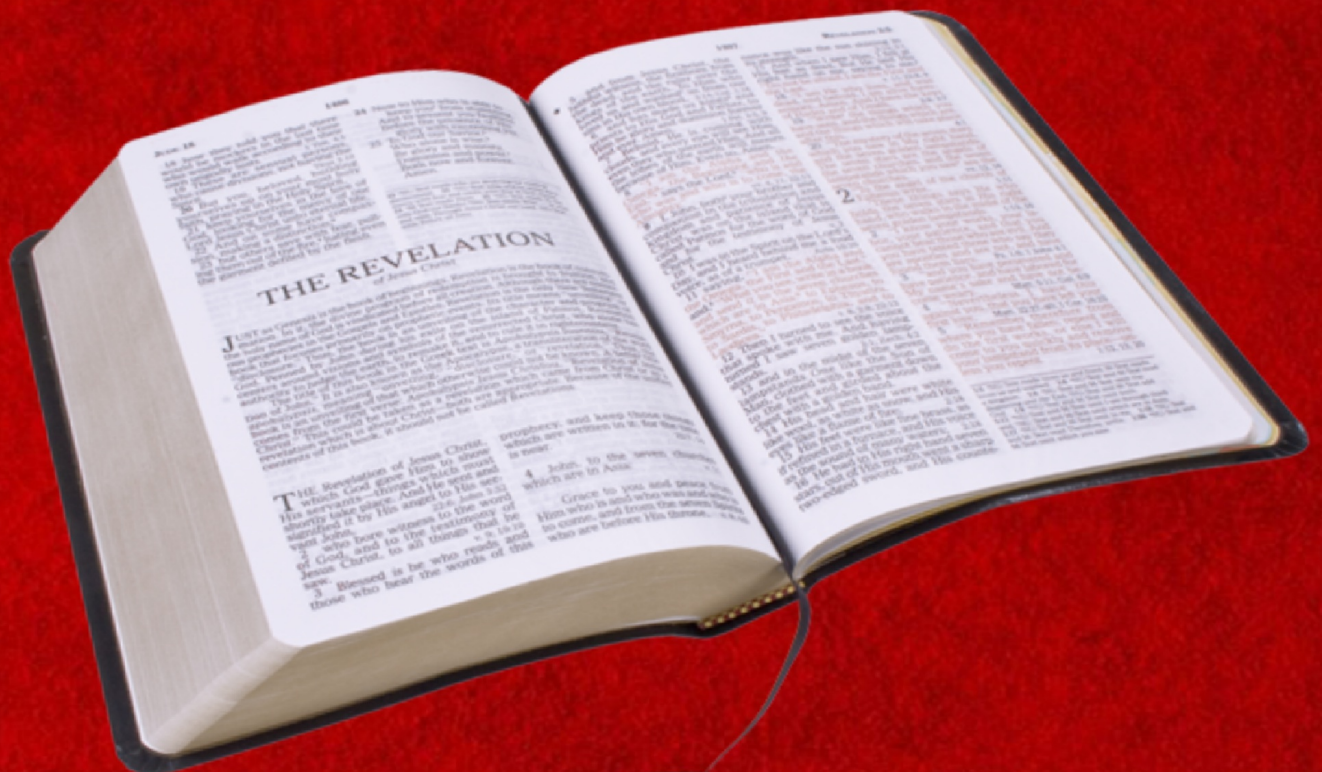


VOLUME VI

# THE BOOK OF REVELATION EXPLAINED



Earl R. Borders

**The Book  
of  
Revelation  
Explained**

**Volume 6  
Chapters 20-22**

**Earl R. Borders**

The Church of God, God's Acres  
2020

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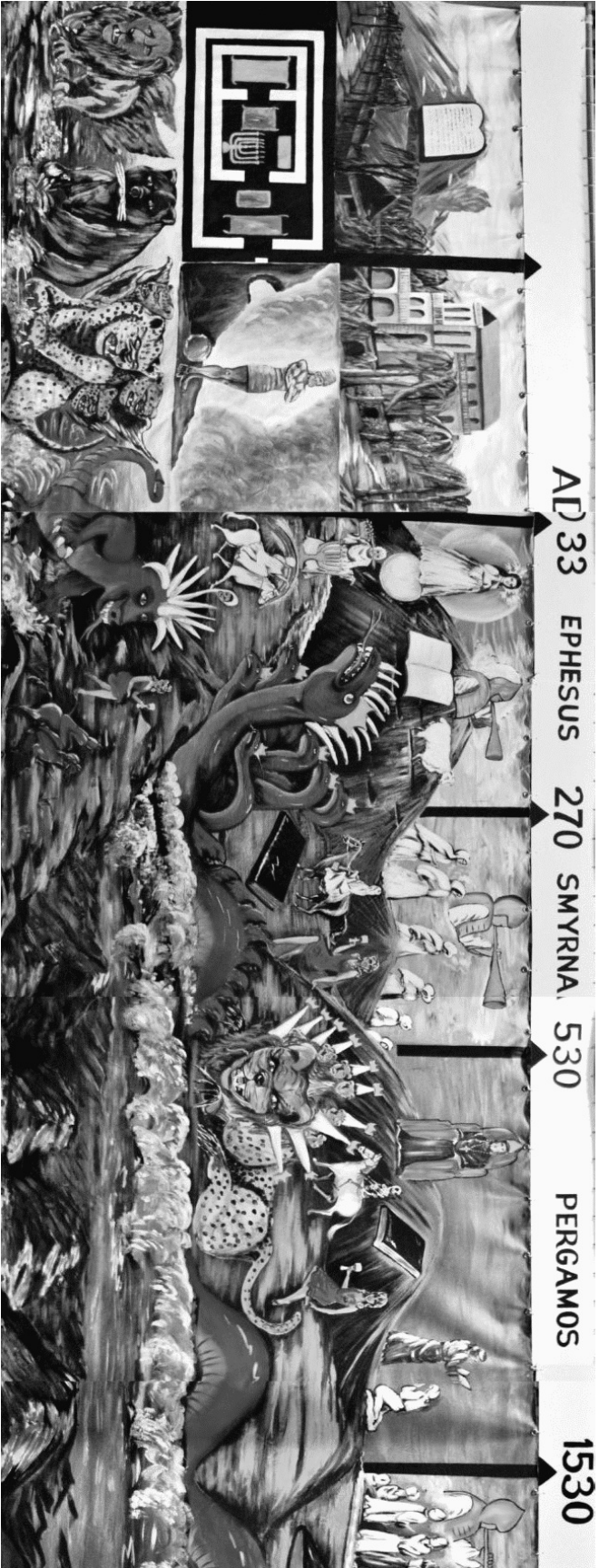
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1530

THYATIRA

1730

SARDIS

1880

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## The Time Delineation of the Revelation

There are seven series in the Revelation. They carry us from the morning-time portion of the Gospel Day to the evening time or the seventh-seal period of time. The Revelation retraces the Gospel Day seven times. It does this by taking us (through the vehicle of these series) through the seven periods that comprise the Gospel Day. It portrays the Spirit of God working through the seven periods of the Gospel Day, carrying the truth into all the earth (Revelation 5:6; 1:20).

	A.D. 33	A.D. 270	A.D. 530	A.D. 1530	A.D. 1730	A.D. 1880	A.D. 1930	
<b>Prophetic Age</b>	<b>Seven Series</b>	<b>Ephesus</b>	<b>Smyrna</b>	<b>Pergamos</b>	<b>Thyatira</b>	<b>Sardis</b>	<b>Philadelphia</b>	<b>Laodicea</b>
	1	C. 2 ----- (Chapter 1 is an introduction to Series One)				C. 3 -----		
	2	C. 6 ----- (Chapters 4 & 5 are an introduction to Series Two)					C. 7 -----	C. 8:1-2 -----
	3	C. 8:2-13 -----				C. 9 -----		C. 10 -----
