the Christ we preach...the Jesus we talk so much about. He gave Himself for us in order that He might deliver us from this present evil world (age) in which we live, according to the will of God the Father. This is the gospel, but many who today profess Christianity are not preaching this message. Their message is not the gospel of grace that Paul preached.

### SOME TROUBLE US WITH FALSE TEACHING

*"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel; which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." [Gal.1:6-7]*

Even in Paul's time there were those who were perverting (turning around) the gospel of Christ, making it a different gospel than the one Paul preached. Paul was writing to born-again people, a part of The Church. He preached a message of the love of Christ, and His undeserving, unmerited favor toward believers. Many today add to this through their own works and words. Some preach that we must do something to be saved. But we cannot do anything to be saved or to keep ourselves saved. We are saved by His grace alone and we are kept by His grace alone.

### GOD DISAPPROVES

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*"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." [Gal.1:8]*

This verse is in the subjunctive mood: *"If there be any way possible that this would happen, let this one be accursed."* Though some have perverted this wonderful truth of the gospel of Christ, let us stand strong for the Truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the gospel of grace, the good news. Let us not vary from the Truth even a little, because some today are preaching another gospel, a gospel of law, and a social gospel. The gospel we have is that God is working in the hearts of His people to bring them into a special place.

### GOD'S PICTURE OF A HELP MEET

*"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the Savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing." [Eph.5:22-24]*

Here we have a picture of a man and wife, teaching us that the wife is to be in subjection to her husband. But more so, it is teaching about the marriage of Christ and His Bride, and that she will be in complete subjection to Him. Is The Church today wholly in subjection to Christ? Rather, are not many in subjection to leaders, presidents, and heads of their

organizations? The Church should be in subjection to Only One, the Lord Jesus Christ. She should get the mind of Christ on every detail concerning her life. Our every smallest action should be governed by the mind of Christ, not by rules or regulations set up by organizations or by traditions of men.

*"For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."  
[1Co.2:16]*

God wants us to be governed by the mind of Christ, in complete subjection to Christ, by the quickening of the Holy Spirit. However, many in The Church are not living in subjection to Him.

#### GOD'S PICTURE OF A HUSBAND

*"That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." [Eph.5:26-27]*

Every Christian husband is a type of Christ in his marriage. Christ, as our husband, wants to do something in our lives. He wants to show us His love. It is sad that many of God's people do not allow Jesus to show His love to them. They do not take time to study the Word or to pray. Very few families have a time each day of gathering together for a time of prayer and Bible study, when God can work in their lives and captivate their hearts. They are too busy doing many things, perhaps even church work or helping the poor, to have a time for Jesus to woo them. The Word says *"Husbands, love your wives"* [Eph.5:25]. What happens in a family when a woman does not allow time for her husband to show his love to her? Such a marriage would quickly be broken. Wives take time for your husbands; take time to be with them. In the same manner every member of the Body of Christ should take time for Christ!

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#### OUR ONLY HOPE...CHRIST WITHIN

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*"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ... That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." [Eph.3:14, 16-19]*

Notice; the 4-fold petition: ☩ *"to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man"* and this is *"according to the riches of his glory."* And his glory is limitless! • *"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith."* ☩ For Christ to dwell is for Him to have a permanent abode in, and take command of your heart, dwelling there by faith, in order that *"ye may be rooted and grounded"* in His love. It is beautiful to understand what God is doing in His people. • *"that you may be able to comprehend."* To comprehend is to lay hold of a thing, to reach out and grab it, to make it real in your life. The same word is rendered *"apprehend"* in Philippians 3.

God wants us to lay hold of His things, but in order for us to do this; He has to strengthen our inner man. He has to make us to be rooted and grounded in His love and then He can make us able to comprehend the breadth, length, depth, and height of His love.



## WIFE OF THE LAMB

This great love is the absolute perfection of what God is doing in your heart. The length is the same as the breadth; the depth is the same as the height; together they are a perfect cube. John spoke of a cube in his Revelation of Christ:

*"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 the length is as large as the breadth... the length and the breadth and the height of it are equal." [Rev.21:2, 16]*

*And there came unto me one... 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." [Rev.21:9-10]*

The city is The Bride, the wife of the Lamb. She has come into this place of understanding His love, unto a perfect element. This knowledge is progressive and is gained by experience. It is possible for God's people to gain this knowledge, for Paul says that God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we may ask or even think [Eph.3:20].

### GOD'S PREPARATION OF THE BRIDE

Now, reread that wonderful passage from Ephesians 3. Christ gave Himself so that He may work in the heart and life of His Bride, to bring her to a place of maturity so there can be a marriage. He wants to wash The Church and cleanse it with the Word of God. This thought comes from Exodus 30. At the entrance to the tabernacle was a brass Laver (which held water) in which the priest must wash his hands and feet before he could go into the Tabernacle to minister. To fail to do so would render him unfit to minister before God. This brass Laver is a beautiful picture of the Word of God. This Laver was made of the women's looking glasses. The purpose of a looking glass is to examine oneself. Water, when mentioned in Scripture, has to do with the Word of God, and brass speaks of judgment. The Word of God applied to the heart of a child of God by the Holy Spirit, both show him his sins and judges them. That the priest must wash speaks of the cleansing of the walk of believers before going into service for the Lord. Jesus was speaking of this when He washed the disciples feet:

*"After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet ... Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." [Joh.13:5a, 8]*

### PRACTICAL CLEANSING REQUIRED

Jesus was teaching His disciples that their walk had to be cleansed. There is a provisional cleansing that is by the washing of the blood of Jesus Christ when we receive Him as our Saviour. But, we also need to have our hands and feet washed every day of our life. God wants to wash you daily with the water of the Word. He can only do this as we read and study His Word. This is the thing most lacking among believers today. God wants to wash us in order that He can present us to Himself, a glorious body, without any spots or wrinkles. Only faith in the Word of God will take away these blemishes.

## ALLOW GOD'S WORD TO CLEANSE YOU

When we know the Word of God and put our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, we have nothing to fear. Fear is one of the things that causes spots and wrinkles and only by the Word, can it be cleansed. I admonish you to study the Word of God; make it the top priority in your life! Through the Word Jesus cleanses us; He cleanses our life, our walk, and our service [Eph.5:25-27].

Our feet get dirty when we associate with the defilement in the world. If we do not bathe in the Word of God, we become as dirty as the world. Jesus will not marry a filthy, dirty, stinking bride. In the natural, it is difficult to be close to a person who has not bathed. It would be much more impossible for our Lord to fellowship with one who has not allowed themselves to be washed by the Lord Jesus through the Word of God.

It is evident that to qualify for this high place, our walk also must continually be cleansed by His Word. It is so important that each of us learn to trust the Lord, walk with Him, and fellowship with Him. Jesus will have a clean Bride who loves Him, and Him alone. We must yield our heart to Him and live in His Word as we "*press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*" [Phi.3:14].

## CHAPTER 4, A RAISED BODY

### GOD'S PEOPLE ARE RISEN!

*"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. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." [1Co.15:20-25]*

A period of time has elapsed between Verses 23 and 24, and is made evident by the word "*then*". At that point the action is after the end of the Kingdom Age. The previous verses will have taken place in the present Church Age. The subject of this chapter is the resurrection, and we should bear in mind that "*now*" Christ is risen from the dead, and He is the firstfruits of the resurrection. **Firstfruits** have the thought of "*a principal part*" or "*the first one of all fruit*." Christ, then, is the principal one of the resurrection. There is no one who brings forth the power of resurrection other than Christ. He is the firstfruits of all them who have gone by way of the grave. We see that Christ, as the Head of the body, is already in heaven. Therefore, in the sense of the resurrection, the Body of Christ has already been divided because the Head is in heaven, as we read, "*Christ the firstfruits*."

### CHRIST BRINGS LIFE AND HOPE

*"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." [1Co.15:22]*

As Adam was the first one to bring death, so Jesus was the principal one of the resurrection. The first "*all*" in this verse has to do with the natural or the human race. The second "*all*" has to do with the spiritual life. Every person who knows Jesus as Savior will

come into a place of resurrection, for the hope of The Church is the coming of our Lord, and seeing Him face to face. Everyone will arise in an orderly manner.

*"But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."  
[1Co.15:23]*

This word "*order*" carries the thought of "*rank or group*." It is a military word by which the army would divide its ranks into divisions. The Body of Christ is also separated into groups, yet each is still a part of the body. A part of the Body of Christ, the Head, is already in heaven. Notice how this is worded, "*in his own order*", or could be read "*in his own division*".

"The word "*afterward*" covers the whole Church Age in which we are now living. God is dividing The Church according to spiritual growth, maturity, and faithfulness.

The word "*coming*" has the thought that when He comes, He is going to come right in and claim that which is His.

When God's people see Him face to face, He will be right in among His people. We long for His coming, we long to see Him, the one who loves us and proved His love on the cross. If this longing is not in our heart we must wonder how much we really love Him.

*"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."  
[Rom.5:8]*

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## THE NATION OF ISRAEL

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*"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." [1Co.10:11]*

The nation of Israel also had a hope. Their hope was to enter the land of promise which was given them by the Lord. In the sermon he preached before he was stoned, Stephen called Israel a church in the wilderness. In 1 Corinthians 10, Israel is called an example for The Church, to show how God brought them into the land of promise. In the same way He will bring us into our promised land.

*"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." [Eph.1:3]*

## GOD SET UP RANKS IN ISRAEL

*"Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their father's house: far off about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch. And on the east side toward the rising of the sun shall they of the standard of the camp of Judah pitch throughout their armies: and Nahshon the son of Amminadab shall be captain of the children of Judah." [Num.2:2-3]*

Notice that everyone had "*his own standard*" and "*with the ensign of their father's house*." The word "*standard*" has the thought of "*a stamp*" or "*an arrangement*." We can look at the children of Israel and see that there were orders (ranks) among them. The Levites, who were the priestly tribe, were camped around the Tabernacle of Testimony and beyond the Levites the other tribes were camped, 3 on each side. God had a definite order for Israel and everyone stayed in his own order.

## ISRAEL MOVED ACCORDING TO THE TRUMPET SOUND

Even when the trumpet sounded for them to move, they all moved out according to God's appointed order. In Numbers 10 we read concerning the silver trumpets. The trumpets had a different signal for every purpose. There was a trumpet sound for going into battle, a trumpet sound for the beginning of a feast day, and a trumpet sound of gladness. There were also trumpets sounded over the burnt offerings and the sacrifices of peace offerings. When the trumpet was blown twice, it signaled the head of each tribe to assemble at the door of the Tabernacle. When an alarm was blown, it was a signal for those on the east side of the Tabernacle to go forward and each alarm indicated another side to go out. Each tribe was responsible to know its own signal. It was very important that each person learn exactly what every sound meant and so be prepared to obey the summons.

### THE TRUMPET SOUNDS!

*"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." [1Th.4:16-17]*

As the children of Israel listened for the trumpet sound to know the time, so God's people in this age also are listening for the sound of the trumpet, and if a person is ignorant of the sound, how shall he know when to go? As with Israel, we also must learn to be in tune with God, and to know His signals. We learn these signals through knowledge of the Word of God. Let us examine ourselves to see if we are in tune. When the trumpet sounds "*come up hither*" [Rev.4:1], we will be called up in ranks according to our fellowship with Jesus:

God has an order according to our knowledge of the Word. The Word is Christ Jesus. Knowledge begins with knowing Jesus.

*"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." [Joh.17:3]*

Knowledge grows as we yield our lives to the will of our Lord until the time we can say, "*Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ*" [Phi.3:8]. It is this knowledge that brings us to the place of maturity. The Word will turn our ear and put within us that wonderful hope of the promise that God has given us: "*Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ*" [Tiu.2:13]. It is this hope and knowledge of the Word of God that will change us and bring us into that special place.

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## GOD'S PEOPLE ARE CHANGED

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*"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." [2Co.3:18]*

But how can we be changed from one place to another? This is a challenging thought. In Israel, the men, of course, always remained in their tribe, only the women were allowed to change from one tribe to another, and that only by marriage. In Deuteronomy 7, we read that they were not allowed to marry outside their nation, but they could marry from one tribe to another. The tribe closest to the door of the tabernacle was Judah, which was the tribe of praise, love, and worship. From this we understand that God does have an order,

and each of us has a proper place in His order. This place is determined, not according to any outward manifestation, but according to our spiritual maturity. It is our growth through the Word of God and our yielding to the power of the Holy Spirit that changes our lives. Our desire to be married to Jesus will cause us to move ever closer to Him.

*"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." [Gen.1:26]*

Being in the image of Christ is the ultimate glory, and this will only occur as we spend time with Him in the study of His Word and in prayer and worship and in yielding our life and heart to Him every day, every hour and moment by moment.

## MANY GLORIES IN THE RESURRECTION

*"ALL FLESH IS NOT THE SAME FLESH: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. SO ALSO IS THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD." [1Co.15:39-42a]*

Remember, our subject is the resurrection of the dead. We read that there are many glories (divisions).

- First, there is the **terrestrial** (earthly glory), which has 4 divisions: Men, beasts, fishes, and birds.
- Then there is the **celestial** (heavenly glory), which has 3 divisions: The sun, which generates its own brilliance, the moon which reflects the brilliance of the sun, and the stars. The glory of the stars is divided by their distance from the sun, or the amount of reflection.

The word "*glory*" here might be rendered "*radiance*" or "*brilliance*." In Hebrews 1:3, we read that Christ is "*the brightness*" of all the glory of God and He is the basis of all the brilliance of the celestial glory. God is changing us through the working of the Holy Spirit, from glory to glory, even into His own image. If we do not yield to Him and allow Him to change us, we cannot reflect His glory. There is a danger of being identified with people we admire instead of with Christ and thereby reflecting their light instead of His glory. The closer we are to Him the more we reflect His glory, and this is our aim.

## A LIGHT THAT LIGHTENS EVERYONE

John tells us that Jesus is "*the light*" that lightens every man [Joh.1]. He is the Light of the world. When He was taken up to heaven He left His people to be the light of the world, but they must first be separated from darkness. John 3:19 records Christ's words that "*this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*" The more we love the light, the more we will be separated from darkness. The more light that is manifested in us, the more the darkness flees. What happens to the darkness when a light switch is turned on? It has to go! So we are the lights shining now. If we let Christ live in us and obey Him, the darkness is going to flee. The closer we are to the Son, the more light will be manifested in us and the less the things terrestrial will be in

our lives. Notice that in 1 Corinthians 15:39 these things terrestrial (earthly) are called "*flesh*." God wants us to be separate from the earthly and become like Jesus.

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## HOLY SPIRIT WORKING TO CHANGE US

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As we read in 2 Corinthians 3:18, He will change us. It is according to the Spirit of the Lord that these things become operative in our lives. We are born with the spirit of man, which is a spirit of darkness. When we receive Christ, we receive the Spirit of Christ, which is the Spirit of Light. The more of Christ we allow to live in us, the more of His glory is shown and the more our lives are changed. In Colossians 1:13, we read that God has "*delivered us from the power (kingdom) of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son*." This is a provisional truth that becomes practical as we yield our lives to the leading of the Holy Spirit; and though we are still living in this darkened world, our new kingdom becomes more real day by day until we are taken away into the kingdom of light. But until then, we let Him move us into a whole new, different realm by faith. God is in the process of taking a people out of the darkness of this world and separating them unto Himself. As we approach the end of this age, the world "*shall wax worse and worse*" [2Ti.3:13].

### DARKNESS OF THIS WORLD

*"But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." [1Th.5:1-3]*

This is the darkness we have been discussing: The Tribulation, the ultimate, extreme darkness of this world. The Lord is going to come as a thief in the night and steal away some of His people before the ultimate darkness enters. Every one of God's people has provisionally been brought out of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love. Provisionally, every one of His own are not in darkness that that day should overtake them, but is this true in the lives of all God's people? No! Many born-again people are enjoying darkness today. Study 1 John 1:5-7.

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## LET US WATCH!

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*"Therefore, let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober." [1Th.5:6]*

The word "*therefore*" refers to this darkness. Some of God's people are spiritually asleep, in fact they are snoring. They are making a lot of noise but not getting anything accomplished; some may even be dreamers. We are not talking about sinners, because sinners are not asleep. In Ephesians 2, we read that they (sinners) "*are dead in trespasses and sins*." We are not to sleep as other Christians who do not appropriate God's provisions and make them their own. Christ has provided for all believers by His death on the cross, all that is needed to have full fellowship with Him.

Now, the phrase "*let us watch and be sober*," means "*to be wide awake and not intoxicated with the world or the things of the darkness and systems of the world*." We are to put on the breastplate of righteousness, and the helmet of salvation, taking the shield of faith and the sword of the Lord, which is the Word of God. God has not appointed us to the day of wrath, the day of darkness, the day of tribulation. He has appointed us to deliverance from

that day of destruction. God is working in our lives to draw us to Himself and to change us into His likeness.

### **THERE ARE UNFRUITFUL WORKS**

*"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." [Eph.5:11-14]*

Wake up, shake yourself a bit, for in Hebrews 12:12 we read that we are to "*lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees.*" Wake up! Don't sleep! Be aware of your need for putting Christ first in your life! Christ then will become the No. 1 issue in life, your lover, you will see how horrible the darkness of this world has become. Then you will not want it, in fact, you will begin to despise it, and have no fellowship with it. In Ephesians 5:15, we are instructed by Paul to "*walk circumspectly*" in this world and not as fools do who are of this world.

### **LET NO MAN DECEIVE YOU**

*"Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience." [Eph 5:6]*

The Tribulation Period is the ultimate wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. These are not disobedient children, but children of the disobedient one which is Satan. Do not let people deceive you with empty words. Their words are just so much talk; they don't amount to anything and there is a lot of that around today. There are people who profess to preach the Word of God, but talk in circles, using their own theories and violating God's Word.

### **WALK AS CHILDREN OF THE LIGHT—EXAMINE YOURSELVES**

*"Be not ye therefore partakers, with them. For you were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light. (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth.)" [Eph.5:7-8]*

God's people were like the world before they were saved, but no longer. God brought them out through the blood of Christ and separated them unto Himself. He wants us to be separate from the world, so He can be a Father to us and have fellowship with us. He has brought us out of the kingdom of darkness and, as we yield to Him, He will enable us to walk as He walked, and the brilliance of His light will shine through our lives. This is the fruit of the Spirit and this is what He desires to see in our lives.

God does not want us to go into any part of The Tribulation darkness. He wants to take His people out before The Tribulation starts. And He will, but every man in his own order. What order are you in?

- Are you living in the brightness as a son of God, or just barely twinkling in the darkness of this evil age?
- How much of Christ is being reflected in your life?

There is going to be a resurrection; there is going to be a translation. The questions each of us should ask ourselves are, "where am I in God's program" and "in what order am I today?" We should aim for the very best God has, that place in the Bridal Company, the closest to the throne of Christ.

## CHAPTER 5, THE 7 CHURCHES

### JESUS IS COMING

In this chapter we want to look at some points concerning the coming of our Lord and how He is working in The Church today...preparing us for His return. We will begin to read from *The Revelation of Christ* which John received while a prisoner on the Isle of Patmos, where he was exiled for his witnessing of Christ. John wrote,

*"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; 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." [Rev.1:10-13]*

There are some who believe that this means that John was filled with the Holy Spirit on Sunday, but that is not the thought here at all. John was constantly being led by the Holy Spirit; he remained full of the Spirit. He was suffering on the Isle of Patmos because he had been led by the Holy Spirit to witness of the life and ministry of Christ and of His imminent return to this earth. What then, is the message here?

First, we need to determine what is meant by the words "*the Lord's day*." Consider Peter's testimony: "*one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day*" [2Pe.3:8].

#### THE LORD'S DAY

In the Scriptures, Sunday is never called "*the Lord's Day*." **The Lord's Day** is the day given to Christ, the day in which He is to be crowned King of Kings and Lord of Lords. It is **His Day**! It is **His Time**! God is giving His Son a **Day** which will cover a period of about 1,000 years. When this **Day** is over, as we read in 1 Corinthians 5:28, He will return the throne to His Father, and they will reign co-jointly. Christ will have His **Day**! But prior to that **Day**, the day in which we now live, Christ is judging His Church.

In the Greek manuscript for Revelation 1:10, there is no article before the word **SPIRIT**. Actually it should read: "*I was in Spirit on the Lord's Day*." What John is saying is that his spirit was taken out of his body, and while his body remained on the Isle of Patmos, his spirit was transported all the way across the Church Age to the Day of the Lord. He heard a voice behind him as a trumpet, and he turned and saw 7 golden candlesticks (lamp stands). These lamp stands represent the 7 churches [Rev.1:20]. He looked back over this Church Age and saw Jesus in the midst of the light bearers in The Church, judging them. What we really should understand from this passage is that He is speaking of the judgment of The Church during this Church Age.



## THE LAMP STANDS

I want us to think about these lamp stands. In every oil burning lamp, there are degrees of light. The amount of light is dependent on 2 conditions: ☞ the oil in the bowl, and • the condition of the wick. Some of you might remember in the days before electric lights, what happened when the lamp was not properly prepared. If there was little or no oil, there was no light. If the wick was not properly trimmed, instead of light you got black smoke. In the Scripture, oil speaks of the Holy Spirit. It is very important that each vessel of the Lord be continually full of the Holy Spirit. Having been filled 20 years ago, or even 2 years ago, is not good enough. We must be full and bubbling over with the power of the Holy Spirit every day.

**LIGHTS NEED TRIMMING:** *"Christ...loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" [Eph.5:25b-26].* It is through this washing that He does the work of trimming and keeping our lights shining brightly. Saints, when the Lord takes His scissors to trim our little wicks; it hurts, but that is the only thing that will bring forth His light through us.

- Are we allowing Him to do this work for us?
- Are we being continually cleansed with the washing of Water by the Word?

If a person is not saved, has never received Jesus as his personal Savior, then, of course, there can be no light in him at all because Christ is the Light. Such a person may seem to be religious, may attend a church regularly, but that does not mean he knows Jesus Christ as Savior. It simply means he gets up and goes to a religious meeting on Sunday. In order to have any light at all, even a little sparkle, we must have Christ in our life. This is so simple. When a person asks Christ to come into his heart, He comes in. When Christ is in our heart, then we are a part of His Church; and then God puts radiance in our life as we learn the Word of God. So, in The Church, we can see the different degrees of light bearers, which we saw when we looked at 1 Corinthians 15:39-52. Christ must be first.

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## JUDGMENT OF THE 7 CHURCHES

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Now, we will turn our attention to Revelation 2 and 3 where we find recorded the finished judgment of these same 7 churches we read about in Revelation 1.

The Scripture concerning these churches can be studied in 3 ways:

1. There were 7 **literal** churches in 7 literal cities and these things which we read here were actually happening at that time.
2. They could be studied from a **dispensational** view point or we could say, how these things have been judged during the whole Church Age in which we now live.
3. The way in which we are affected by these things in our **lives today**.

Item 3 is what we want to study now. I believe we can look at these 7 churches, examine them carefully and find ourselves in one of these 7 positions. This is what God is doing...He is judging us today.

## HOW DOES OUR WALK LOOK TO JESUS

This judgment in Revelation 1 is not the judgment seat of Christ which Paul wrote about in 2 Corinthians 5:10 and in Romans 14:10, which speak of a literal seat of judgment. But the word used for **judgment seat** is the same word used in John 19:13. It is "*a raised platform from which a ruler speaks to his subjects.*" Today, He is walking among the lamp stands; but, there will come a day when we will stand before the judgment seat of Christ and receive according to the deeds done in our body, whether good or bad. The good is what is done through yielding to the Spirit, and the bad is what is done through yielding to the flesh. If there is a gain for some, there will also be a loss for others (in this connection, study 1Co.3:13 and Col.3:24-25).

A good illustration of this can be seen at our state fair. There the contestants are examined by the judges, who at a later time declare who is to receive the prizes according to individual merit. In the same way, Christ is standing among the lamp stands, and then, later at the judgment seat, He will give out the rewards. If we find ourselves in one of the categories that we will read about in the following chapters, we will receive the equivalent of that category.

### 4 THINGS RELATING TO EACH CHURCH

There are 4 things which Christ said to each of these 7 churches:

1. To each church there was given a description of the One doing the **judging**.
2. To each He said, "*I know **thy works**.*"
3. He said, "*To him that **overcometh**.*"
4. "*He that **hath an ear** let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*"

### PHILADELPHIA, CHURCH OF BROTHERLY LOVE

Let's consider the church at Philadelphia [Rev.3:7-13]. **Philadelphia** means "*brotherly love*." This is human love or kindness toward any person. This is the work of Christ, working outward from our mortal body.

**THE JUDGE** — Here the Judge is seen in a 4-fold manner. He is seen as ☩ The Holy One, • The True One, ☩ The Authority of David, and • The Power of God. He can perfect these fruits in His people as they yield to His Spirit.

**THY WORKS** — "*I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name*" [Rev.3:8]. In Revelation 3:8, He shows His abilities and man's inabilities. In Revelation 3:9, He shows His power to keep His people from false teachings and His ability to overcome them. The believer's part is to guard the Word concerning Christ's suffering and to enter into them. His promise is to keep His people who are walking by the Holy Spirit, out of the time of tribulation and to use His power to do so.

**TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH** — There are some who will overcome every obstacle along the way. There is a special place for such saints. There will be a terrible trial of affliction coming. This is the time told of in Matthew 24:21-28, but before that time of Tribulation, He

is coming again for His Bride. Oh, what a wonderful promise! It will be in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. In the meantime, His people are to get a good hold on the Truth that God has given. Jesus is the Truth. His people hold these things dear to the heart in order that no one can take their crown—the crown of victory, which is as the crown the winner of the Olympic Races are awarded.

These are called a pillar: *“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out”* [Rev.3:12]. And where is the pillar to be? It will be in the very Temple of God. This speaks of their established place, their strength, their ability to hold up other saints. On this pillar is written 3 names:

- The 1<sup>st</sup> is **GOD'S NAME**, The Name of Deity, a Glorified body, not flesh.
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> name is **NEW JERUSALEM**. In connection with this thought, study Rev.21:1-2, 9-10. This is Christ's bride, and includes her adornment.
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> name is the new Name of Jesus. He has not yet been called a **BRIDEGROOM**. This is a name of marriage, which is the highest calling.

**HE THAT HATH AN EAR** — Are we longing for that Name to be given to us? Are our ears open to hear what the Spirit is saying to us? We need to ask Him to open our ears to hear what He is saying to the churches: *“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit”* [1Co.2:9-10].

### SMYRNA, SUFFERING WITH CHRIST

*“And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; 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. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. 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.2:8-11]

**THE JUDGE** — **Smyrna** means “myrrh,” and speaks of those who have identified themselves with Christ in His death and in His resurrection. They said this when being baptized and meant every word of it. They have laid their lives on the line and given their lives for the Lord Jesus Christ.

**THY WORKS** — They suffered persecution. As Paul said, “I die daily” for the Lord Jesus Christ, or *I pour myself out every day as a drink offering*.

### TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH

*“FOR THE LORD HIMSELF SHALL DESCEND FROM HEAVEN with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”* [1Th.4:16-17]

*“But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.”* [1Co.15:23]

Here we have those who have died, and those who are alive at the coming of the Lord, but every man in his own order.

**HE THAT HATH AN EAR** — We can discover by self-examination in what order we will be. The 1<sup>ST</sup> order, Philadelphia and Smyrna, is without blame. The 2<sup>ND</sup> order is the Ephesians.

### EPHESUS, FULL-PURPOSED

The name **Ephesus** means "*full-purpose*." They are a people in whom God's full purpose is centered. We read what the Judge said to them:

*"Unto 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." [Rev.2:1]*

#### **THE JUDGE**

*"And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted." [Rev.2:3]*

*"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." [Rev.2:4]*

There are several things listed to the credit of the saints in Ephesus and only one thing against them. They were commended for their works, their labor, their patience, their stand against evil, their stand against false prophets, their longsuffering, and their hatred of the deeds of the Nicolaitans. But they had left their first love, the Lord Jesus Christ. They no longer had that special, preeminent love that a wife should have for her husband. There are many who love the Lord and begin the race for this high calling, then little by little let down, because something happened to discourage them along the way, and they lose the keen sharp love they had in the beginning. Where they used to go to meeting 4 times a week, they drop to 3, then 2, even once, and may even stop going altogether. It is because their love for Christ is no longer the greatest thing in their life. God's people cannot say they have a Bridal love, without loving His people and desiring to meet with them. Then, without this fellowship, other things begin to creep in and replace the love they had for Christ. It could be their job, friends, family, home, automobiles; one excuse after another. Christ wants 1<sup>st</sup> place in our life. He will not take 2<sup>nd</sup> place. These Ephesians represent those who let down a little at a time until many other things are more important than Jesus. Do you have anything in your life more important than Jesus?

**TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH** — If the Ephesians will overcome this one wrong, then they would automatically move up into the Philadelphia-Smyrna group where no fault was found. The overcoming saints go into a higher rank. Those who do not overcome will drop down into a lower rank. We are either overcoming or being overcome by the situations in our lives. There is no middle-of-the-road or sitting-down place.

**HE THAT HATH AN EAR** — Paul wrote: "*And he is the head of the body, The Church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence*" [Col.1:18].

### SARDIS, A FLESHLY WALK

Those who do not overcome this condition will drop down into the **Sardis condition**, as seen in Revelation 3:1. **Sardis** means "*red one*". This speaks of the fleshly, carnal life in

Protestantism. These are a lower order than the Philadelphia-Smyrna group. The Sardis group is seeing Christ as **HE WHO has THE 7 STARS**; while the ones in Ephesus see Christ **holding THE STARS**.

### **THE JUDGE**

*"Unto the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand..." [Rev.2:1]*

*"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." [Rev.3:1]*

There is a difference between having and holding. If I am holding an object in my hand, I have control of it. But if I lay it down, though it still belongs to me, yet I am not in complete control of it. Those of Sardis belonged to Him, but they had not allowed Him control over their lives. Therefore, He only *"hath the...seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars."* If God no longer has complete control of a people because they left their first love and sought help from the world, then the working Spirit of God is also of no effect as far as His control in them. Seven is the number of completeness or fullness.

**THY WORKS** — Then, *"thou hast a name."* They had this name of a **SPIRITUAL LIFE**, but it was only in appearance, not in reality. The word **Sardis** also means *"that which remains"*. This condition represents Protestantism as a whole. The word **protestant** means *"protesting"*, holding the remaining truth of the early saints who were called Protestants because they began by protesting against the evils in the religious world. Study the lives of men like Martin Luther, John Wesley, John Hess, and others who gave their lives that we might have the Word of God. But as the name of Sardis finally had only the appearance of being alive, Protestantism, also, is now only a name, without life.

The church at Sardis was admonished to *"Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain"* [Rev.3:2]. The Church today needs to take a stand against sin and against religious orders that are not spiritual and not in harmony with the Word of God. The works of Sardis were *"not found perfect before God"*, not fulfilled or complete. This is how the Judge found conditions in Sardis in that day, and it is the condition of the majority of Christendom today. Can anyone believe that they would have the same place in glory as Philadelphia?

*"Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." [Rev.3:3]*

In 1 Thessalonians 5:2, we read that Jesus will come *"as a thief in the night."* When a household is aware of the approach of a thief, they would be prudent to stay awake and alert. Many of God's people are awake, looking, hoping, and longing for the coming of their Lord; their attitude being "I can hardly contain myself until Jesus comes." But many are sound asleep. They do not care and give little thought to His soon return. It is to these that He will come as a thief in the night.

*"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." [Rev.3:4]*

Those wonderful undefiled garments speak of the righteousness of Christ, with which God's people are clothed. These garments can be defiled by not living for the Lord, by

letting the filth of the old creation come upon them. It does not defile the life of Christ, but it makes the life and witness of that person without effect. Those who have not defiled their garments, whose garments are still white and not tinged with the filth of this world, are worthy of something better than those who have allowed their garments to become defiled.

### **TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH**

*"He that overcometh, 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." [Rev.3:5]*

The Greek word for the phrase "*shall be clothed*" means "*to throw over as to throw an outer garment over, as a cape or a mantle.*" In 1 Corinthians 11:15, this same word is translated "*veil*" where it has to do with a headcovering of a woman, showing her subjection to her head. There are 2 phases of overcoming here: ☒ the fact that she has overcome the worldliness of Protestantism and • has come out of this situation having left the religious organizations and has taken Christ as her head. Now she has no other head than Christ. This takes her out of this whole situation and puts her in a different place or rank than the one which we see in the system.

The first problem was that she had denied the headship of Christ by joining religious organizations and now, by overcoming this, she has put on the veil which identifies her with Christ alone.

Secondly, she doubted that she had eternal life. There is much of this teaching in Christendom today. Hear His words, "*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.*" Here, the Greek words translated "*will not*" is a much stronger word. In fact, it is 2 words, both of which mean "*no*", and when used together might be translated "*no, not by any means will I blot out his name out of the book of life.*" These must surely be words of encouragement to people who have lived their lives in organizations that teach they can lose their salvation.

Here, there are 2 things said to the one who overcomes:

1. I will take him out of these organizations and will veil this one as belonging to me. ‘
2. I will take all fear from his life and set him free of legalism and self-righteousness.

Then He gives a promise; "*I will not blot out his name,*" instead, "*I will confess his name before my Father.*"

### **HE THAT HATH AN EAR**

*"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit sayeth unto the churches." [Rev.3:6]*

The non-overcomer from the condition in Ephesus goes into the **Sardis condition**, which will be the 2<sup>nd</sup> order. The non-overcoming saints from the **Sardis condition**, who will not take Christ as their only head, and will not stand for the Truth, and who fit into the organized system as a whole, will drop down into the **Pergamos condition**.



## PERGAMOS, LOOKING TO THE WORLD

*"And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges." [Rev.2:12]*

**THE JUDGE** — Notice how the Judge is seen by them, as having a sharp, 2-edged sword. The name **Pergamos** is from a compound Greek word, meaning "*much married*." These people were **MUCH-MARRIED** to the world. We can see how they dropped down from simply belonging to organizations to being much-married to many religious and political systems of this world.

### **THY WORKS**

*"I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's 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." [Rev.2:13]*

Where is Satan's seat? Satan is called the "*prince of this world*." In the book of John we see that 3 times it is stated that his seat is in this world. Don't ever fool yourself. Satan does have influence over the natural man in this world. This does not mean that he is overpowering God. God is still on the throne! But it means that Satan is the **PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR** [Eph.2:2] and has the thought that he is in control of the situation. So, we have shifted from the Ephesian stars where Christ held The Church, to the Sardis stars where He only had them, but now they have given control of the situation to Satan and are not allowing Christ any control at all. He is seen as one with a 2-edged sword, which is the Word of God. The Word of God is the only thing that will bring them out and back to Him.

*"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 Nicolaitans, which thing I hate." [Rev.2:14-15]*

The Judge had not 1 thing, nor 2 things, but several things against them. First, it is the doctrine of Balaam (recorded in Num.22-24) where Balac, the king of Moab, hired Balaam to curse the Israelites. Although he kept trying, each time instead of Israel being cursed God blessed them. Then the king advised Balac to send his people among them and make marriages with them. Soon, little by little, the Israelites began compromising and were soon committing fornication with these heathen people, and then worshipping their gods. In the same way, the church at Pergamos became so knit together with the world, that it was practically impossible to distinguish God's people from the people of the world. It is true, also, in The Church today.

He said, also, that Pergamos had among them those who held the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, whose deeds as we have already studied, were hated by the Ephesian church. Who are these? We cannot be sure who the Nicolaitans were because Jesus is talking only of their deeds. The word **Nicolaitan** comes from 2 Greek words meaning "*victory*" and "*people*". The whole word means to "*lord it over the laity*", as it is with Priests, Doctors of Divinity and Reverends who reign in Christ's place. This is true in most religious organizations. God hates this, as do those who agree with Him. In a sense, this is spiritual rebellion. Christ surely will not have a Bride who disagrees with Him.

In Revelation 2:16, He tells the church at Pergamos to repent or He "*will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.*" Notice, He will come quickly, not waiting. The Greek word used here is in other Scriptures and is translated as "*soon*", "*shortly*", and "*hastily*". He will come to them with the sword of His mouth, the sharp, 2-edged sword. Later, at the end of The Tribulation, He will again come with the 2-edged sword, when He comes to set up His Kingdom.

#### **TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH**

*"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." [Rev.2:17]*

There is a 2-fold reward to the overcoming saints in this condition:

1. They will eat of "*the hidden manna*" which was a wilderness food, not a heavenly food. The Jews said to Jesus:

*"Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat." But Jesus answered: "... Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven." [Joh.6:31-32]*

The true manna has been hidden, they seek only the type that points to Jesus, who is the one they should be feeding on (spiritually), but they are still eating the wilderness food. We can see that their position is not the same as those who have fully overcome as in Philadelphia or Smyrna. After Israel crossed Jordan and came into the promised land the Manna stopped. Saints who will not take their place in heaven with Christ are still enjoying Manna.

2. The 2<sup>nd</sup> promise (reward) is "*a white stone.*" Throughout the Bible, it was customary, whenever the Jews needed an answer from God to determine doubtful questions, they would cast lots. This was done by putting a black stone and a white stone into a vessel and casting one of them into the lap [Pro.16:33]. The black stone indicated rejection, the white stone signified acceptance. This was the method used in Acts 1:26. The promise of the white stone shows that though they were still eating wilderness food they were nevertheless accepted.

#### **HE THAT HATH AN EAR**

*"And in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." [Rev.2:17]*

So the overcoming saints in Pergamos will be separated and set aside for a place and a name that they alone will have. But the non-overcoming saints will drop down into the Thyatira position.

#### **THYATIRA, ODOR OF AFFLICTION**

*"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; 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." [Rev.2:18-19]*

**THE JUDGE** — **Thyatira** means "*an odor of affliction*". This church represents the mass of religion in idolatry [Col.3:5]. Here the writer is seen as eyes as "*a flame of fire*" and feet as "*fine*"



*brass*" emphasizing His position as the Judge. Oh, how great a judgment to those who hold to idolatry!

**THY WORKS** — "*I know thy works.*" This speaks of those who are always working. There are many in Christendom today whose whole religion is based on works; whose whole theme is charity and giving. It is all set up in works, and the first works more than the last.

*"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." [Rev.2:20]*

The record of Jezebel is in 1 Kings 16. She was the daughter of the heathen king of Zidon and married to Ahab, the king of Israel. Being a princess and having something in herself to boast, she began to draw away God's people; teaching them to worship Balaam and other foreign gods, calling herself a prophetess. It is a terrible situation when God's people are taught by false prophets who do not know the Lord, but many are being led astray by false teachings, organization, and worldly systems; things that seem very religious, but have no power. Paul warned against this in a letter to Timothy:

*"In the last days perilous times shall come...(those) having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away." [2Ti.3:1, 5]*

Jezebel taught them to turn away from Jehovah God to idols. Study Elijah's test of the heathen god 1 Kings 18. It is a sermon all its own. The idol had no power and could not answer prayer no matter what the idol worshippers did.

*"And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation except they repent of their deeds." [Rev.2:21-22]*

There are many *Jezebels*, false prophets, in the so called Christian churches today drawing God's people away from the Truth of God's Word. Would anyone dare to think Christ would have a Bride from these churches?

Let us compare the promises given to Philadelphia and Thyatira. Christ saying to the church in Philadelphia "Because you kept my Word, you have no idolatry whatsoever, and I will take you out so that you will not see any of the tribulation period at all." To Thyatira He says, "I will cast you and all of your children into great tribulation." Now these are saved people, and there are many people who are saved in Christendom today who will see some Tribulation because of the situation they are in, except they repent of these deeds.

*"And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: (this will be in this present age) and I will give unto every one of you according to your works." [Rev.2:23]*

In effect He is saying to them, "I know your works, your service and faith, and these are greater than your second works and I will judge you for them -- this is what you are after and this is what you will receive."

## **TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH**

*"And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star." [Rev.2:26-28]*

Some will overcome the condition, they will watch over His works. He compared their works with "my works;" not only the work on the cross but what He has worked in them. They are the feet portion of Christ's body seen in Zechariah

*"And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south." [Zec.14:4]*

These are the 5 foolish virgins of Matthew 25:1-13.

We see in Psalm 2:9, that after Jesus subdues the nations He will break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. He will have some people to rule over them. Jesus will reign with His Bride in heaven, the 144,000 Jews will rule over the Jews and these overcomers will rule under them. These overcomers will have a particular place. He will rule the nations with a rod of iron. This will be after The Tribulation is over when Christ begins to reign.

*"And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." [Rev.20:4]*

This is a different company yet; These were slain during The Tribulation for the witness of Christ, and will be raised from the dead and they will rule with Christ for a limited period of time, 1,000 years. This is not The Bride ruling with Christ because her rule is not limited. She is a Queen, at the side of her husband. The whole Church will reign with Christ in some degree. There are many who reign with a king, such as knights, dukes, and princes. But these of Revelation 20:4 are earthly, and have been slain during The Tribulation; their reign will be earthly, not heavenly. These are the souls under the altar, spoken of in Revelation 6:9, also the woman in the wilderness of Revelation 12:14.

## **LAODICEA, PROFESSORS**

*"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; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert neither cold nor hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." [Rev.3:14-18]*

**THY WORKS** — The Laodiceans are professors of salvation, but not possessors. This is the condition of religious people who really do not have anything. There are many people who join religious organizations, who think they are all right, that they have need of

nothing, rich and increased with goods, but they are mistaken, they have nothing without Jesus because He alone has the remedy for the religious systems of this world. Saints, we have so much more than religion in Christ. Religion is man's effort to find God; salvation is God's effort to find man. Man needs God; man needs salvation not religion. Yet many have nothing, except religion.

*"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent." [Rev.3:19]*

In effect He is saying, "I am doing everything to draw you to where I want you." Many things that happen in the lives of people are allowed by God to draw them into a place that they see their need of a Savior, and to see the need of Jesus in their heart. Joining a religious organization will not help anyone. We all know about inoculation, the process by which a person is given an injection that contains bacteria of a disease to stimulate antibodies and so prevent the disease. Some churches give a bit of Jesus so people won't receive Christ, but we must have Christ in our lives to obtain eternal life with Him. Jesus said:

*"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]*

Notice, which side of the door Jesus is on here. He is outside knocking to get in. In so much of Christendom today, He is knocking on the outside wanting to get in. He said, "*I will come into him, and will sup with him*"; or, "we will have supper together; we will have fellowship around the dinner table together." There are many in Christendom who have never invited Jesus into their lives. As many as receive Him, He gives the right to become children of God; as many as put their trust in His Name. He knocks on the door of hearts and calls, "Will you let me come in?" I thank God for the day He knocked on my heart's door, and I said, "Lord Jesus come into my heart." He came in and gave me a new heart, a new life, and a new joy. Here is what I was...wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked, and He gave me the eye salve so that I could see.

#### **TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH**

*"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne." [Rev.3:21]*

This is the last order, the last rank. They will have a place "*to sit with me in my throne*." But it will not be as a bride but as a friend; they will intercede for others on earth. Isn't it wonderful to know that all the saints will share in the Messiah's rule? It will be in the same place that He sat with His Father on His throne. How has He been sitting with His Father? Over 2,000 years as an Intercessor. This is the position these will have.

Paul wrote, "*If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed of God*" [1Co.16:22]. The thought here is, if any man does not have even the poorest of sacrifices, or a meal offering, which would signify just barely knowing Him, they do not know Him at all. They are accursed of God. If they knew Him even a little, then the blessing would be according to how well they knew Him. However, no blessing is mentioned for this non-overcoming group; therefore, they do not know Him.

## WE MUST EXAMINE OURSELVES

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Let us examine our hearts. Where do we stand in God's program? In the day that we stand before God, will He say, "I find nothing wrong; your heart is right before me?" This does not mean we will not have any failures in life, but if we do fail we apply 1 Joh.1:9, "*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" It does not mean we will not sin, but that our heart is right before our Lord. Paul wrote,

*"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." [2Ti.4:7-8]*

There is a crown, a wreath of victory, for some people. When we leave this earth, we will be given a position for which we are qualified, and it will be an eternal position. It will not change; it will stay forever; and, eternity is a long time. I want to be an overcomer, don't you? I want God's best in my life. All the values of this world, the things of the world that men strive for and enjoy during their lifetimes, cannot be compared to 1 minute of eternity without Christ. With all his wealth, Solomon said, "*all is vanity and vexation of spirit*" [Ecc.1:14].

He was the wisest, richest and best ruler of all Israel, and he realized that all things of this world leave our soul empty and reaching for what we cannot find. Without Christ, we cannot have satisfaction in life. But though we have nothing but poverty in this life, if Christ is real and living in the heart, we lack nothing. Run after Jesus. If you do not know Jesus as your Saviour, please, receive Him now. Without Him you have nothing, but when you receive Him you can go on from there letting Him build you up and work in your life, to bring you into a place of reigning with Him.

## CHAPTER 6, REVELATION 4

*"And 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. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind." [Rev.4:1-6]*

The "*after this*" in Verse 1 refers back to the judgment of the churches in the previous chapters. Again, as in the first chapter, a definite article "*the*" should not appear before the word "*spirit*." It should be "*I was in spirit*." In those chapters, John was looking at The Church, but now he sees a door open in heaven, and the same trumpet that spoke in Revelation 1:10, now speaks to him again saying "*Come up hither*." His spirit goes up to heaven, and the first thing he sees is a throne, and Jesus is sitting on that throne. We must always keep in mind that much of the book of Revelation is written in symbols and is prophecy, and it is a vision of John. Revelation 5 takes place after The Church is judged.

## THE RAINBOW, THE MERCIES OF CHRIST

The rainbow speaks of the mercies of Christ in the midst of all the judgment that is coming upon the earth. There was a rainbow at the time of Noah when judgment was being poured out; there will also be a rainbow when judgment is poured out once again.

### AROUND THE THRONE

The word **seat** in Revelation 4:4 is the same Greek word that is translated "**THRONE**." There are 24 other thrones that are round about the 1 throne. The 24 elders, clothed in white raiment and with crowns of gold, are the same as the Philadelphia and Smyrna group. These are full, overcoming saints that have thrones just like Jesus, surrounding His throne in identification with Him in His reign. These are those who have learned to reign in life with Christ Jesus during this Church Age. They have learned to abound over (overcome) every obstacle which came into their lives, to suffer with Him in everything. We sing, *"If I may but win Him, if Christ I may gain, I care not how hot is the fire."*

Do we really mean it? These saints we read of here really meant it. They didn't care what the people thought or said; they cared only what they read in the Word of God.

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### JESUS TAKES HIS THRONE

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This is the beginning of the reign of Christ. First, His throne is set up in heaven (as we read in Revelation 19, His throne will be set up on the earth 250 days short of the 7 years of Tribulation). In the meantime, these saints have already been reigning almost 7 years before Christ begins to reign on the earth.

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### THE 4 BEASTS - LIVING ONES

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A better rendering of the word **beasts** in Revelation 4:6 is **LIVING ONES**, or **LIVING CREATURES**. The next verses are a description of these living ones, and are the same as that of Christ. The 4-fold biography of Christ in the gospels presents the complete picture of Christ on earth. Matthew portrays Christ as King, Mark as a Servant, Luke as a Man, and John, as a Heavenly being. Let us look at these individually and compare them with the living ones:

- The 1<sup>st</sup> is likened to a lion (His **kingly** nature), as He learned to reign as King on the earth, which is pictured in Matthew.
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> is likened to a calf (His **sacrificial** nature), as seen in Mark.
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> had a face of a Man (His **sinless** nature), as seen in Luke.. Notice, it does not say He was **LIKENED** to man, but that He **Is** man.
- The 4<sup>th</sup> is like an eagle (His **heavenly** nature), as seen in John.

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## GOD'S PEOPLE

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### HAVE A NEW 4-FOLD NATURE

This 4-fold nature, which Christ has given us, is developed as we yield our lives to the Lord. We have a sacrificial nature but, you don't see very many of God's people sacrificing themselves. Yet Paul writes to the Romans:

*"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." [Rom.12:1]*

God wants us to be a living sacrifice not a dead one, unto Jesus. He also gives us a heavenly nature:

*"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." [Eph.1:3]*

### HAVE A HEAVENLY HOME IN HIS HEAVENLY KINGDOM

And indeed our blessings, inheritance, and longings are to be in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus. All this is seen in the 4 Living Ones. The difference between the 4 Living Ones and the 24 Elders is merely a numerical figure of different acts of operation, yet they are the same company of people and are represented by the Philadelphia and the Smyrna groups. These are all glorified human beings that have overcome the world, and in whom Christ finds no fault.

The number 24 is 2 times 12 (2 is the number of complete witness and 12 is the number of Gods' Kingdom). His Heavenly Kingdom is seen in these people. It can be proved that they are neither angels nor people of Israel by the description given in Revelation 5:9. But before we get there, we will look at the desires of their heart.

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### ALL CREDIT TO JESUS

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*"The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." [Rev.4:10-11]*

We do not read where angels will have crowns, they are called "*ministering spirits*" in Hebrews 1:14. Jesus was so glorious that crowns won in the race in this life did not seem important anymore, so they cast them at His feet.

Today, there is a real lack among God's people of praise, worship, and giving honor to the Lord. Notice their praise and worship: "*Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created*" [Rev.4:11].

### ONLY JESUS IS WORTHY TO OPEN THE BOOK

*"And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?" [Rev.5:1-2]*

They searched the heavens and could find no one able to open the book. But one of the 24 Elders had the answer. He knew who was worthy because they had lived close to the Lord, and knew the Word of God. They cried out "*Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power.*" For the same reason He is able to receive this honor too.

## THE BOOK OF JUDGMENT

This book is the book of judgment of Christ upon ungodly men. He is seen here as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, but when He opens the book, He is seen as a freshly slain Lamb. His shed blood gave Him the right to open the book. The Lion, the Lamb, and the one sitting on the throne all represent Christ, but each is seen in a different aspect. The 24 Elders and the 4 Living Creatures are different aspects of the same company of overcoming saints. The act of the Lamb taking the book signifies that only He had the right to open the book.

## WORSHIP AND NEW SONG

*"And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints."*  
[Rev.5:8]

In Ephesians 6:10-18, in Paul's discourse on the armour for victorious saints, the last one listed is **PRAYER**. Only God's people have this glorious privilege of bringing all their needs to the very throne of God.

*"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."* [Rev.5:9]

This was a "*new song*." No one can sing a song of glory except a redeemed person, and their only song will be of redemption. Notice the use of the pronoun "*us*." There are people who reject the translation because there is one manuscript that omits this word, so they claim these to be angels, but we have no record that angels ever sang. But "*us*" is in almost all other manuscripts and it shows that Christ has people who are redeemed by His blood from all over the world. They really love the Lord and their songs are songs of the blood. Do you have that song? Is that the song ringing in your heart? Some Christians would just as soon sing a worldly song as a gospel song. Not so with this company of full overcoming saints.

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## ANOTHER GROUP IN HEAVEN—THE 2<sup>ND</sup> RANK

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Now, we will look at the 2<sup>nd</sup> order (rank) in Revelation 7. The first part of the chapter tells of the sealing of the 144,000, then after the sealing, we read:

*"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood around the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, what are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, these*

*are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them." [Rev.7:9-15]*

Who are these? First, we see they are an innumerable company taken out of every nation, unlike the 24 Elders who were a specific number. The **MAJORITY** is not right when it comes to spiritual things or doctrine. They think that having a big membership or drawing big crowds proves them right, but Saints remember...If the **MAJORITY** runs after something, it is the natural mind that is being drawn, not the spiritual mind. Jesus preached to thousands, but not many followed Him. Only 120 were in the upper room on the day of Pentecost. That is a small ratio compared to those who heard Him and could have been there. Few people really want the Truth. Most would rather have their ears tickled and run after the crowd. They want their soul thrilled for a short time rather than be established in the Word.

## THE 2 HEAVENLY GROUPS COMPARED

Let us compare the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> ranks. This 2<sup>nd</sup> group is taken out of every nation but they stand before the throne, whereas the 24 Elders are seated on thrones. The second group had on white robes; the elders had white raiment. The word translated "*robes*" is a Greek word from which our English word "*stole*" is derived. The white raiment indicates position and they are like the raiment of the King, which identifies them with Him. The robes of the innumerable company only show the righteousness obtained from believing in Christ as Saviour.

Next, the 2<sup>nd</sup> group had palms in their hands, which shows a lesser place than the 24 Elders, who had crowns that they cast before the throne. Then the other company "*cried with a loud voice*," but the 24 Elders have harps to play and they sing. In the Septuagint, the word "*harp*" is rendered "*ten-stringed instrument*." Did you know that heaven is going to be a noisy place, filled with singing and shouting and giving glory to God? These singers will not be mumbling to themselves, afraid someone will hear them. They will lift their voices and sing with everything that is within them.

Then we see that those in the 2nd group "... *came out of great tribulation*..." The 24 Elders were taken out of the world before The Tribulation. They had laid hold of the promise of which we read in Revelation 3, "*Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation, which will come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth*." The first group is "*kept*" out, while the second group is "*taken*" out of the Great Tribulation.

## SERVANTS OR BRIDE

*"Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." [Rev.7:15-17]*

This 2<sup>nd</sup> group is seen as servants, not as a bride. A bride serves, but not as a slave would serve. The difference is that a bride serves because of love, a servant serves because they have to.

We read that there will be fellowship. The thought here is of spiritual hunger and thirst. Jesus spoke of those who feast on Him and drink of Him. For this 2<sup>nd</sup> company, when they



were here on earth, there was a lack of this constantly feasting and drinking upon the Lord. Now they will never hunger and thirst again. These words, *"neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat"* speaks of the tribulation of life and sufferings they endured. *"God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."* There is a common belief that there will be no tears in heaven, but evidently there will be some for a short time, for He will wipe them away. I am sure there will be no tears among the overcomers.

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### A 3<sup>rd</sup> GROUP (RANK) SEEN

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Now we come to the 3<sup>rd</sup> order (rank).

*"And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth." [Rev.14:1-3]*

The sealing of the 144,000 Jewish people is recorded in Revelation 7 and their place in heaven in Revelation 14. This sealing is done by the Holy Spirit as in the sealing of Ephesians 1:13, *"sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise."* They are sealed with the name of the living God. Jesus said the 1<sup>st</sup> company had *"the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God ... and... my new name."* They receive 3 names whereas the 144,000 will receive the Father's name alone. This 3<sup>rd</sup> company is redeemed, a group all its own. They will be in heaven before the Antichrist comes in great force.

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### A 4<sup>th</sup> GROUP (RANK)

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*"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, how long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were gives unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." [Rev.6:9-11]*

This 4<sup>th</sup> group is also a preview of what is coming with the opening of the seals and goes on through the whole Tribulation Period. This group is seen as souls without a body; they have been killed during The Tribulation. They are waiting for the time when those *"that should be killed as they were"* have also been martyred. They are overcomers who have been martyred by the Antichrist empowered by Satan himself.

<h2>CHAPTER 7, REVELATION 17-19</h2>
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### THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB

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*"And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne,*

saying, Amen; Alleluia. And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God." [Rev.19:1-9]

## **BUT ONLY AFTER "THESE THINGS"**

Let us consider these verses. This chapter begins with "*After these things I heard*". The thought here is, "*After I heard these things, then I heard something else.*" So "*these things*" of Revelation 19:1 refer to Revelation 17-18. Let us go back to these chapters to see what caused such great commotion in heaven at this time.

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## **JUDGMENT OF THE FALSE CHURCH**

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*"And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."* [Rev.17:1-5]

The woman we read of here is the false church. They are professors that are not possessors. Many of these are the non-overcomers of the assembly of the Laodiceans. Jude called them "*clouds without water.*" Read the description of them in 2 Peter 2:17-19.

They had nothing spiritual. Jesus said to them, "*buy of me and I will satisfy every need of your life.*" Some heeded His Word, but many did not. These in the false church are those who did not receive His Word. They do not know the Lord, even though they are very religious.

## **THE 2 WORLD POWERS**

We learn here that there will be 2 world powers. We believe that after The Bride is taken out, this great religious system is going to organize a very great body, setting up a world church, which will, for a time, be in control of the political system. The religious power is represented by this woman. There will also be a political power which is represented by the beast upon which she rides. That the woman rides upon the beast indicates that she holds the reins, that she has control of the beast. But later these things will change.

## **RELIGIOUS POWER**

In Revelation 17:1, we read that she "*sitteth upon many waters.*" In Revelation 17:15 we learn what these waters are "*peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.*" These are people who will be living during the Tribulation Period. That she is sitting upon the waters indicates that, for a time, the religious system will have complete control. Religion does have great

control over people today. Many times we have seen religious sects whose leaders have many followers who will do exactly what they say without question. This is called mind control. These religions will amalgamate and form this powerful world religious system; but it will not last.

## POLITICAL POWER

In Revelation 17:16, we read that the situation is going to change. Notice the 10 horns. In Revelation 17:12, we read that *"the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings."* These kings are going to rebel against the religious system and completely destroy it. Then, the political system will take over and give their power to the Antichrist who will head both systems.

## SATAN CAST OUT OF HEAVEN

Before the middle of the week, Satan will be cast out of heaven and will enter into the Antichrist shortly before the political takeover. This will bring about the situation that will allow him to claim that he is *"as God"*:

*"Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." [2Th.2:4]*

He will set himself in the temple of God and declare that he is God.

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## DESTRUCTION OF THE RELIGIOUS POWER

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In Revelation 18, we see the complete destruction of the religious system, followed by the mighty songs of praise and worship in Revelation 19. But why was it recorded in this particular place? Because a man cannot enter into marriage with his fiancée if another woman has a claim on him. In the past, it was customary for the one officiating at a wedding to ask the audience, "If anyone knew of any reason why these two should not be joined." Any person who was aware of such an entanglement was expected to say so, and the wedding could not go forward until it was proven that the man did not have another wife. This false religious system is claiming to be the Bride of Christ; therefore, the claim has to be proven to be false before Christ can take His true Bride.

So it is that *"after these things"* John heard something different. In the destruction of the false woman, he heard weeping and wailing. Now, he hears singing, praising and worship, because He has judged the great whore by putting it in the hearts of the kings to overthrow the religious system. This system is called a *"great whore"*. Webster defines **whore** as *"a prostitute, a person who submits to promiscuous lewdness for hire."* That is what we see in Christendom today. Some religious people will be submissive to anything if it will bring in money. This is not true of people who truly love the Lord; they want only to lift up His Name.

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## REJOICING PEOPLE

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Revelation 19 is a song containing 3 stanzas, sung by different people at different times. The 1<sup>st</sup> stanza is in Revelation 19:1-5 and pertains to the destruction of the false woman and the avenging of the blood of His servants at her hand.

*"And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up forever and ever. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great."*

We cannot believe the Word of God, and at the same time, doubt that God will punish sin! This passage is a constant memorial to the destruction of this woman. Then "*the four and twenty elders and the four beasts*" (Living Ones), of Revelation 4, "*fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne.*" Remember, these 24 Elders and 4 Living Ones are the same as The Bride of Christ. They sit on thrones and reign with Him on equal thrones. It is certain that the destruction of the false woman, who prevented the marriage, would be cause for tremendous happiness and joy and celebration. It is indeed a time of jubilee.

#### A VOICE COMES OUT OF THE THRONE

I believe this voice from the throne is the same as the voices of the 24 Elders and the 4 Living Creatures, because they are the only ones that have thrones [Rev.19:4]. Notice, the word **voice** is singular, **one voice**. Though there are many people there is only **ONE VOICE**. This speaks of harmony or agreement. There is **one voice** encouraging everyone to praise the Lord our God. You who are His servants, you that fear Him, great and small; you praise Him! In Revelation 19:1, there were "*much people*", who started the song, and after Revelation 19:5, a great multitude joins in the singing. It is a multitude so great as to be beyond counting, all singing and shouting as with **one voice**, "*Praise the Lord.*"

Saints, now is the time to practice. Lift up your voice and shout if you really love the Lord. Glorify the Lord with your voice in praise to Him! Be ready to join this wonderful choir. Here is their song, "*Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth*" [Rev.19:6]! Praise the Lord! Our God reigns! He is on the throne. Today, the Son is at the right hand of the Father, soon Jesus will have a throne of His own with power and authority...with His wife at His right hand. He will have a kingdom to rule over and The Bride to rule with Him. Praise the Lord! The Lord Omnipotent Reigneth!

Notice that here He is called the "*Lord our God*". He is exalted to the highest measure at this time. When Jesus came, He took upon Himself the form of man being obedient unto the death of the cross, because of this we read:

*Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus 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."*  
[Phi.2:9]

We read that "*His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace*" [Isa.9:6]. Up to now, He has been called "*Wonderful*" and "*Counselor*," but when He begins to reign, then His name is going to be called "*the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.*" That will be the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah 9.

## THE VOICE OF A GREAT MULTITUDE

The 3<sup>rd</sup> part of this song, beginning at Revelation 19:7, concerns the wedding of Christ and His Bride.

*"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." [Rev.19:7-8]*

Here we see the "*great multitude*" of Revelation 19:7, the "*innumerable company*", that "*came out of great tribulation*" [Rev.7:13-15], talking about The Bride and her marriage. They are singing about it, they are joyful about it: "*Let us be glad and rejoice...the marriage of the Lamb is come.*"

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### MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB, NOT A LION

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Notice, this is the marriage of the Lamb not the Lion. It was the Lion of Judah, who had the right to open the book, but it was The Lamb who opened it, and it is The Lamb who is getting married. Although He is reigning, it is not because He is King, but because of His atoning blood that He gains a bride. She has fallen in love with Him, because He first loved her and bought her out of the slave market and set her free to become His Bride. Her love for Him is the basic qualification for her marriage. This should be the goal of the whole Body of Christ. We might ask ourselves, has this happened to me or are there other things more important in my life than becoming the wife of the one who died for me?

#### HIS WIFE HAS MADE HERSELF READY

The literal meaning of the word translated "*wife*" is simply "*woman*" and is so rendered 129 times in the New Testament. It is used for unmarried as well as for married women, and so, I believe, it should be here, "*His woman hath made herself ready.*" Saints, did you know this is the reason we are on this earth? Reference Genesis 1:26 and Revelation 4:11. That is what this life is all about! God has given us this time here to prepare for the wedding! He has provided for our every need; and, He wants us to take these provisions and use them to prepare ourselves for eternity. We have a beautiful picture of this in Esther's life: "*She required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of women, appointed. And Esther obtained favor in the sight of all them that looked upon her*" [Est.2:15].

Young women who are looking forward to marriage prepare a hope chest; they put together a trousseau, because they want to be ready for that day. In this day, many girls do not seem to be interested in marriage or changing their name. They do not want to be in subjection to anyone. This is out of harmony with the plan that God set up before the foundation of the world, because marriage in this life is to teach us of the relationship of Jesus with The Church. For this thought study Ephesians 5. God wants His children to begin early in their Christian life preparing a hope chest for eternity; and, to anticipate the great and wonderful day in which Christ is going to take a bride. His Bride eagerly desires to be married to the Lord Jesus Christ. She does not desire greatness for herself, but only desires His name to be lifted up, His name to be exalted in everything.

## EXAMPLE OF PREPARATION

*"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." [Phi.3:14]*

This preparation for the wedding is no easy task. Making clothes is easier now than it was before modern inventions were available, but even with the best sewing machines, most young girls don't like to sew. In Bible times, preparing for a wedding was a lot of hard work. A woman started with flax and wool, which she had raised, and then she had to grade it, divide it, spin it, weave it and then make the garment. This work was done with her own hands. The Bride of Christ will not be lazy. In this connection, study Proverbs 31:10-31 and 1 Thessalonians 1:3. With all her strength, The Bride will press toward the mark; this goal is of the high calling of God. She must have a real desire to win Christ as her husband. But she will not be left to do this task alone. When believers begin to desire to win Christ, and as they begin to trust on the Lord, and do His will under the direction of the Holy Spirit's prompting, He does the work and the believer receives the reward.

## CHANGED BY THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD

*"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." [2Co.3:18]*

This is why it is so necessary to be filled with the Spirit. If we are to be in the Bridal Company, we must be filled with the Holy Spirit. In John 16, we read that the purpose of the Holy Spirit is to convict of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He will not speak of Himself, but He will speak of Christ. The work of the Holy Spirit is to woo us, lead us, guide us, and direct us into all Truth and prepare us for this Bridal Place. If we are not filled with the Spirit, then we surely cannot be led by the Spirit; and, there are other forces leading us in the wrong direction. If we are not led by the Spirit, we cannot come into this desired place. This can only be accomplished by the work of the Holy Spirit.

## CLEANSED BY THE WORD OF GOD

*"To her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." "And the armies which were in heaven followed him...(were) clothed in fine linen, white and clean." [Rev.19:8, 14]*

The Greek word here translated "clean" is defined as "bright, brilliant, brilliantly clean, outstandingly clean and bright, white and shining." How did her garment get this shining brightness? It was done by the washing of the water by the Word:

*"That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." [Eph.5:26]*

This woman has studied the Word and the Holy Spirit has cleansed her with it. If we are to win this race, obtain this prize, we must set aside a time each day to get alone with the Lord and His word. We must allow the Holy Spirit to control every thought of the heart and mind while we are alone with Him.

We learn by practicing, yielding to the Holy Spirit, submitting ourselves to Him, and lifting up our heart and voice and mind to Him. We relax and let the Holy Spirit take control of our spirit, soul, and body.

*"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." [1Th.5:23]*

He does a beautiful work in our lives. Then we sit down with the Word and an open heart letting the Holy Spirit reveal to our heart the beautiful truths recorded there.

*"For there is no respect of persons with God." [Rom.2:11]*

God does not love one person more than another. What He will do for one person, He will do for every person. If we but desire to win this place, we have only to yield to Him and He will do the work.

### THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE SAINTS

Back to Revelation 19:8, the "*fine linen*" is "*the righteousness of saints*." The literal rendering of this passage is "**THE RIGHTEOUS DEEDS OF THE SAINTS**". When a person receives Christ as Savior, God lays over on him the righteousness of Christ. It belongs to that person; it has become their righteousness. But it is a provisional righteousness that was received from God. Then, as the person yields to the Lord and allows the Holy Spirit to control his life, obeying His instructions, they reach a place called "*the obedience of faith*" [Rom.1:5, Rom.16:26]. He takes these provisions and makes them practical in the believer's life. They become works which are not his works but are accredited to him. The works of the Lord are the works the person allowed the Holy Spirit to work in his life.

*"For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." [Phi.2:13]*

Although we have done nothing but yield, God directs our life and brings us into a place of maturity. Then, He gives us credit for this righteousness that has been worked out in our life.

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### GOD'S TRUE WORDS

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*"And He saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb... These are the **TRUE SAYINGS OF GOD**." [Rev.19:9]*

The things that we are seeing are the True Words of God.

Now, the bride is not called to her own marriage supper, she doesn't need an invitation. Then, obviously, the called ones are the friends who are invited. Please study Matthew 25 concerning the account of the 10 virgins; 5 of them were wise and 5 were foolish. This could not have been the bride, because they were waiting for the marriage supper after the bride was there. The marriage would already have taken place before the supper.

We read here that the 5 foolish virgins had not bothered to bring extra oil. In the Bible, oil speaks of the Holy Spirit. The inference is that they were either not filled or not yielded to the power of the Holy Spirit, the condition was all the virgins "*slumbered and slept*" while they waited for the coming of the bridegroom. Certainly many Christians are even now sleeping their lives away. The foolish virgins didn't get into the supper at all, and the wise virgins barely made it. Remember, these are true statements. Take them into your heart, saints; let these words work mightily in your life.

There will be a literal marriage taking place in heaven. Think about it! In my mind's eye, I can see The Bride coming down the aisle; the Bridegroom waiting for her; and the Father performing the ceremony. It may not be exactly that way, but it is a beautiful thought. The Bride will have eyes for no one but the Bridegroom. She is not looking for the material things that are the desires of the soul to be fulfilled in this life. She is listening for a trumpet to sound and waiting to go to meet the Lord, her Bridegroom.

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## THE JOY SET BEFORE

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If we want to be a part of that Bridal Company, we must get ready now! We don't have time to dilly dally with this world and run after the foolishness of this world. Get ready by yielding to the power of the Holy Spirit. Give God His time in your life and let Him work His pleasure in you. **JESUS IS COMING SOON!**

### The Bridegroom Cometh

Behold the Bridegroom cometh; He skippeth o'er the hills,  
Then looketh thru the windows, and leapeth o'er the sills.  
I hear His Words of greeting; They fall on raptured ear:  
"Rise up, my Love, my Fair One; no longer tarry here."

The Turtle's cooing carol, is heard thru-out the land.  
The Fig tree, too, is leafing, and tells us Spring's at hand.  
The Vine no more is barren, nor bear and brown the tree;  
The shadows are retreating, the sunlight bids them flee.

For lo! the winter passeth, the rain has gone away.  
The singing birds are coming, to grace our wedding day,  
Then to the mountains going, up to the hill of myrrh,  
To wait the morn's glad breaking, with love's flame all astir.

For all my heart is ravished: oh, come along with me.  
Thou'rt fairer than the dawning, there is no spot in thee,  
Behold the Bridegroom cometh, with voice of cooing dove;  
The Bride is ready, longing, her heart is "sick of love."

"My coming draweth near; away with all thy fear!  
Rise up, my Love, my Fair One; no longer tarry here."

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## CHAPTER 8, MATTHEW 13

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### PARABLES

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Though we are going to study from Matthew, we do not base church doctrine on the 4 Gospels, because we believe they were written primarily to Israel. The Church began at Pentecost and we base church doctrine on the epistles of Paul since his epistles are written primarily to the churches. However, "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*" [2Ti.3:16].

A **parable** is a story used to illustrate a truth; it carries the meaning "*to cast along side the truth as a shadow, picture, and allegory.*" Parables are also used to illustrate truths, because they throw light upon established truths and help them to stand out in our minds.



Everything we read in the Scripture, from Genesis through Revelation, is about one man, His name is Jesus Christ. He is shown in many aspects throughout the Word in various methods which are used to illuminate (highlight) Truth. The Truth cannot be proven by any of these because all the details do not necessarily have a meaning in them. Neither can we base doctrine on them because if a type were perfect, it would cease being a type and would become reality.

A parable is a comparison, and is simply an object that is used to show spiritual truth. A shadow is the image cast by an object when intercepted by light. If there is no light, there is no shadow; Jesus is the light.

*"For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect."* [Heb.10:1]

*"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."* [Col.2:16]

These Scriptures declares that the Old Testament offerings, feasts, and Sabbath days are "a shadows of things to come, but the body is of Christ." A figure is simply an example, and the Greek word used is in other scriptures, translated "pattern" and "fashion".

An allegory is told to illustrate a truth. A good example is the 2 sons of Abraham, which we find recorded in Galatians 4 where one is born after the flesh and one is born of the promise [Gal.4:21-26]. All these things were a shadow of things yet to come. When Christ came The Law was finished. These things are simply pictures of the Lord Jesus Christ.

## DIFFERENT GLORIES

*"The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; and when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."* [Mat.13:1-9]

This parable is comparing different degrees of glory. The **house** in this parable is a figure of the house of Israel. The **sea** speaks, both symbolically and prophetically, of the Gentile nations and the instability of the world and the earth during this Church Age. In this passage, Jesus is symbolically leaving the house of Israel, because of their unbelief. The dispensation of The Law is ending. Jesus is introducing the new covenant and the Jews did not receive His Word. Jesus is the Messiah that God had promised, so He has fulfilled God's promise that God would send a Messiah; but Israel, as a nation, rejected Jesus, God's promised Savior.

Now Jesus is turning from "national" Israel to whosoever will believe which includes the Gentiles. There was a time of transition when God began to usher in the Church Age. It was a slow process; it didn't happen overnight. God was not through with the nation of Israel even though He had started bringing in the Church Age. He was working with the

nation of Israel up to 70 A.D. when Titus destroyed the temple. From that time, Israel was scattered among the nations and God no longer worked with them as a nation. But now, in the last days of this age, He is again working with His chosen people...Israel.

## ISRAEL SET ASIDE

In this Matthew 13 passage, Jesus is in type, but not literally, leaving the house of Israel and going to the Gentiles. A great multitude had come to hear Him; but different people hear in different measure. Notice, how many times the words "*hear*" and "*heard*" are used in this parable.

*"And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." [Mat.13:10-11]*

This verse may help us to understand the parable. Notice the words "*you*" and "*them*." The word "*them*" refers to the multitudes that had gathered and "*you*" has reference to the disciples. Throughout the Church Age, God lays His hand upon the people that love Him, and He calls them with a special, holy calling. The disciples were a "**SPECIAL**" chosen group and to them was given the understanding of the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. The Bride is also seen as a mystery in this parable. Before we look at this parable, we need to establish it is talking about God's people. We can see a beautiful picture here concerning what is happening during the Church Age.

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## WHY PARABLES

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*"Therefore I speak to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand: and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, And I should heal them." [Mat.13:13-15]*

*"But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him".* Jesus is quoting from Isaiah 6:9:

*"That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Isaiah said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them."*

In John 12:37-40, this same quotation from Isaiah is applied in a little different way. This incident took place after triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. John 12:37 states that though He did many miracles, they did not believe on Him. Many people who professed belief, followed Him shouting, "*Hosanna to Him that cometh in the name of the Lord*"; however, they really did not believe...they were there because they had seen the miracles.

Concerning the 5,000, Jesus said that they followed Him because of the food they received—the natural things. There are always people claiming to believe because they have received material things but they are not true believers. Isaiah 29:10-16 also says there would be a falling away in Israel, which is true today among the Gentiles also; many of whom are in doubt concerning the things of God. Saints, do you see the transition that

took place after Stephen was stoned until the destruction of Rome? Then you will be able to see the transition taking place today. God wants His saints to run after Him, doubting nothing. The Bride will run with all her heart to win Jesus Christ as her Bridegroom.

## NEW EYES TO BELIEVERS

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There are many people whose eyes are closed so that they cannot see, and whose ears are stopped up so they cannot hear. *"But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear"* [Mat.13:16]. Have you let God open your eyes so that you can see the Truth that He is teaching us? If so, then you do have blessed eyes.

*"For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."*  
[Mat.13:17]

Peter has the same thought in his first epistle where he says the angels and Old Testament prophets had a desire to look into the things that they prophesied concerning Christ [1Pe.1:10-12]. You are blessed if God is revealing Jesus Christ to your heart and putting a hunger in your heart to run after Him. Many in this world who belong to religious organizations have no desire to run after Christ. An account in Acts 26 tells of a time when Paul came to Jerusalem and talked to those who were under The Law. Paul had been taken prisoner and it is his testimony concerning his conversion that is recorded:

*"And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."*  
[Act.26:15]

## NEW CREATION BY FAITH IN CHRIST

Notice, all these things are obtained by faith in Christ. The purpose of the Gospel is that we may receive forgiveness of sins first, and then an inheritance among them that are separated, set apart, or sanctified. There are many people who have received forgiveness of sins who do not understand there is an inheritance to receive. We know we have this inheritance by the Word of God. Later, at Rome, where Paul had spoken to some of the Jewish leaders concerning the Kingdom of God, the Scripture says:

*"And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not. And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, go unto this people, and say, hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it."* [Act.28:24-28]

Not all have the same desire to hear and do: *"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself"* [Joh.7:17].

It is still true today that some hear and some do not; some believe and some do not; some lay hold of the things of God and some do not. Not all Gentiles will hear His Word, but some will and respond in different ways. The point is, He is talking to those who are willing to really yield to the Holy Spirit. They are the ones whose eyes the Holy Spirit will open and let them see deeper and more wonderful truths. Christ spoke in parables, some understood and some did not. Only those who were willing to be led by the Holy Spirit were able to understand what Jesus was talking about. God speaks to willing hearts.

### TO UNDERSTAND IS TO DO THE WILL OF GOD

*"Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the wayside." [Mat.13:18-19]*

The **seed** is the Word of God. Some hear the Word, about Jesus and about His Kingdom, but do not understand it because they do not have a willing heart to do what they hear.

*"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth forever." [Psa.111:10]*

The majority of those who attend spiritual meetings do not understand; they may hear the Word every Sunday, but that does not mean that they listened and understood, or that they are even born again, because *"the wicked one ... catcheth away that which was sown in his heart."* Notice; it was *"sown in the heart."* The Word of God speaks to their heart, but they lay it aside. If there is something in the Word you don't understand, don't discard it and don't throw it aside. Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal it to your heart, because if it is just put aside, it is in a position to be seized by the enemy before it is believed and it becomes of no value whatsoever; it is worthless to the unbeliever. The Bride of Christ will not let this happen because her heart is open and wanting more.

### A STONY PLACE

*"But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but endureth for a while; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the Word, by and by he is offended." [Mat.13:20-21]*

Notice, in each case, the Word was heard. Here the seed fell on a stony place, but it could not mature, because there was no depth. This person heard the Word and immediately received it with joy. There was singing and testifying with gladness of heart; but trials came, like the heat of the sun causing it to wither away, because there is no depth of earth. In a stony place there is little soil in which the seed can root and grow. A stony heart is rebellious, a know-it-all heart. Israel had a stony heart. But God will give a remnant a new covenant (a new heart). The heart of the Bride of Jesus will be pliable, easy to plow and cultivate. When the Word falls on a stony heart, though the Word is heard, there is no spiritual growth, no inward pleasure. It is wonderful and necessary to praise and worship, but this alone does not bring growth.

### BE ROOTED AND GROUNDED

It is only through study of the Word of God that we become rooted and grounded. Without it, when trials and anxieties come we will be overwhelmed by them. There is much anxiety in this world, there is trouble on every side, and the enemy uses these cares and the

deceitfulness of riches. Do you know that riches can be deceitful? As Paul told Timothy, *"For the LOVE OF MONEY is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows"* [1Ti.6:10].

It is not that riches are bad, but it is bad when we let them control our lives. People will spend more time seeking financial security than seeking God's security. It should be the other way around. The deeper a root grows down; it becomes stronger and harder to be uprooted. Some plants that appear to be small have deep roots and if broken off, almost immediately spring up again. This indicates good soil. Paul wrote to the Ephesians, that they *"be rooted and grounded in love"* [Eph.3:17]. He also wrote to the Colossians, to *"walk in him, Rooted and built up in him"* [Col.2:7]. If we expect to grow, we need to walk with Him; fellowship with Him; and be led, moved, and guided by the power of the Holy Spirit. Then, we not only will grow down, but we will also grow up and be established in the faith. God is going to have some deep-rooted people. All this also applies to the seed that fell among thorns. The Bride of Christ will be an established people.

### SEED FALLING INTO GOOD SOIL

*"But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."* [Mat.13:23]

Many saints are going to be established in good ground. He that hears the Word and understands it, and lets God use it in his life, will also bear fruit, some 100-fold, some 60-fold, and some 30-fold. The Word takes root in this good ground and becomes established in their heart. Nothing can move it, neither people nor events. Let people talk, let the enemy do his worst. As we become really rooted, grounded, and immovable in the good solid truth, nothing can move us. God will have some fruitful people. The fruit is the life of Christ as produced out of us by the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul desired that we might be *"filled with all the fullness of God"* [Eph.3:19].

### 3 DEGREES OF FRUIT BEARING

There are 3 different degrees of fruit bearing. We should each examine our life to see if we are producing the fruit that God wants of us. This fruit is produced by abiding in the Lord, allowing Him to control our life, and becoming rooted and grounded in good fertilized and cultivated ground. Cultivating means plowed, harrowed, and broken up to make it usable. Then the seed can be planted and will grow. For some of God's people, tribulation destroys the seed; while for others, it causes more growth. It depends on how it is received. Saints, if we accept trials as from the hand of God, we will grow. If we take them as from man, the same trials will hurt us and destroy the work that the Word should be doing in our lives. How do you receive the plowing of God's cultivator? Is it with joy?

### LABOR INVOLVED IN GROWING FRUIT

*"He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich."* [Pro.10:4]

*"The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing."* [Pro.20:4]

Growing a crop is hard work and sweat. It can't be done by lying in bed half the day. It requires diligence, not laziness.

It is the same with bearing spiritual fruit. We cannot be fruitful without effort. We need to get up early in the morning, pray and worship, read and study the Word of God. When we are really yielded to the Lord we will **LAY ASIDE TIME JUST FOR HIM**. We will put the things of God first in our life. We won't let anything come before Him; not pleasure, ease, or riches. None of these things can control our lives if we want to bear fruit for God. We will take every opportunity to learn the Word and let the Word grow in our life. Then we will become rooted, grounded, and established so that when the Lord comes, we will stand before Him as a 100-fold, fruit-bearing son of God. These are those saints who will be the Bride of Christ, who will be a helpmeet for Him. Where do you stand?

The parable of **THE FRUITS** is comparable to the [Ephesian church](#) in Revelation 2 and the following parable of the **WHEAT AND TARES** is comparable to [Smyrna](#).

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### PARABLE: WHEAT & TARES

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*"Another parable put He forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay, lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn." [Mat.13:24-30]*

#### JESUS SOWS THE SEED

This parable covers this whole Grace Dispensation, all the way through the time of judgment. Jesus tells us what this parable is referring to:

*"He answered and said unto them, He that sowed the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." [Mat.13:37-43]*

Jesus is sowing the seed; however, the enemy has also sown false (counterfeit) seed...tares. Tares and wheat are hard to tell apart, especially when they first come up they look alike. So, the devil has counterfeit seed. Only those experienced in the truth of the Word can distinguish the difference.

We read "*while men slept* (during the dark times)". Darkness is when the enemy does his work most effectively. Many of the leaders who should be guarding the sheep are sound asleep. In time of trouble and depression (darkness), man is more susceptible to any false doctrine that may come along. Even believers can believe false doctrine when they are discouraged, if they are looking for something to lift them up, other than the Word itself. But only the Word of God is able to lift people up

When the wheat sprung up, the tears were so much like the wheat that only the servants of the householder could tell the difference. And so it is today. God has some men in leadership who know the Word and are able to discern between truth and error, between wheat and tares. Most people cannot tell the difference. Some hear a new doctrine and think it is wonderful, because they do not know the Word, and are unable to see error that is hidden in a cunning, crafty way. Only the Holy Spirit can reveal the truth.

#### THE ENEMY ALSO SOWS SEED

When the servants came and told the owner of the field about the tares, the owner knew immediately who had done it...it was his enemy. Of course, he is our enemy also. It is the arch enemy, the devil himself and his horde of demons and wicked spirits who are in this world as well as in the heavens. Paul called him the **PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR**. Jesus called him the **PRINCE OF THIS WORLD**. He is the enemy and he has his angels sow the tares in the wheat field.

#### GOD SEPARATES WHEAT FROM TARES

When the servants wanted to go out and gather them up, they were told to let them grow up together. God does not destroy error. He lets people do as they like. If we want error, God will let us have it. It only takes one drop of poison in a jar of water to poison the whole jar; likewise, one bit of error will ruin the whole thing: *"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump"* [Gal.5:9]. We will see more of this later on in another parable. The enemy has planted this error, but it will grow up together with truth until God's time. At the end of the age, at the time of harvest, God will take out the tares; He will gather His people into His barn...in His time.

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#### PARABLE: MUSTARD SEED, ABNORMAL GROWTH

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*"Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field; which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof." [Mat.13:31-32]*

On the day of Pentecost, The Church began with only 120 people. It was a way of suffering, a way of rebuke, few people wanted to go this way. They preferred a more popular road, this one was too small; however, when Constantine became emperor of Rome, he stopped all persecution of The Church, and it started to grow. The Church kept increasing until it became such a monstrosity that vultures could lodge in the branches of it. The thought of lodging in the branches does not necessarily mean building nests, it was a place where the vultures could rest. As time has passed, Christendom has become bigger and bigger. We see this same thought in the **Pergamos condition** in Revelation 2:12. In this condition, God's people are joined unto the world and are accepted into worldly culture. The Bride is become like wheat that is too small for birds to rest on its branches; therefore, The Bride is joined only to the Lord.

## GROWTH STUNTED BY FALSE DOCTRINE

*"Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." [Mat.13:33]*

In Scripture, a woman usually speaks of a religious system. The word **church** in itself is in the feminine gender. Israel, as is the false church, is also in the feminine gender. This woman represents the false church, which put leaven into the meal offering. Leaven always speaks of sin and of the puffed-up old creation.

As yeast does in bread dough, causing the bread to puff up, so sin works in the old creation that lives in the body of believers. The Old Testament Meal Offering was the meekest (lowest) of the offerings. It was meal mixed with oil; it had no blood in it. What we see in this is the very lowest concept of Christ that is revealed by the Holy Spirit. This is the meal in which the false religion is able to mix in the leaven.

In Leviticus 2, we read that **NO MEAL OFFERING SHALL BE MADE WITH LEAVEN**. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, and also to the Galatians, "*A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump*" [Gal.5:9]. But today, everything is allowed to be taught, even immorality. The 3 measures of meal represents the fullness of Christ, this is where the leaven was hidden. The whole thing became leavened. It doesn't take much leaven to ruin the whole loaf. Saints, do not allow any error into your thinking. If it is not in harmony with the Word of God, turn your back on it and run. We want only truth; anything else is wrong, wrong, wrong. If it isn't truth, its error; shun it. We want nothing but the truth, that is...Jesus, the Word of God. If He isn't honored 100% it is wrong. This parable is seen in the [Thyatira condition](#).

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## PARABLE: HIDDEN TREASURE

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After the leaven in the Meal Offering parable, Jesus sent the multitudes away, and went into the house. Only His disciples were allowed to listen and understand these truths. There are 3 more parables, and these 3 are parables of the latter time. Let us read the first one:

*"Again the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth the field." [Mat.13:44]*

## GOD'S PECULIAR PEOPLE

This parable concerns the **PRECIOUS TREASURE** God has on the earth. In Exodus 19:5, Israel is called a "*peculiar treasure*" unto God. This promise is conditional on their obedience to His voice. Israel has not done that. But, after they receive their Messiah, they will be His **PECULIAR TREASURE** again.

Notice, this treasure is in a field, in other words, Israel is of the earth. Everything that God has given Israel is earthly blessings. Usually, when we read of earth in Scripture, it refers to Israel. They are God's treasure, hidden in a field. The man who finds them is, of course, the Lord, and with joy He goes and sells all He has and with His own blood buys the field.



## PARABLE: GOODLY PEARL

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*"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls; Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." [Mat.13:45-46]*

These 2 parables (the Goodly Pearl and The Net) should be understood together. We are living in a transition time in which God is changing from working with Christendom, as a whole, to beginning to work with Israel. In this transition, God is preparing to **bring out** of The Church a **SPECIAL PEOPLE**. Also, He is beginning to work with Israel to **bring in** a **PECULIAR TREASURE**. As we look at these two together, we see that He is working with Israel in the world and at the same time bringing out of The Church a **SPECIAL PEARL**. A pearl comes from a dirty oyster that is taken out of the sea. The sea in Scripture, usually speaks of the instability of the Gentiles. Out of this sea, God is bringing a **SPECIAL PEOPLE**. Let's look at the parable of the pearl.

The word **merchant** has the thought of a passenger on a sea vessel, which is traveling by sea for trade. This merchant is the Lord Jesus Christ who is in this world today looking for pearls. There are many pearls, but He is seeking beautiful pearls. The whole Church is a pearl in the eyes of Jesus, but He finds an exceptionally beautiful pearl, a pearl of great price. He goes and sells all He has to purchase this pearl.

### THE MAKING OF A PEARL

There is a marvelous story in the making of a pearl. While the oyster is in its bed of mud, in the depth of the sea, a grain of sand finds its way into its shell and acts as an irritant to the oyster. I think oysters are about as ugly a creature as there is, and that is what we are like in the natural...ugly, wallowing in the depths of the mire, being tossed by the waves made by the motion of this world...and God allows a little grain of irritation. To protect itself from this irritation, the oyster coats the sand; and, it continues to coat it until it becomes more and more beautiful. This is what God is doing in His people today. It is through suffering, heartaches, and problems that He is bringing us to a place of beauty. The question we need to ask ourselves is "Are we letting irritation produce beauty in us?" If so, we will produce the beauty Christ is looking for in The Bride.

### GOD'S SPECIAL PEARL

Pearls are harvested daily and come from many different oysters. They differ greatly in their beauty according to the amount of coating. God is working in many hearts, but the most beautiful are those that yield to His working. God will have 1 exceptionally beautiful pearl that is made up of saints who have allowed the trials of life to bring out the beauty of Christ in them, ones who have allowed Him to have His way in their heart.

*"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." [Phi.2:13]*

Jesus gave up everything, laid everything aside, not only for us but also for Israel. For as we have seen in the Parable of the Field, and also again in the Parable of the Pearl, He sold all He had. Paul wrote,

*"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." [2Co.8:9]*

## JESUS LAID ASIDE EVERYTHING

Jesus laid everything aside to come down, because He saw some hidden beauty. Even before it was planted, He saw the beauty of the life of Christ in humanity. Even before the foundation of the world, God saw a people that would let Him work out the beauty of His holiness in their life; this is the life that is in us. It is all because of the blood shed on the cross; this is the value of it all. Jesus sold everything He had to purchase His treasure with His own life. Hallelujah! He had a treasure from the field and a treasure from the sea. In the Parable of the Pearl, we see the church of **Philadelphia**, and in the Parable of the Treasure Hidden in the Field, we can see the church at **Sardis**. Jesus cried out to His Father,

*"And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." [Joh.17:5]*

This is what He gave up to purchase us, how much do you appreciate His sacrifice?

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## PARABLE: THE NET, TIME OF JUDGMENT

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*"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." [Mat.13:47-50]*

This is the latter time and brings us into the time of judgment. This represents the last group mentioned in Revelation 3:14-22; it is the **Laodicean condition**. We can see from this that in the last days, even during The Tribulation, God is casting His net of judgment into the sea of the nations, and every type will come out of it. He will separate the good from the bad; He will judge those that are bad and bring the good into His blessings.

## SPECIAL PEOPLE TAKEN TO HEAVEN BEFORE THE TRIBULATION

Now, let us bring together the whole thought and see what God is working in His people.

First, we see 3 major divisions of fruitfulness. God is going to have some fruitful people. Whether or not we, as individuals, are part of **HIS FRUITFUL PEOPLE**...God will have fruitful people. He will take out of this world a Bride from The Church in which there is neither Jew nor Gentile. These people will be raised among the tares, among every error that is in the world. God will take care of those that have an honest heart. They will be those who refuse to compromise, who refuse to be identified with anything that has any hint of error. God is going to bring them out and, out of this people, produce the most precious, beautiful, and valuable pearl.

## CHRIST IN US, THE HOPE OF GLORY

In our life, we must see that the circumstances around us are producing one of the most thrilling, glorious things that we will be able to present to God—the life of Christ in us the hope of Glory. These people are fully matured, fully grown, and beautiful. This is the desire of our heart, saints, to be in a condition that God will be able to bless and be blessed by the lives of His people. This will not be a popular way.

When Paul was in prison, he wrote to Timothy, that all men had forsaken him. If God's people go this way, others will disagree; there may be a separation from dearest friends and relatives, or others who do not want to go this way. But this **SPECIAL PEOPLE** will take a stand and go God's way, no matter what other people do. This is the desire of our hearts as we wait for the trumpet to sound, to take in the Word of God and let it rule in our hearts richly. The only thing that will count in that day is full knowledge of our Lord even as a wife who has suffered with her husband through the ordeals of this life.

*"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." [Phi.3:10]*

### A HELP MEET FOR JESUS.

*"And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him." [Gen.2:20]*

During the Church Age, through the Holy Spirit, God is searching for a helpmeet for His Son.

## CHAPTER 9, REBEKAH

### SELECTING A BRIDE

*"And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac. And the servant said unto him, peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest? And Abraham said unto him, beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again. The LORD God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence. And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again. And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter." [Gen.24:1-9]*

In this chapter, we will discuss a lady named **Rebekah**. We will look at this account of her as a type of The Bride of Christ, and the operation of the Holy Spirit in taking a people out of The Church to be this Bride. Abraham, as the father of all, represents God.

*"Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all." [Rom.4:16]*

Isaac is a picture of the Son of God (who was to be sacrificed). Then in Genesis 24:2, we have the eldest servant of whom some believe to be Eliezer of Damascus (mentioned in Genesis 15:2). This cannot be proven but the author agrees with this thought. The name **Eliezer** means "*The God of help.*" This servant represents the Holy Spirit whom God has ordained to produce a bride. Here are some things the Holy Spirit is to do:

*"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you." [Joh.16:13-15]*

Christ is going to have a Bride and the Holy Spirit is now operating in The Church to gather a company of people that will be conformed to His image. This account of the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah is one of the most exciting accounts in the Bible.

## A PICTURE OF THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Abraham sent his eldest servant, in the same manner that God sent the Holy Spirit to this earth, for the purpose of preparing a bride for His Son. One of the qualifications of the bride for Isaac was that she must have a willing heart. If she was not willing, the servant was then released from his oath. Christ will have only a **willing** Bride. Are you willing for this place?

Also, this bride for Isaac could not come from among the Canaanites (a type of the works of the flesh) and in this parable it speaks of worldly, religious flesh). No works of the flesh can be in heaven [Rom.8:7-8]. The bride of Isaac must come from Abraham's kindred, from his people. The Bride of Christ must come from the family and kindred of God.

*"As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the children of God." [Joh.1:12]*

It is from among these separated people that God will take a Bride for His Son.

*"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?" [2Co.6:14]*

## GOD PROVIDES ALL

*"And the servant took ten camels." [Gen.24:10]*

*"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come." [Joh.16:13]*

The servant took with him everything he would need for the journey to seek out a bride for Isaac. Notice how that all the goods of his master were at his disposal. He took 10 camels, which represents the providence of God. The Holy Spirit takes the providence of God, the daily circumstances, and makes them work in the life of those whom He is preparing to be in The Bridal Company. Ten is the number of responsibility according to ability, and here it has the thought that the Holy Spirit has control of all things.

## GOD CHOOSES THE ONE WHO QUALIFIES

The servant went to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nabor. **Mesopotamia** means "exalted place", and here it represents those who are in the family of God, having been born of the Spirit through faith in Christ. They have been raised together with Christ and seated with Him in heavenly places [Eph.2:6]. It is among these exalted ones that God is searching for a bride. **Nahor** means "a snorter" or "one who blows or breathes heavily through the

nose." Breath, or wind, causes us to think of the Holy Spirit. In the following connection the Holy Spirit is called "*wind*".

*"The **wind** bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."* [Joh.3:8]

In a sense, Nahor is a type of the Holy Spirit working in The Church. Not everyone in Nahor was in harmony, nor is everyone in The Church yielded to the Holy Spirit. God led the servant to go to the right place to get a bride.

### **GOD SETS THE CIRCUMSTANCES**

*"And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of evening, even the time that women go out to draw water."* [Gen.24:11]

When the servant arrived at Nahor, he made the camels to kneel down outside of the city by a well of water. This well is a picture of the Word of God. The Holy Spirit takes the Word and quickens it to the heart. The Word produces faith, for "*faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*" [Rom.10:17]. Making the camels kneel down shows he is in full control of the situation. Sometimes we feel that our circumstances are unique, and out of control; but, every circumstance in the life of the child of God is the providence of God, no matter what it is or how ugly it may appear. A camel is peevish, hateful, and will bite the hand that is giving him his food. Sometimes the circumstances of life seem just so contrary, but like the camels, they are the providence of God and we need to accept them as from God and let Him work His will in our life through them. That the servant made the camels kneel by the well indicates that they are submissive to the Holy Spirit in view of the Word of God which controls the providence in our life.

We see the servant by the well at evening. The well was the place where the women came for refreshing water for their families; and they always came at evening to draw water for their households. In John 4, we read that Jesus talked to a woman at the well in Samaria. He told her that He is the Living Water; He is the well from which she should be drinking. And in John 16, the operation and work of the Holy Spirit in refreshing saints is laid out beautifully. Jesus explained that it would be necessary for Him to go away, but that He would send the Holy Spirit to come and be among the people of God. The Holy Spirit lingers by the well of refreshing, which represents the wonderful truth of the Word of God.

### **GOD IS LOOKING FOR WILLING HEARTS**

*"O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water; and let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, drink, and I will give thy camels drink also; let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master."* [Gen.24:12-14]

In essence, the servant prayed, "Lord, I want your will to be done." We can see here the likeness of this prayer to the prayer of the Holy Spirit in Romans 6:

*"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth*

*the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." [Rom.8:26-27]*

He is searching out a Bride for the Son of God, and He is praying there will be a people who will be willing to come away from the world. He is praying for you that you will be in this Bridal Company.

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## GOD LEADS HIS PEOPLE

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*"And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born of Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder." [Gen.24:15]*

While the servant was still praying, Rebekah comes to the well for water, no other woman is mentioned coming...there are times when we draw water alone. This is the first mention of her name **Rebekah**, which means "*tying*." The thought is that she entwines by her beauty, that she ties people together to love and to honor. She arrived at the well at the right time, and in the right attitude. She was the right person with the right heritage. God's timing is always perfect. He never makes a mistake.

Rebekah was born to **Bethuel**, Abraham's nephew. His name means "*point ye out God*." It is so wonderful, to be a descendant of one who has been pointing us to God. God always has some people to point others to Him. Bethuel's mother was named **Milcah**, which means "*a queen*." This also was Rebekah's heritage. She came from a reigning people as does The Bride of Christ. She will learn to reign in life by Christ Jesus...this is her heritage.

*"For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." [Rom.5:17]*

When Rebekah came to the well, she had a pitcher on her shoulder. She came there for business; she wasn't there just to get a drink for herself. She was there to get something so she could serve someone else. She came to get water for her family. The Bride of Christ is not selfish and self-centered; she will serve and encourage others with the Word of God along with material things. So the servant's prayer was answered. Rebekah was the right person, God had her at the well at the right time. She was from the right family, and had the right purpose of heart.

## GOD'S BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE

*"And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up." [Gen.24:16]*

The first thing said concerning her is that she was beautiful. This is not necessarily natural beauty, but that she was beautiful in the eyes of the servant. This speaks of the spiritual beauty of the Bride as the Holy Spirit sees her. He knows our inward beauty. The beauty the Holy Spirit sees is the righteousness that is obtained by the new birth. This beauty is developed as one grows into maturity. As I think of her beauty I think of these verses:

*"O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." [SSg.2:14]*

*"A man's wisdom maketh his face to shine" [Ecc.8:1]*

Next, we read that she was a virgin. This tells us that she has never been under the dominion (headship) of a husband. God is preparing a people that will deny the headship of any man. The only headship The Bride will submit to is the headship of Jesus Christ.

### **FOUND DOING GOD'S WILL**

Rebekah went down to the well, filled her pitcher, and came up. Again, we see her intent was to help and serve others. As she came up from the well the servant ran to meet her and said, *"Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher."* A simple request, but it is in the simple things that the character and the depths of the heart are seen. She was the answer to the servant's prayer.

### **WITHOUT HESITATION**

*"And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink. And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking." [Gen.24:18-19]*

Immediately, she lowered her pitcher (the women carried them on their heads), and held it in her hand while he drank. These pitchers were very large and heavy; sometimes they held as much as 5 gallons. Here we see the strength of the woman. The Word of God is not weighty to one who has spiritual strength. The Bride of Christ will have dynamic strength and a willing heart to serve even those they do not know. We are admonished in the Scripture to:

*"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." [Heb.13:2]*

In this case, Rebekah did not know this person, but she was, nevertheless, willing to serve him with the water from the well. When we minister of the Water of Life, we do not need to know their name, because our service is to God not to man. It also should not concern us whether or not our ministry is appreciated, because it too is a service to God.

*"And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ." [Col.3:23-24]*

### **A DESIRE TO PLEASE GOD BY DOING MORE**

*"And she hasted... and drew for all his camels."* Rebekah was willing to serve all these peevish camels; are you ready to be a servant to peevish things? Camels are very likely to be not only unappreciative but they sometimes seem to be downright vindictive! Members of the human race are seldom willing to serve where we are not appreciated. But Rebekah was willing to serve, even in those circumstances! The 10 camels would probably be very thirsty but Rebekah was not daunted, she was intent on finishing her task. The full overcomer, the Bride of Christ, will be one who goes on regardless of how things look, or the attitude of those they serve; not looking for reward or thanks from man, but ever mindful of the admonition of Paul:

*"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." [Gal.6:9]*



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## GIFTS...EARRINGS OF GOLD

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*"And the man (servant) wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not. And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold;"*  
[Gen.24:21-22]

The earring is a beautiful picture of our desire for the Holy Spirit to control the things we hear. How important is the ear to us? God emphasized over and over the importance not only of what we hear, but also how we hear it. In Revelation 2 & 3, concerning the churches, the phrase "*He that hath an ear let him hear*" is used 7 times. Is your ear hearing what the Holy Spirit is saying now?

*"As an earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reprover upon an obedient ear."*  
[Pro.25:12]

*"And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."*  
[Joh.16:8]

We can see here that the work of reproof is done by the Holy Spirit (the earring was gold and gold speaks of deity). He does this work by showing the beauty of God's deity while . He exalts Him, and lifts Him up above everything. God wants us to offer our ears to Him, and to be so sensitive and controlled by the power of the Holy Spirit, that He can speak to us and we will listen, and He will cause us to understand what He is saying to us. This is given only to the potential bride.

The Holy Spirit also does this work by showing us that human beings are seldom willing to serve where they are not appreciated. But Rebekah was willing to serve, even in those circumstances! Rebekah was not daunted; she was intent on finishing her task. The full overcomer, the Bride of Christ, will be one who goes on regardless of how things look, or the attitude of those they serve, not looking for reward or thanks from man, but ever mindful of Paul's admonition in Galatians 6:9, "*be not be weary in well doing.*"

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## GIFTS...BRACELETS OF GOLD (SERVICE)

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The next gift was the bracelets. Bracelets are worn on the wrist, and speak of giving the hands in service to our Lord. Our service is to be directed by the Holy Spirit. Each bracelet was of 5 shekels weight of gold, or 10 shekels altogether (5 is the number of grace and 10 is the number of responsibility). We see from this that the Holy Spirit is to direct our hearing, and now our hands, our lives, and our service; this is a gift from God. Rebekah was willing to receive these gifts. God also wants all His children to receive them but not all want what is offered to them. This woman had already proved her willingness to serve.

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## HER LINEAGE

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*"And said, Whose daughter art thou?"* [Gen.24: 23a]

After he had given her the gifts, the servant questioned her concerning her ancestry. Who are you? Who are your parents? Are you kin to my master Abraham? She quickly answered, "*I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor.*"



The Holy Spirit also asks these questions of those who desire to be in The Bridal Company, which exposes a willingness to testify. We should be willing to testify to the world that we are children of God, born of the Holy Spirit, through Christ Jesus. As we go through this world, both our words and our actions should testify of our relationship to God.

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### HER OPEN HEART

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*"Tell me, I pray thee: is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in?" [Gen.24:23b]*

The servant's next question was concerning a place to lodge. To some saints the Holy Spirit is only a guest, for a short stay, to be called upon when needed. May I come in and dwell with you? She welcomed him, and assured him of provision for his camels also. When the Holy Spirit comes into our life, He desires a whole-hearted welcome, not only for Himself, but also for the things He brings with Him; the things in our lives that He knows will cause us to be conformed to the image of Christ. We cannot have one without the other. If we are really yielding to Him and want Him to dwell within, we will accept both Him and all His working in our life. Rebekah shows her willingness by serving both the servant and the camels.

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### SHE HASTED TO TELL OTHERS

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*"She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in. And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD And he said, blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren. And the damsel ran, and told them of her mother's house these things." [Gen.24:25-28]*

Immediately, she ran and told her mother's household all about the arrival of this man, the gifts he had given her, and his desire to lodge with them. She was so excited, not merely naturally, but she was excited in her spirit. So also we will be when we understand the purpose of the coming of the Holy Spirit into our life.

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### HER FAMILY WAS ALSO JOYFUL

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*"And Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban." [Gen.24:29]*

**Laban** means "*whiteness*," and here he represents another rank. He represents the people of God who are saved by grace, who know the righteousness of God by faith. Laban heard Rebekah's account of the arrival of the servant, and he also became excited because Rebekah's excitement was contagious. When he saw the earrings and bracelets and heard her testimony, then he came, and he received firsthand experience with the servant and his camels by the well.

There are some who go this far toward receiving the infilling of the Holy Spirit. They hear the testimony about this wonderful One who has given these spiritual gifts, and they run out to meet Him and see Him. They will see the camels kneeling by the well, but they will go no further. The offer to water and feed the camels came from Rebekah, not from Laban. Do you see the difference in the attitudes of people toward the Holy Spirit and God's gifts?

## THE FAMILY SHOWS MORE HOSPITALITY

Laban took a further step, he invited the servant in. Again, Laban represents the 2<sup>nd</sup> Rank of people who will go part of the way, but then stop. He invited the man into the house, and prepared room for him and the camels. He provided food and water to wash the feet of the servant, and the men who were with him. How good it is to learn to refresh the walk of others for in doing so we do it unto God. Jesus gave an example of washing His disciples' feet in John 13; they didn't know what He was doing at that time—that some day they would help cleanse the walk of others.

*"Jesus answered and said unto him, what I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter."  
[Joh.13:7]*

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## GOD'S WILL MADE KNOWN

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Although the food was set before him, the servant would not eat until he had made clear his purpose for being there. He explained that he was the servant of Abraham and was seeking a bride for Abraham's son Isaac. He told them how God had answered his prayer by sending Rebekah to draw water for himself and his camels. When he had finished telling them of his errand, Laban and Bethuel said it was up to Rebekah, they would not make the decision for her.

So also is the decision for the Bride of Christ to make. It is a personal decision for each member of the Body of Christ. God brings each of us to this place. We can go all the way with the Lord or we can stop short of the goal. Rebekah's family recognized that it was all of God, but they did not want to go with her themselves. Here Laban again represents those who know the conditions, but are not willing to qualify for the Bridal place. He was a man, and in the Scripture, a man speaks of strength whereas the woman speaks of weakness; most do not want to go in weakness.

*"But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." [1Co.1:27]*

## GOD DOESN'T CHOOSE THE SELF-SUFFICIENT

Christ will not have a bride who is self-sufficient, but her sufficiency will be of God, as we read

*"Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God."  
[2Co.3:5]*

Laban had no desire to go with the servant.

After it was agreed that Rebekah was to go with him, the servant brought more gifts.

*"And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things." [Gen.24:53]*

The first jewels that she had received were an earnest of more precious things to come. The gifts of silver represent redemption, the gold represents deity, and the raiment represents the outward appearance of the new man. In both sets of gifts we can see inward and outward spiritual blessings

*"Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." [2Co.1:21-22]*

In 1 Corinthians 12, there is a list of 9 of the wonderful gifts which the Holy Spirit has for us as a body; but, nowhere is there any indication of a limit to the number of gifts that He wants any one person to have. Laban and his mother also received gifts, and in this we see how the Holy Spirit wants to share and give gifts to all who will receive them.

### **SOME WOULD HINDER THE WILL OF GOD**

In Genesis 24:54-62, we read that they ate, drank, and rested. Then Laban and the mother requested that Rebekah wait 10 days before leaving. They didn't want to go themselves; they apparently wanted to hinder (delay) her going. So it is in The Church today, there are some who are not interested in being in The Bridal Company yet they want to delay the one who is determined to go. Everyone who is looking for the coming of the Lord, and is striving for this high calling, wants their relatives and friends to go with them. But many go the wrong way, refusing God's way; however, they cannot be forced to go unwillingly. They say, "It is my decision," or "I'll just wait a little while longer to start." But we cannot wait, the Holy Spirit is putting us in the place of decision. The servant said "*Hinder me not.*" When it came right down to the question, "*Will you go with this man?*" Rebekah said, "*I will go!*" In order to go, she had agreed to ride those peevish, mean, filthy, stinking camels. She had seen them and watered them, but now she must ride on top of them. How wonderful to learn to stay on top of God's providences.

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### **THE ANTICIPATION AND THE JOY**

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Those camels were her only means of transportation to her espoused husband. It was a long journey from Mesopotamia to Canaan, through mountains and deserts, and it took many, many days to make the trip. It was a hard way to go; but, there is no record of her complaining, murmuring, or regretting her decision. Although she had never seen Isaac, she loved him because of the description the servant had given to her, and she joyfully looked forward to the time of union. Even though we have never seen our Lord Jesus, yet we love Him, because the Holy Spirit has spoken to our hearts and told us of Him.

*"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." [1Pe.1:8]*

Have you purposed to go all the way, to make this journey to see Him in spite of any hardships of the way? It matters not what others say, trying to discourage you; the important thing is to see Jesus. Set your eyes on the goal and continue until the journey's end.

### **ALMOST THERE**

*"And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide..." [Gen.24:63]*

I wonder what Isaac's thoughts were as he walked there in the field. I believe that his father had told him what the servant was doing, and he knew his bride was coming, and his heart was anxious to see her. No doubt, Jesus is waiting and longing for the day when He will receive His Bride.

## REBEKAH IS FILLED WITH JOY

At the end of the long, toilsome trek, Rebekah "*lifted up her eyes*" and saw a man walking "*in the field*." She asked her companion who it was, and was told it was Isaac. Then she took her veil, and covered herself, which indicates her humility and her virginity. Can you imagine the joy of her heart? Forgotten were the problems and trials of the way. Someday very soon, we are going to hear the trumpet sound and go to meet our Lord, not in the field, but in the air, and so shall we ever be with our Lord.

*"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." [1Th.4:16-17]*

## ARE YOU WILLING

Now is the time that you must decide to go. Will you go? Nothing is important enough to keep you from running this race and winning Christ as Bridegroom.

# CHAPTER 10, PSALM 45

## MARRIAGE OF THE KING

*"My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer." [Psa.45:1]*

Psalm 45 describes a glorious wedding, even the marriage of the King of all kings...Jesus Christ. It is the most thrilling and exciting truth, as far as seeing, knowing, and enjoying fellowship with Him. There are no higher heights, no deeper depths, no wider widths, or no broader breadths than the knowledge of this wonderful truth. Nothing can stir us more than the thought of being married and sitting on the throne with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The writer of this Psalm was so thrilled and excited that he could hardly be silent. The word **indicting** is translated from a Hebrew word that means "*to gush, or to boil over, to bubble over as a fountain*." If this writer was so excited in writing this; how much more should we be excited to have a hope of being Jesus' Bride? The bride and the groom are the most excited people looking forward to their wedding. Being the Bride of the Lord Jesus Christ should be more exciting than anything this world could ever offer. It is the Word, the hope, and the vision of believers. We read in the Scripture that "*Where there is no vision, the people perish*" [Pro.29:18].

## VISION OF BEING WITH OUR LOVE

We have a vision, the most wonderful, exciting vision there could ever be, and our heart bubbles over. It boils out like a geyser with this wonderful truth. The writer says his heart is boiling over with this thought of getting it on paper. The most noticeable thing about a person in love is that they want to talk of nothing except about the one they love. Even though that person is normally very shy and bashful, this is quickly overcome when they are in love. Anyone who is in love with Jesus will be excited and anxious to speak of Him to everyone they encounter. When we get a real vision of His majesty, His glory, and all

that He is, that excitement will transcend everything else in this life. We are excited about Him because we see Him as He is, the King of Glory.

### NONE FAIRER THAN OUR LORD

*"Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee forever." [Psa.45:2]*

The Hebrew word which is rendered "*men*" in this passage refers to Adam. It shows the humanity of Jesus in that He came down to earth, took upon Himself the form of a man, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. That is why He is so beautiful; it is His marvelous grace that we are seeing. In this context, "*fairer*" is not speaking of complexion but loveliness and beauty; not outward beauty, but spiritual (inward) beauty. It is not evident to the casual observer, but is revealed upon close fellowship.

*"When we shall see him there is no beauty that we should desire him." [Isa.53:2b]*

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### WHY DO WE LOVE JESUS?

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Why then did we fall in love with Jesus? We fall in love with Jesus when we perceive His great love toward us.

*"We love him, because he first loved us." [1Jo.4:19]*

It is only as we recognize His love for us that we see His inward beauty. When we see Him as He is, we love Him.

### GOD REACHED DOWN TO MAN

*"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us... full of grace and truth." [Joh.1:14]*

*"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." [2Co.8:9]*

*"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." [Rom.5:8]*

It was the grace, love, and favor of God (unmerited favor) that sent Jesus down to this earth to die in our place. He laid aside everything because of His unswerving love for lost humanity. Seeing this; how can we not fall in love with Him?

### GOD'S GRACE

*"Grace is poured into thy lips:" [Psa.45:2]*

One day the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Jesus but when they returned without him, their answer was "*Never man spake like this man*" [Joh.7:46].

*"Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth: for Thy love is better than wine." [SSg.1:2]*

Thus spoke the Shulamite, she was from **Shu'nem**, a city given to the tribe of Issachar, and its name means “*a double resting place*.” The Shulamite had learned to rest before meeting Solomon, the man of peace.

This beautiful picture of the Bride of Christ tells us of how we love to come in contact with the lips of His grace. It is not enough to talk about grace, but we need to learn to show it. We love God's people, not because they are good or merit anything, but because Jesus loves them and lives in their heart. This is the grace of God that we have anything spiritual. We learn to show this same love to others by not condemning them or finding fault with them. This is what we learn by “kissing the Lord.” As we enter into His grace, we enter into His eternal blessing also.

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## THE BRIDEGROOM

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*“Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee.” [Psa.45:3-5]*

In these verses we can see the Bridegroom in all His glory, royalty, and splendor leaving His house to come to the wedding. We see the victory of Calvary, the battle Jesus won and finished that qualifies Him to take this Bride. Oh, the Majesty! Oh, the Glory!

The sword in symbolic language of the following Scriptures speaks of the Word of God.

*“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” [Heb.4:12]*

*“The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” [Eph.6:17b]*

It is the Word of God that conquers; it defeated the devil on the mount of temptation, Jesus only said; “*it is written*”. Jesus’ greatest enemy to be conquered was sin the flesh, when He died on the cross the flesh was put to death provisionally, and praise the Lord, His arrow hit my heart one day...I fell under His feet and He began to reign in my heart. This victorious God-man, Jesus Christ, has a right to reign—taking His place upon the throne.

In Psalm 45:6-9, we see Him coming in victory, with His sword girded upon His side and not in His hand; it has been put aside for the wedding. Saints, try to envision the magnificent pomp and splendor of that great day at the marriage of the King of kings and Lord of lords. Just to be a spectator would be wonderful, but how much more wonderful to be The Bride at His side. Think of it! The 3 things mentioned are in harmony with His title of **Majesty**: ☩ He is Truth, • He is Righteousness, and Ž He is Meekness. His Bride, like Him, will also possess these divine traits.

## JESUS IS OUR VICTORY

He is victorious; He has sharp arrows. He is our victory! He is victorious in us!

*“We are more than conquerors through him that loved us.” [Rom.8:37]*

## HIS REIGN IS EVERLASTING

*"Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: the scepter of thy kingdom is a right scepter." [Psa.45:6]*

His reign will not end with the thousand years, but after the Kingdom Age, He and His Father will reign co-jointly "*forever and ever*" and His Bride will reign with Him! His scepter is righteous, honest, fair, and equal. He shows no partiality in His reign, nor will she who reigns with Him.

## SWEET-SMELLING SAVOR

*"Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad." [Psa.45:7-8]*

*"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]*

These odors speak of the cross where Jesus shed His blood. This odor is so precious to God because He smells the sacrifice of Christ; a fragrant offering, a sweet-smelling sacrifice. God's saints also smell this sacrifice by the Holy Spirit, and they enjoy the odor because they enjoy the same things that God enjoys. His Bride will smell like Him as she behaves like Him.

The sweet odor of Jesus' love flows out of "*ivory palaces*." The word **ivory** comes from a word meaning "*something sharp*," and is translated **A TOOTH** 38 times as an enduring substance.

That odor follows Jesus wherever He is. It is the sweet odor of the Servant and His sacrifice but also the sharp odor of the King and His judgment.

I believe the thought is that this odor follows Jesus wherever He is. It is the sweet odor of the Servant and His sacrifice but also the sharp odor of the King and His judgment even as He goes to His wedding. Christ's death on the cross proved His right to reign and to be married. The great beauty of this work will be put on exhibition and all His glory made manifest.

*"Whereby they have made thee glad." [Psa.45:8b]*

The word "*whereby*" is translated "*stringed instruments*," thus bringing joy to all who hear. Oh, the beautiful harmony flowing so loudly that it can be heard coming from this wedding procession!

## THE WEDDING PARTY

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*"Kings' daughters were among thy honorable women." [Psa.45:9a]*

Notice that the king had many daughters. The word **daughters** could be translated **RELATIVES**. There are many people that He loves, and that love Him in a measure, and they are among these "*honorable women*." Brides usually have a maid of honor, who is a close friend, and so it is here. These are believers who will not go all the way with the

Lord, who have no desire to run to obtain the high calling. They will have an honorable place, yet they will not attain to The Bridal place.

*"Upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir." [Psa.45:9b]*

We see the queen standing indicating that her standing is perfect in God's sight because He sees her in Christ. She stands there in her beautiful wedding gown, trimmed in gold, the very best from the king's coffers. There is no limit to the glory and deity of God. The gold of Ophir was known to be the finest, so that "*gold of Ophir*" is used to express the very best fine gold. The Bride of Christ shall have nothing but the best because she partook of the best in Christ. This gold is the material of which The Bride will make her wedding garments, and she will receive it from Him. Can you just see her standing beside the King, with all His wealth and all His glory? She will share this glorious hour with her Bridegroom...Jesus Christ.

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### PARENTHESIS—THE BRIDAL CALL

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*"Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house. So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him." [Psa.45:10-11]*

These verses in Psalm 45 are parenthetical. They speak of The Bridal call. Right now, God is speaking to His people to prepare themselves. Oh saints, hearken, pay attention! He entreats us to forget those things that are most dear to us on this earth. Notice, that in this case the word "*daughter*" is singular, although in **Verse 9** of Psalm 45 it was plural.

### THE BRIDE IS NOT HINDERED

*"but this one thing I do, **FORGETTING THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE BEHIND**, and reaching forth unto those things which are before" [Phi.3:13b]*

We must forget anything or anyone who will hinder our running this race of faith, or hinder our answering this high calling. The Scripture says:

*"For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." [Eph.5:31]*

In the same way, The Church today is called to leave anyone or anything which would hinder this body of saints from running this race and winning Him as their husband, because He and He alone, is their Lord. Incline your ear to Him. We must learn to worship Him in spirit and in truth, worship Him with our whole heart. Worship only Him, nothing and no one else. And, if He is all-in-all to us, we will worship Him; which is why we are beautiful in His sight. In this earthen vessel we may never be outwardly beautiful, but He sees His own beauty in us.

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### A GIFT FROM THE DAUGHTERS OF TYRE

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*"And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour." [Psa.45:12]*



Then the daughters of Tyre come bringing a gift. Tyre was a city on the Phoenician coast. It was a wealthy city with many shipyards and merchants. When Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem, the King of Tyre furnished Solomon with gold, timber, and laborers. These people represent another rank, people who are saved, but are only friends because Jesus was not everything to them. They will not attain to The Bridal place. Although they may have wealth and bring gifts, worldly things are not important at this wedding. Even though their wealth was in their life, because of this they will not win the prize of the high calling. It will be a glorious time for friends, and it may be an honor to bring gifts to such a wonderful wedding, but they will not have a place, they are neither bride nor bridesmaids, they are only friends.

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## THE BRIDE IS READY!

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*"The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold." [Psa.45:13]*

Again, we see the daughter of the king brought on the scene that we might gaze on her dress; and again, the word **daughter** is in the singular. Her clothing is of wrought gold (interwoven with gold). This gold had to be hammered out so thin in order to be made into threads, and then woven into the material. Again, we must bring out that His Bride is not spiritually lazy! She will give of her best to her Lord whom she loves. She will spend time with Him in prayer and meditation, studying the Word, and just loving Him. He prepares her and gives her the ability in her own heart and life to take His deity and work it out in her life to the beauty of Jesus Christ. She has the whole design of her garment herself. She has made herself ready by yielding to the power of the Holy Spirit in her daily life.

*"She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework..." [Psa.45:14]*

"Needlework" or embroidery, takes a lot of skill; it takes training; it takes time. She receives this training and skill from the Holy Spirit. In Exodus, we read that God chose special men for the job of building the tabernacle in the wilderness.

*"Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, **IN WHOM THE LORD PUT WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING TO KNOW HOW TO WORK ALL MANNER OF WORK FOR THE SERVICE OF THE SANCTUARY,** according to all that the LORD had commanded." [Exo.36:1]*

They were given understanding and wisdom to embroider the hanging for the gate of the court, and cherubim into the curtains, and the veil. What we see from this is the beauty of God's working, first in her, then outwardly to produce a beautiful wedding gown for all to see how she has been identified with her Lover. We see how God is bringing us into a place where we are identified with Him in His judgment. He chose these men and filled them with the Holy Spirit before they started this embroidery work. And so, we can see it is necessary not only to be filled with the Holy Spirit, but yielded to Him in order to have this needlework worked into our lives.

## HER COMPANIONS

*"The virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee." [Psa.45:14b]*

These companions follow her, coming along behind her, holding her train. They are very much like the friends we read about earlier, who are at the wedding but not as The Bride.

## GOD HAS SET A CHOICE BEFORE US

Now what part do you really want? Do you want to be companion, friend, or the maid of honor? Or do you want to be The Bride? What do you really want in life? These questions we must consider. God has put us here to prepare for eternity. I will leave this question with you: **“WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH OUR LIVES?”**

# CHAPTER 11, CHANGE IN PROCESS

## THE 2 ADAMS...ADAM AND JESUS CHRIST

### ADAM, FATHER OF SINFUL RACE

*"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: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ)." [Rom.5:12-17]*

Adam is the image of Him who was to come; however, he plunged the whole human race into sin when he fell from the place where God had put him. Because of this fall, we inherited sin from Adam and so all became sinners. The whole human race is in sin; but even so, Adam is a figure of the last Adam...Jesus Christ. The Greek word translated **FIGURE** means *"to make an imprint, pattern, or mark."* It could even be a flesh wound. Adam was a pattern of another Adam who was yet to come. Who is this other Adam? Paul answers this question in 1 Corinthians 15:45.

### JESUS CHRIST, THE LAST ADAM

*"It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. "And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." [1Co.15:44-45]*

This is a comparison of the natural body with the spiritual body. In Genesis 2, we read that God breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life and he became a living soul. God gave him the power to live. We are alive today because Adam passed life on to us. This natural life will pass away. Adam was never promised eternal life, only a living soul.

We also read that this first Adam was a figure of another Adam who was to come. Then we read the last Adam was a quickening spirit. This last Adam is the Lord Jesus Christ. Notice, that He is not called the **second Adam**, because Paul wants us to realize that there is not another Adam to come. Christ is the **last Adam**.

The first Adam and the last Adam are to be compared—one is a living soul and the other is a life-giving spirit. In Genesis, we learned how God worked in the first Adam, created from dust, and so we can compare the manner in which He brought the last Adam into the

world. Christ was never Adam before He came to earth. He was the Son of God, eternal in the heavens. The first Adam was never called deity, holy, or righteous. Jesus was and still is Deity.

## GOD—AUTHOR OF LIFE

*"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." [Gen.2:7]*

Notice, it was the Lord God who did all the work; He formed Adam; and gave him life. Adam could not boast of anything in his own strength or ability. The phrase "**LORD God**" is the Jehovah Lord, the Self-existing One, the Eternal One. The word rendered **God** here is **Elohim**, which is the plural of **EL** and means "*The Almighty*." It was the Eternal, Almighty God who breathed life into Adam, and this man (Adam) became a figure of another which was yet to come.

## A COMPANION FOR ADAM

*"And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." [Gen.2:21-24]*

From this we understand that God performed another operation which was just as sure as His 1<sup>st</sup> operation—a figure of Him who was to come. So, His 2<sup>nd</sup> operation is also a figure of one who is to come. He took a rib out of Adam, and from this rib He made a bride for Adam. He brought her unto Adam and gave her to him. Adam recognized her and said, "*this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh*." He called her "*woman*" because she was taken out of his body. This is a wonderful picture of the portion from which God is going to take The Church and make a Bride for the last Adam (Jesus Christ). God is doing the work, and just like the work He did in making a bride for Adam, so He will do the work in making a Bride for Jesus Christ.

## TYPE OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

Since Adam is a type of Christ, then we must realize that Adam's body is a type of the Body of Christ which is The Church. Adam became the head of the human race, and, in the same manner, we read in Ephesians 1 that Christ became the Head of The Church, which is His Body:

*"The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." [Eph.1:18-2]*

## CHRIST'S SPIRITUAL BODY, THE CHURCH

When we receive Christ as our own personal Savior, we become born into a spiritual body, the Body of Christ. This is a body that has been raised from the dead. All of this is

according to the working of God's mighty power. This same power raised Jesus from the dead, and brought out of the grave a new race of people; a heavenly race, that He raised far above principalities and powers and every name that is named, both in this age and the ages to come. He put all things under the feet of Christ, and made Him to be the head of The Body, The Church.

## **GOD'S PURPOSE FOR THE NEW BIRTH**

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*"And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." [Eph.2:6]*

We are not literally in heaven, but in Christ we are seated, by faith, in heavenly places with Him. All who are born-again in Christ are a part of the Body of Christ, this is why we are called **SAINTS**. Just as everyone who is born in the natural is part of the body of the first Adam, all who are born-again are part of the spiritual body (The Church) of the last Adam (Jesus Christ). The Church is made up of a separated people. God counts that we have been separated unto Christ and already seated in "*heavenly places*" with Him.

## **CHRIST, THE HEAD OF THE BODY**

*"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ." [1Co.12:12]*

We can look at our human body and see a clear picture of what God is doing in the spiritual body. As the human body has only one head, so also the spiritual Body of Christ has only one Head. Joining a religious system establishes you with another head in place of Christ as Head, thereby denying the headship of Christ. Saints do you understand the seriousness of this? The Bible teaches us that Christ is the Head of The Church and for a member of the Body of Christ to join an organization is to deny His power to lead His body. Every function of our human body is directed by the head. My hand cannot function without instructions from my head.

Some time ago I had a stroke. My foot and hand just would not obey my brain, but God intervened and healed me. This experience is a good illustration of a wonderful truth. The members of the body cannot act without instructions. When a member of the body acts contrary to the instructions from the head, it is in the state of disobedience to the head and it becomes sick. Much of the Body of Christ is in just this kind of disobedience to His headship.

## **WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

*"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." [1Co.12:13]*

The Holy Spirit is the agent by which the Body of Christ operates. When a human being is born, he has a human spirit. When a person is born of God (born-again), he receives the Spirit of Christ into his life. When that person is filled with the Holy Spirit, he receives additional power into his life. The purpose of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life is to take charge and rule over the human spirit. The human spirit is the drive (motivation) of the natural life. If it is controlled by the Holy Spirit it will be in harmony with the will of God.

On the day of Pentecost, God baptized the whole spiritual Body of Christ into one body. As the believer becomes a part of this spiritual body he, individually, needs to be filled with

the Holy Spirit. As every part of my body is a member of my natural body, so likewise, the born-again person becomes a member of the mystical (spiritual) Body of Christ. I am a member of the Body of Christ, not a member of some religious organization. I can only be a member of one church and that is the Body of Christ. I may be a foot or an eye; however, whatever my place is, I am to function to God's glory in that place where He has set me. **EACH BORN-AGAIN BELIEVER HAS A PLACE!**

*"If the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him." [1Co.12:15-18]*

God sets each member in the Body of Christ according to His pleasure and each member is to function, by faith, in that place where God has set him. Did you know that walking by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only thing that pleases God, and He is very displeased when we are joined to another body?

### WALK OF FAITH PLEASES GOD

*"Without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." [Heb.11:6b]*

### GOD'S PLAN IS BY OBEDIENCE OF FAITH

As we believe God and lay hold of what God has done for us through Jesus Christ, He puts us in the body as it pleases Him. God has a ministry for every believer, and they grow into a deeper fellowship with God as they are faithful to the ministry He has given them.

### ALL HAVE THE SAME FUNCTION?

*"And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary. And those members of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor, and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness." [1Co.12:19-23]*

If we were all alike, we would not have a functioning body. The phrase "*seem to be*" comes from a Greek word that means "*a reputation*." Both this phrase and "*we think*" are opinions of what people see in that person. It is man's idea of the situation. "*We think*" they are less honorable, they "*seem to be*" more feeble, but they are not either of these, because they have been set in The Body by the operation of God. The power and honor they have is in the Lord, Himself. The word **set** means "*to put in a design, a certain arrangement, or position*." We do not set ourselves in The Body; God set us there. Paul did not ever consider himself to be a big preacher. He knew the place to which God had called him, and he stayed faithful in that place. Shortly before his death, Paul wrote to Timothy that he had fought a good fight and kept the faith [2Ti.4:7]. God had brought him into an honorable place, though not in the eyes of men.

## NOT WISE TO COMPARE OURSELVES

*"Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's. For though I should boast some what more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed: That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters. For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible. Let such an one think this, that, such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such will we be also in deed when we are present. For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." [2Co.10:7-12]*

This does not sound as if Paul were held in honor, does it? But we know that Paul won a prize, a crown of victory. Some of God's people compare themselves with others and try to do someone else's job, not realizing where God has set them. Some want to be showy, to be **UP IN FRONT** while refusing to function where God has set them. The important thing is to seek God and find out where He wants us, and let Him take care of the commendation.

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## GOD'S WORK SEEN

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*"Our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked." [1Co.12:23b-24]*

We understand that a more spiritual person should **BESTOW MORE ABUNDANT HONOR** on the **UNCOMELY** person, while a less spiritual person may put them down or talk against them. The word **comely** gives the thought of "*something well formed, shapely, graceful or beautiful.*" If people are not like that, people who have not yielded their mind to the Holy Spirit tend to dislike them. In a spiritual sense, God makes His people graceful and brings them into a wonderful place.

Paul may not have had a physically graceful body (there are some indications that he may have been a hunchback) because of the many beatings he had endured. It is possible he was nearly blind; we read in his letter to the Galatians that they would have given him their eyes if they could. However Paul appeared physically, he had the truth, the Word of God, and spiritually he was a beautiful person. This is the beauty that God wants to work in each of our lives, the beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ.

## GOD'S PEOPLE ARE SPECIAL TO HIM

The word **honor** means "*the valued price.*" The honor God bestows upon His people is a comparison with the honor He bestowed upon Christ at Calvary. Jesus paid the price in full in His own body upon the cross, and the value that God sees in us is the same that we see at the cross. If we do not value the truth, God does not put much value in us, no matter how great we might appear in this world.

One thing that God saw in Adam was a rib which He would use to make a bride. Obviously a rib is not a thing of beauty, but God saw potential beauty there. The rib is a supporting factor of emotion and love; the ribs also give protection to the heart. God picked this part of the body to make a bride for Adam. In the same way, He will take, as it were, a rib of the mystical Body of Christ to make a Bride for His Son. The beauty of the

woman was not in the rib, but in what God did with the rib. Oh! What a picture of the Bride of Christ! God is bestowing upon her an honor that the world cannot understand and therefore will not receive.

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### CHRIST'S BRIDE...A HELPMEET

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*"And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him." [Gen.2:18]*

Adam was not lonesome or bored, he had a lot of creatures to name, trees to dress and care for, but he needed someone to be a help to him. We know he had God to help him and communicate with but God saw that he needed someone of the same level of nature to live with and reproduce.

*"Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor." [Ecc.4:9]*

God also saw that His Son needed a wife to be of the same plane of spirituality and able to live with Him eternally. He was to find such a woman in The Church, but she would have to qualify for such a place.

*"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." [2Co.3:18]*

It is the Word that changes lives. As we look into His Word it should reflect the glory of God in Christ. It is a wonderful work that God is doing in the uncomely parts. He is making something special.

The Hebrew word translated **RIB** in Genesis 2, means "a beam." The same word is used in reference to the building of Solomon's temple, and also the Millennial Temple. In Ezekiel this word **RIB** is rendered "board" and "chamber" and is referred to as a "supporting form." In Ephesians, The Church is called the **HOUSE OF GOD**, the **BODY OF CHRIST**, and the **TEMPLE OF GOD**. We should be the supporting beam in His holy place. Everything we say and do should be for the support of the Body of Christ.

As the Holy Spirit, moves in our lives, and as we are obedient to the Holy Spirit, we are edifying the Body of Christ. This is the uncomely part, the little things, the insignificant things that do not mean anything to the natural mind; yet, God loves these little things that we do to encourage, support, and edify the function of the Body of Christ. He expects this from us, and when we do these "little things," our life becomes beautiful and we become fitted into the rib portion of the Body of Christ. This rib portion is what He is taking out and making into a beautiful Bride for His Son, Jesus. How do we know if we are there?

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### LOVE ONE ANOTHER IN CHRIST

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*"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another." [Rom.12:10]*

*"That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another." [1Co.12:25]*

God desires there to be no schism (division). Regardless of our likes or dislikes, we are told to be careful to have the same care for each member in the Body of Christ. Let's face

it, we are human beings and there are people with whom we are naturally incompatible. However, God tells us that we are to have the same loving care “*one to another*” and to love one another with a “*brotherly love*.” God does not want any division in the Body of Christ. Even today, He is fashioning a beautiful body that it is going to be just like Jesus who loves all alike. Let us examine our own heart and see if we are functioning well in the body where God has set us. What counts is...Christ in me!

### Christ in Me

This is my wonderful story; Christ to my heart has come;  
Jesus, the King of Glory, finds in my heart a home.  
I am so glad I received Him, Jesus my heart's dear King;  
I who so often have grieved Him, all to His feet would bring.  
How can I ever be lonely, how can I ever fall;  
What can I want, if only Christ is my all in all?  
Now in His bosom confiding, this my glad song shall be;  
I am in Jesus abiding, Jesus abides in me.  
Christ in me, Christ in me, Christ in me, O wonderful story:  
Christ in me, Christ in me, Christ in me, the hope of glory.

## CHAPTER 12, A VIRTUOUS WOMAN

### WHO IS THIS WOMAN?

*"Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies." [Pro.31:10]*

First, I would like to note that in the passage from Proverbs 31:10-30 each verse is an acrostic. That is, each verse begins with a Hebrew letter in order from the first to the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet. We can see this because each verse shows a different characteristic of this remarkable woman. Is not this what God is looking for to be His Son's wife?

The subject here is a virtuous woman. The word **virtuous** is from a Hebrew word meaning "*to be strong and able*." In the Old Testament, it has also been translated "*rich*". **Virtuous** is derived from a word that means "*to be in pain*" or "*to give childbirth*."

The word **woman** comes from a word that means "*to come out of man*": "*She shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man*" [Gen.2:23b].

### WHERE DID SHE COME FROM?

To find out who she is, it is necessary to find what man from (she was the rib that was taken out).

- In the natural sense, we would have to say woman came from Adam; but in the spiritual sense, we would have to say she came out of the Body of Christ.
- In the natural sense, the woman is weak; she is referred to as the "*weaker vessel*" in 1 Peter 3. Looking at it from the spiritual sense, we must say she is powerful and strong because she comes out of One who is powerful and strong.



- In the natural sense, the woman fell from this place of submission to her head (her husband). In the spiritual sense, she walked by faith, in submission to Christ as her Head, thus becoming part of a family of fearlessness and strength, a family of conquerors.

We cannot say these things about just any woman, can we? No! But we know that this woman is a special woman, different from any other woman, because she is of a heavenly family, a new creation.

The value of this woman; who can know it? Her value *"is far above rubies."* One translator calls this **PEARLS**, instead of **RUBIES**. How far above? We don't know. Whatever rubies are worth, her value is exceedingly above all of them—this is the value of a new creation. Her value is even greater, because she is a called-out woman, a special woman; set aside to be Jesus' Bride.

## SHE FEARS GOD

*"Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised."*  
[Pro.31:30]

This is a wonderful description of this woman we are talking about. She is a woman that fears the Lord, that is reverent or under subjection. She is a woman that loves the Lord. And so her price is above other precious stones. Over and over again we hear, and we know prophetically and in type, that precious stones speak of the people of God. But this woman is above the ordinary child of God.

## WHO CAN KNOW HER?

Here is a question that needs to be examined: **"WHO CAN FIND SUCH A WOMAN IN ORDER TO KNOW HER?"** It doesn't mean that she's lost, God knows all about her. The thought is that a woman of this caliber is rare. Such a **WONDERFUL WOMAN!** Jesus will find such a woman in His Bride. He will examine her and find within her all of the qualities that we will read concerning her in this passage of Proverbs 31. She truly is a spiritually strong woman; not physically strong, but spiritually strong through her knowledge of the things of God. This spiritual strength is gained by experiences and by knowing Him through the trials and situations in our life. Through these we grow and become strengthened in the Lord. This woman was truly a strong woman because the Word of God has strengthened her.

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## HER ATTRIBUTES

### TRUSTED BY HER HUSBAND

*"The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil."* [Pro.31:11]

God could not trust the first Adam, but He does trust the last Adam...Jesus Christ. When the life of Christ is in us, we are a new creation. As we walk after the Spirit we become trustworthy. If we totally yield to the leading of the Spirit, Christ can trust us totally. God is preparing us to be trustworthy.

*"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."* [Eph.2:10]

Who is **OUR** husband? Of course, in the spiritual sense, it is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is both our Lord and our husband, and, by faith, we claim Him for our own because we have been espoused as a chaste virgin unto the Lord...He is ours. As we study God's Word we grow up into Him, in great strength, so that our husband (to whom we have been espoused) can put His trust in us. How many of God's people, do you suppose, Jesus can really trust?

Jesus became our husband when we were espoused to Him. Provisionally, the whole Church is espoused to Him, but only a few are so trustworthy that He can depend upon them. This is what we see in Proverbs 31:11. The heart of her husband can safely trust in her and have no losses. In scripture, **spoil** refers to the “*losses of war*.” To the victorious there is great gain. So we see here a victorious woman, victorious in battle, the spirit of conquering is in her.

*"I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil." [Psa.119:162]*

Not only are there no losses by trusting in His Word, but there are always great gains, by knowing the Word of God. We continuously encourage saints to study and learn the Word, because if we do not know the Word, we will be weak, and there will be losses in our life. But a good knowledge of the Word will encourage our heart and cause us to want more. The obedience of faith brings joy and victory, and when in victory there is no need of spoil, because Jesus won our battle and brought us complete victory at the cross. This woman is His finished work and her victories are because of Him.

### ACCOMPLISHES GOOD THINGS

*"She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life." [Pro.31:12]*

She accomplishes good things; so we ask, “In whose opinion are these things good?” Not necessarily in her opinion, or her friends or neighbors, but in the opinion of her husband. She will do Him good all the days of her life. What He enjoys is what she longs to do, and she delights in doing the things He enjoys. If Jesus is not everything in our lives, how can we claim Him as our husband?

### IS NOT SLOTHFUL

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*"She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands." [Pro.31:13]*

She goes after something that will help others. The word **seeketh** shows that she is always busy; she produces something just for Him. There are 2 things named here: ☞ **Wool** and • **Flax**

- **WOOL** comes from an animal—shearing the sheep not killing them. Sheep are a picture of God's people. The wool speaks of God's covering. We are provisionally clothed by the Lamb of God. This woman takes of this to share with others.
- **FLAX** comes from a plant that must be worked and cultivated. This woman takes these things that God has produced and makes beautiful garments: "*Fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints*" [Rev.19:8].

- Both **WOOL AND FLAX** speak of covering nakedness: *"Will recover my wool and my flax given to cover her nakedness"* [Hos.2:9].

We see that she is busy with God's works. Again she is not lazy! She works willingly, not grudgingly, with her hands. We do not read of her groaning or telling others how hard she works. There are many women in the household of faith, however, only one group of believers fits this description...the Bride of Christ. Everything she does is in the name of her espoused husband.

### IS LIKE A SHIP BRINGING HELP TO OTHERS

*"She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar."* [Pro.31:14]

When we think of a merchants' ship, we think of one that is loaded with goods to supply the needs of people. This ship is bringing food from afar...how far? This ship comes all the way from heaven. Someone said, "That's far-fetched." I answered, "It sure is!" It's a very long way. But it's full of the products of God, full of glory and blessing, all the things that God gives us to distribute to others. That is why she is like a merchants' ship, constantly carrying spiritual supplies to others. We see the others in Proverbs 31:15, *"She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household and a portion to her maidens."*

She takes the supplies she received from far away and begins giving them to others. The Bride of Christ begins giving where she lives by sharing the Gospel to all who will want to be a partaker of God's grace.

*"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word."* [Psa.119:9]

The things of God are **teaching** and **giving**...these must always begin at home. We need to teach our children and grandchildren the ways of God—how to walk in His ways. There are many things that we have had to learn about daily life that God teaches us, and we need to pass these truths on to others (also study Pro.3:1-4). How do we expect other people to get excited about the things of God if we, the believers, act in an indifferent manner?

### RISES EARLY BRINGING NEEDFUL FOOD

*"She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens. Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me."* [Pro.31:15-16]

She starts early in the morning; showing how anxious she is to give spiritual food (Word of God) to her family. She rises while it is yet night and gives food to her household first and then she gives a portion to her maidens or to others with whom she comes in contact. She serves those who should be serving her. She is continually thinking of others, rather than herself.

We are speaking of spiritual food. The old creation feeds on things of the flesh, and the new creation feeds on things of the spirit, which is the Word of God. The carnal things which the flesh is attracted to and feeds upon must be removed (judged and set aside) before we can feed on the things of the spirit and obtain spiritual nourishment. We cannot

eat both at the same time. What are we feeding on? She gives what is needful for her maidens to grow up into spiritual maturity.

### BUYS A FIELD WITH HER LIFE

*"She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard." [Pro.31:16]*

Now, she begins considering other things. The woman cultivates the field and plants it so it can become fruitful.

**Considereth** means "*to think on, to dwell on, or to plan something.*" This woman does not just jump into a project without knowledge, she prays to get the mind of her Lord. Saints; this is the characteristic of an overcoming Christian...to trust in God's guidance. Then we can go ahead with assurance, knowing it is in perfect harmony with His will: "*Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths*" [Pro.3:5-6].

We can go ahead and buy the field. Matthew 13:38 says that "*the field is the world*". We lay hold of the portion that God wants us to have in order to produce what He wants us to produce in our life today. Notice that first the woman considers the field, then buys it and works it. For us the field can be any opportune place to sow seed. Perhaps an acquaintance, a neighbor, or someone with whom we work. Whatever it is, we buy it.

We redeem the time by buying up every opportunity, "*See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is*" [Eph.5:15-17]. Through the obedience of faith, buying up every field that God leads us to, can be a gain to us; however, our sowing is what will benefit our husband, the Lord Jesus.

### STRONG IN THE LORD

*"She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms." [Pro.31:17]*

*"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." [Phi.4:13]*

At this time in history, the girdle was a very useful article. It was a type of belt worn outside the long robe. When a person desired to do any type of service, they girded themselves for the task at hand by lifting the robe and fastening the girdle to hold the robe up keeping it from hindering any body movements. In Scripture, the girdle is a picture of the strength we receive from the Word of God.

*"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness." [Col.1:10-11]*

She is strengthened with His might; able to walk worthy of the Lord, able to do what is in His perfect will. Therefore, she is strengthened in the muscles of her arms, having added strength for action.

### MERCHANDISE IS GOOD, CANDLE STAYS LIT

*"She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night." [Pro.31:18]*

She comes to the glorious knowledge that her merchandise is good. The Word of God is always good! It is the very best of God and His Word is always at our disposal. This is a fact...there is nothing better than giving out the truth.

Then we read that her candle does not go out during the night time. There are 2 great thoughts in this phrase.

- First, Jesus is the light of the world.

*"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." [Joh.8:12]*

*"As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." [Joh.9:5]*

*"For ye were sometimes darkness, but **NOW ARE YE LIGHT IN THE LORD: WALK AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT.**" [Eph.5:8]*

- There are times when we stay up late at night, burning the "midnight oil"...just reading, studying, devouring the Word...making God's Word a part of our lives. However, there is a greater thought which tells us there is plenty of oil in her lamp. We are reminded of the 10 virgins in Matthew 25. All 10 of the lights were going out, although the 5 wise virgins had more oil with them so they had a little light; but the lamps of the 5 foolish virgins went out while they all waited and slumbered. The lamp of this virtuous woman does not go out, neither does it dim. It is constantly burning, kept trimmed, so she can keep taking in the things of God. When is the last time you had your wick trimmed? Oil speaks of the Holy Spirit, and without yielding to Him, our light will grow dim.

Without that light we cannot see where we are going, we get confused in life, and therefore it is so important to be full of the Holy Spirit as manifested by our walk. The Holy Spirit in this woman keeps her going on. She has plenty of oil which keeps her heart enlightened with the Word of God.

### SKILLED IN THE WAYS OF GOD

*"She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff." [Pro.31:19]*

She knows how to use the tools of God. Very likely none of us in the natural know how to use a spindle or distaff, but the Word of God is the tool we have in our hand today, and we must know how to use it to the benefit of our Lord who loves us. The purpose of the spindle and the distaff is to make cloth to cover others. The spiritual clothing believers need is the righteousness of God. She represents those who are always preparing to supply the spiritual needs of unbelievers as well as believers.

### HELPS THE POOR

*"She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy." [Pro.31:20]*

It is good to help people who are poor with material things. However, material things are not the answer to their problem; the answer to their much greater spiritual need is the Word of God. When they are saved (born-again) and learn the Word, they won't be poor

in spirit any longer. This woman is able to discern who is poor and who is needy, and she gives to them the Gospel because she has a loving heart. Paul wrote,

*"And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity (love), it profiteth me nothing." [1Co.13:3]*

This woman feeds the poor and she does it because she loves them. So each believer who knows someone who is spiritually poor and needy should feed them, care for them with a loving heart, and encourage them. There are plenty organizations that help the poor, and this is good, but not many are feeding with the Word of God. Jesus said, *"For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always"* [Mar.14:7].

### NOT AFRAID OF THE STORMS OF LIFE

*"She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet." [Pro.31:21]*

When we think of snow we think of cold and bitter winter, we think of blizzards, snowstorms, and how hard they are. It is not hard on this household, for they are clothed with scarlet. We have hard times in our lives, but we shouldn't complain if we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ. Scarlet was made by crushing a certain type of worm. It is referred to in Psalm 22 concerning the death of Christ, He said *"I am a worm, and no man"*. This is like saying, *"I've been crushed to make red dye."* When we go back to the tabernacle in the wilderness, all the scarlet that was used was made through the death of these worms.

Do you see Calvary in this? All of her household was fully clothed, protected completely. They're not afraid of the cold winds of this world. They know their covering is sure; it's in the cross where our Lord Jesus Christ shed His blood.

### MAKES HERSELF READY

*"She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple." [Pro.31:22]*

Again, we see the covering, but here is a different thought. This is **HER COVERING** and shows the practical righteousness of this woman. When we receive Christ, we are provisionally covered with His Holiness...His Righteousness covers the believer to the uttermost. However, this woman does not stop there; her covering goes beyond what has been provided, she has made a wedding dress. Now she has a practical covering. Again we read of this in Revelation 19:8: *"And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."* A better rendering of the word **righteousness** is *"righteous acts,"* a practical, outward righteousness that is seen in her.

This is special clothing, a tapestry, something that is outstanding. Her clothes are outstanding because they are bridal clothes, something that is different than others. In the natural, riches are sometimes indicated by the type of clothing a person wears. In the spiritual, the Bride of Christ will be evident by her manner of life. The Bride exchanges her wedding dress to make one to be identified as a wife.

## EVERYONE KNOWS HER HUSBAND

*"Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land." [Pro.31:23]*

Men who sat in the gates were elders and rulers of the city. In Ruth 4, we are told that Boaz had to go and talk to the men who sat in the gates to get their approval of a very important transaction. This woman's husband is among the elders sitting at the gate...a man of importance. Up to this point, we have only seen her, but now suddenly we see her husband. She has never turned her eyes away from Him. He is never left out of what she is doing. Everything she is doing is for His honor.

*"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." [Col.3:17]*

If everything we do is done in the name of the Lord Jesus then we can give thanks to God for it; however, if we cannot give thanks to God for what we do, then we should not go ahead and do it. This is a good rule of thumb to govern our behavior.

## MAKES HER MERCHANDISE AVAILABLE

*"She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant." [Pro.31:24]*

We now return to the thought of linen, but from a different viewpoint. At this time she is selling the linen to the merchant. The word **sell** here implies *"to set a value on something."* We, too, need to consider and set a value on the wonderful, glorious things that God is producing in our life. What God is producing in our lives is valued as being *"above rubies"* [Pro.31:10]. Having set the value, she now begins to send it to others.

Notice that *"She delivereth girdles unto the merchant."* In Proverbs 31:13, we read that she was like the merchant's ship, bringing her food from afar. Now we read that she is sending goods away. She delivers that which supports and strengthens. In Ephesians 6:14 we are told to have *"our loins girded about with truth"* (the girdle covered the loins, the middle part of our body). Now, she is sending out truth to others, wherever anyone will take it, as far as the ships will go.

## HER MERCHANDISE—THE WORD OF GOD

This truth is her husband, for Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth and the life"* [Joh.14:6].

*"Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come." [Pro.31:25]*

Strength and honor are her outward clothing, these are her work clothes. One day her work will be over. She now is looking forward to the time when she will sit beside her husband and forever rejoice in Him.

*"She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness." [Pro.31:26]*

Whenever she opens her mouth, she **speaks wisdom**. In Proverbs 3, we can see Jesus as *"wisdom."* In Colossians 2:3, we read that *"In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."* So she opens her mouth and out comes wisdom. Why? Because she continually studies the Word of God, it has become a part of her life.



And, *"in her tongue is the law of kindness."* Oh, are we under The Law? Yes, God has not left us lawless: *"For the law of the Spirit of life In Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death"* [Rom.8:2]. So, she has another law, a **law of kindness**. The thought of the word **kindness** is *"an attitude of love,"* and this attitude is contained in mercy itself. All through the Scripture, love and kindness go together. Working together, they control her life. We are not outlaws; we have a control on our life and it is the Word of God, the Wisdom of God.

### CONCERN FOR HER HOUSEHOLD

*"She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness."* [Pro.31:27]

This woman is always concerned about her household: *"do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith"* [Gal.6:10]. Paul's advice for this is, *"That ye may walk honestly... that ye may have lack of nothing."* [1Th 4:12] and *"guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully."* [1Ti.5:14b]. She looks well to the ways of her household, and she sees that they conform to the ways of God. *"She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night"* [Pro.31:18]. This is her daily attitude. So it was with Abraham...

*"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him."* [Gen.18:19]

She is a busy person, not idling away her time: *"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord"* [Rom.12:11]. She does not eat the bread of idleness. How can we cease working when our heart is burning with the things of God? We must tell it. In 1 Corinthians 9:16, Paul writes, *"woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel."* If this Word is burning in our hearts, we will also want to tell others about Jesus.

### HER CHILDREN CALL HER BLESSED

*"Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her."* [Pro.31:28]

Who are her children? They are those to whom she has witnessed, who have come to the Lord (been born-again) through her testimony. In Galatians 4:19, Paul spoke of his children in the Lord, for whom he travailed in birth again until Christ is formed in them. As this woman's children grow up they will *"call her blessed"*. What greater praise can a woman have than that her children and husband find her praiseworthy?

### EXCELS IN EVERYTHING AND IS FAVORED

*"Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all."* [Pro.31:29]

We are reminded of Solomon speaking about the Shulamite woman when he said that there was none who could compare with her, *"My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her. The daughters saw her, and blessed her; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her"* [SSg.6:9]. There are many spiritual women who have done virtuously, but one, this special woman, this Bride of Christ, surpasses them all.

*"Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates."* [Pro.31:30-31]



In eternity, not only her children, but all will be looking at her, all will favor her, all will praise her. This woman that fears the Lord, reveres Him, walks and talks with Him, "**SHE SHALL BE PRAISED.**" When? When she sits by her husband, when every knee shall bow before Him, she will be sitting by his side, receiving the praises that are due Him.

*"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." [Phi.2:10-11]*

The praises are His, but all will see this virtuous woman who is sitting with Him...The Bride of Christ. By His side she will receive of the fruit of her hands, and there, her own works will praise her.

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## OUR DESIRE

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This virtuous woman is not like any other woman. When I read this I say,

"Lord, I want to be like this woman; I want to be what you want me to be, I want your approval, in all things. Use me, Lord; strengthen me and make me like this virtuous woman in your sight."

<h2>CHAPTER 13, CHRIST'S SOON RETURN</h2>
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## THAT BLESSED HOPE

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*"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." [Tiu.2:13-14]*

Let us set our thoughts on this blessed hope that God has set before all that have been born again. If we have Jesus Christ in our hearts, we should be filled with anticipation, longing for the soon return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The fact is; He is coming soon and those who are looking for Him will meet Him in the air. Oh! What a long and happy time that will be. He will appear in all His glory, the same glory that He had with His Father before the world existed [Joh.17:5].

The Greek word for **hope** is singular and in the feminine gender. It is the expectation of a Bride; she has only one hope...to be with her Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ. Is the coming of Jesus Christ your only hope? It surely should be, and if not, why isn't it? Let each of us examine our hearts; do I really believe that He could come today? Saints; there is no reason He can't, all prophecies have been fulfilled, we are only waiting. We can hear the distant thunder as the nations are being gathered around Jerusalem, their only purpose is to annihilate the chosen people of God. They have all the equipment they need to do the job. It just isn't God's time yet.

Oh! To gaze upon His visible glory. There are no words to tell how wonderful that day will be when The Bride is caught up to share in that glory. Oh, what a hope! What a longing...expecting to see the one who died for us. He gave Himself a ransom in order that a people, like you and me, could be qualified to be married to God's wonderful Son. Soon He is coming to claim His Bride, are you preparing for this day?

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## THE TIME IS NEAR

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I believe that this Church Age is just about over and we should be looking for our Savior's return at any time. How wonderful it would be if the whole Church was longing, watching, and preparing for His return, with a love that grows stronger day by day. But sad-to-say, not all The Church is ready. We all should be crying out from the depth of our heart, "**Even so, come Lord Jesus.**"

**COMPARING THE NATURAL WITH SPIRITUAL** If a woman falls in love with a man and consents to marry him, she would begin to make plans for her wedding and everything else would come second place in her life. If he had to go away on a trip, she would miss him so much. If he wrote her a letter telling the time of his return and the plane schedule, she would be at the airport early and excited, watching the gate for him. Saints, we have such a letter. It was dictated by our Lord Jesus, and written by Paul. He tells us of Jesus' love for The Church and the expected time of His return...

*"But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." [1Th.5:1-2]*

We should know "*the times and seasons*"; the signs are all around us. These signs are like a ticking clock, letting us know the time is near.

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## GREATEST SIGN OF HIS COMING

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The greatest sign is the Jewish people. They went into captivity about 600 years before Christ was born, because they would not believe God's Word, but instead, ran after idols. God said, they "*played the harlot*" and their fellowship with God was cut off. We see them in the news daily negotiating for peace. They cannot have peace without Jesus, for He is the Prince of Peace, whom they have rejected through unbelief.

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## HOW DOES THE CHURCH COMPARE?

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In the same manner, Christendom is playing the harlot today, because they have run after idols. They love the material things of this world more than our Lord. They are religious and are clinging to their denominational leaders. Their hope is not heavenly, but earthly and sensual; this is spiritual adultery. Jesus is going to have a bride, without spot or wrinkle [Eph.5:27]. I believe that the Bride of Christ will be completely separated from anything that could possibly come between her and Jesus.

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## WE MUST DECIDE OURSELVES

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There is a question every child of God should ask themselves, and it deserves an honest answer. The decision that we make will affect us and possibly our children for eternity. So, let's not be hasty, but carefully consider the question: "**Am I really expecting this blessed hope today?**" If the answer is "Yes," then we can say with John "*Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure*" [1Jo.3:1-3].

In our hearts, we must realize the unmerited love that God poured out on us by sending His Son to die and raise from the dead many sons to glory. Today, we (believers) are sons of God, perhaps tomorrow we may see glory. Today we do not know what we will be then, but one thing we do know is that when He shows Himself to us we shall be changed into the same stage of glory.

#### HE WILL FINISH THE WORK HE BEGAN.

Now, if you have this hope it will change your life today; it will make you as clean and holy as He is. It is then that Titus 2:14 will be completed, through our obedience of faith to His Word in our lives today: *"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."* He will purify unto Himself a peculiar people, a people beyond all other people as His own special ones, who are full of zeal.

We will be **LOOKING AND LONGING FOR THE GLORIOUS APPEARING OF THE SON OF GOD**. Today, we can see His appearing through the eyes of faith as the Holy Spirit opens our eyes to see things that are to come. His appearing will be so real to us that we see ourselves already there with Him. The provision has already been made as we read, *"And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus"* [Eph.2:6]. Let us count with God and say in our hearts, "By faith, I am already there seated with Him."

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### 3 STEPS IN PREPARING THE BRIDE

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As we study Titus 2:14, we find 3 things that Jesus expects to take place in His Bride through her obedience to His sayings.

#### 1. MADE PURE AS JESUS IS PURE

She will be purified to be like Jesus Himself. The word purify means to be "clean, make pure, or purge." In 1 Timothy 5:22, Paul told Timothy: *"...keep thyself pure".* *"And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure"* [1 Joh.3:3].

The purity of Jesus is expressed in Hebrews 7:26: *"For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens."* What can make us as pure as He is? As the song says, *"nothing but the blood of Jesus."*

*"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."* [Eph.5:25-26]

Dear reader, do you understand that we don't cleanse ourselves, but it is Jesus who does the cleansing as we take our place as His wife and obey our Husband.

Another thought on the purification in the gospel of John: *"Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you"* [Joh.15:3]. Although we are already clean through the Word, God wants to cut off the unfruitful things in our lives so we can be more fruitful; this hurts the flesh. The flesh doesn't like it and it sometimes rebels against the pruning, but it is needful that we yield to it.

*"Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."* [Joh.15:2]

We have a similar thought in 1 Peter:

*"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:" [1Pe.1:7]*

The fire is needful in our lives as in purifying gold. Gold is heated to a melting point to expose the dross, and then with a ladle, the dross is removed from the top and then it is let cool. This is repeated over and over again until all of the impurities are gone. God exposes to us our sin that we may be cleansed, *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* [1Jo.1:9].

## 2. A PECULIAR PEOPLE

The best rendering of the phrase *"a peculiar people"* would be *"a people of His possession"* or *"a people belonging to Him."* We have been bought with a price.

*"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? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." [1Co.6:19-20]*

**WE ARE NOT OUR OWN;** we belong to Jesus and have been put in the charge of the Holy Spirit to protect and keep us until the day of redemption. If we belong to Jesus, then we should be obedient as a faithful servant.

*"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" [Rom.6:16]*

*"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." [Eph.4:30]*

It is the Holy Spirit's job to make us ready. He woos us by showing the love of Jesus and admonishes us to run the race. So we say, *"Do not grieve Him by yielding to the flesh."* We have been sealed unto the Lord until our body has been redeemed to glory and He will fulfill God's will for us until that day.

*"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." [Joh.17:21-23]*

## 3. ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS

The word **zealous** could have been translated a variety of ways, such as: *"seek, desire, covet, to be jealous, and a burning desire."* In Romans 12:11, it is translated: *"fervent in spirit."* Those who are looking for the coming of the Lord will have an earnest desire to reproduce the life of Christ while in this world. His people have His Nature through the new birth and this enables them to live a godly life.

*"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." [Eph.2:10]*

*"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:" [Phi.1:6]*

God will produce good works through us if we have a desire to walk in harmony with the mystery of His will by the obedience of faith, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself. This unchangeable purpose is that He would have a people just as holy as He; this is the new creation out of which the Bride will come.

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## LOOKING FOR THE COMING OF JESUS?

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We would be only fooling ourselves if we believe that the whole Church, all in the Body of Christ, is to obtain that Bridal Place. Many saints are not looking for His soon return. You may ask, "How do you know this?" Listen to what Christians are talking about. Are they talking about things of the Lord, or are they more concerned with the things of this world than with the coming of Jesus? It isn't that these things of the world are bad, but they seem to be more preeminent than Jesus Christ.

Dear one in Christ, do you love Jesus more than anything? I trust that the answer is "Yes." We must ask ourselves, **"DO I HAVE ANYTHING IN MY LIFE MORE IMPORTANT THAN HIS WILL FOR ME, AND WOULD I GLADLY LOSE IT ALL WITHOUT COMPLAINING?"**

Paul's life was an example of one who was running the race for the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus. He counted all things as loss for Christ.

*"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 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." [Phi.3:7-9]*

First, Paul counted all loss and then he experienced the loss of all he could boast in. The phrase *"the excellency of the knowledge,"* could read *"to hold higher than anything the act of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord."* Do you esteem a higher knowledge of Jesus so important you are willing to lose everything the world has to offer just to win Christ? Or, do you count this knowledge as garbage, refuse, something to throw to the dogs?

*"I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." [1Co.9:26-27]*

We have been put on God's race track to run, this is not the time to let down. We know there is a goal at the end of the race and the prize is winning Christ. We know who we are fighting and the battle is real, we are not just shadow boxing. The secret of winning is keeping our body under subjection, meaning to buffet or disable this fleshly body and treat it as a slave; literally; to hit under the eye. But the thought is that I become a slave driver, enslaving my body to bring it into subjection. Now the reason for this is, when I herald out the Gospel to others, that I myself should not be disqualified from the race.

## CHAPTER 14, SUMMARY

### CONTENTS OVERVIEW

CHAPTER	CHAPTER OVERVIEW
1	There is a high upward calling above all other callings. There is a prize to be won. This prize is set before all who believe in the Lord Jesus, none excluded
2	God has put all saints on a race track and with the prize at the end of the race, running with our eyes on the goal, which is Jesus our prize [Phi.3:7].
3	Though the prize is for all saints, not all will qualify. Many will be disqualified along the track. This way is not easy but strenuous and takes much training; but, if Christ is the desire of our heart, He will equip us [Phi.4:13].
4	All of God's people have a heavenly hope after death of being in heaven. But those that win the race will have a more excellent glory than others [1Co.9:26-27].
5	The Church will be separated into different orders according to their degree of overcoming. Two common phrases used in Revelation 2-3 to discern the places the churches will have in glory are: ☒ " <i>Know thy works</i> " and • " <i>To him that overcometh.</i> "
6	The time of the separation of the winners of the race. They will have thrones when Christ takes His throne in heaven. They will be occupied with worship of Christ.
7	There will be a wedding in heaven, and there will be a Bride and a Groom. This Bride will be a different body of people than those who sang about them.
8	Parables are used to strengthen the truth concerning God's work for this age. Matthew 13 shows a separation of different glories by the illustration of different degrees of fruit bearing. The Bride of Christ will be 100% fruitful
9	In the attitude of Rebekah, God shows us what the Holy Spirit looks for in wooing a Bride for His Master. She has a loving and yielding heart for His desires. Do we have such a heart?
10	This Psalm describes the marriage of the King with which no other wedding can be compared as to its beauty. Three divisions of those participating: The Bride, the Bridesmaid, and friends.
11	The Bride is God's workmanship made practical. The Bride has submitted to His work and made herself ready. A picture of this is in the book of Esther [Est.2:9, 15].
12	Christ will have a virtuous woman for a Bride, and He will not be disappointed.
13	The Bride of Christ will long for the return of her Lover. How disappointing it must be for Christ to see most of His people longing for earthly things rather than His coming.

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## ORDER OF THE RESURRECTION

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*"But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."  
[1Co.15:23]*

The key word is "*order*." The order of the resurrection is:

Order	Group and Description
1 <sup>st</sup> Rank	<b>PHILADELPHIA &amp; SMYRNA OVERCOMERS</b> Glory of the <b>Sun</b> [1Co.15:41-42] Overcomers of Ephesus church 100-fold fruit bearers [Mat.13:23] Bride of Christ [Rev.19:7-8]
2 <sup>nd</sup> Rank	<b>SARDIS OVERCOMERS</b> Glory of the <b>Moon</b> [1Co.15:41-42] Overcomers of the Pergamos church 60-fold fruit bearers [Mat.13:23] Servants of Christ [Rev.7:15]
3 <sup>rd</sup> Rank	<b>LAODICEAN &amp; SARDIS OVERCOMERS</b> Glory of the <b>Stars</b> [1Co.15:41-42] 30-fold fruit bearers [Mat.13:23] 144,000 Jews [Rev.7:4-8] Friends of Christ
4 <sup>th</sup> Rank	<b>THYATIRA CHURCH</b> <b>Terrestrial</b> glory [1Co.15:41-42] Earthly friends of Christ who are: The souls under the altar <sup>1</sup> The 5 foolish virgins <sup>2</sup> [Mat.25:8]

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<sup>1</sup> They rest for a season until their fellow servants that should be killed were killed; they will die during The Tribulation (same as those in Rev.2: 12 and Rev.20: 4).

<sup>2</sup> "And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out."