	4		C. 11 -----				C. 14 -----	
	5	C. 12 -----	C. 13 -----				C. 15 ----- C. 16 ----- C. 17 ----- C. 18 ----- C. 19 -----	
	6	C. 20 -----					C. 21:9-16 -----	
7	C. 21:1-8 -----					C. 22 -----		

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(Chapters 8-11)*
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Spiritual, and The Final Judgment*
- ◆ *"The Worshippers Once Purged"*
- ◆ *Types in Genesis*
- ◆ *Understanding the Providence of God*

# FOREWORD

As we come to the closing chapters and conclusion of these volumes of books concerning the Revelation, I am concluding what has virtually been a life's work. I began working on the materials for these volumes in 1981-1982, some 38 or 39 years ago, and I am very thankful and humbled that the Lord has allowed these volumes to come to fruition. I ascribe all the glory, honor, and praise to Him for any good they have or will accomplish.

As I present to you these final chapters, there is a portion of these that are yet prophetic, yet to be realized. I have attempted to convey that which I feel the Lord has shown me, what I can see. However, time is not o'er yet, and as the songwriter so inspiringly penned, "*Purer light is coming fast.*" I have written what the Lord has enabled me to see, but there is more yet to see. As time stands and this glorious seventh seal progresses even farther, I am confident that the Lord will raise up good brethren whom He will enable to see more and take the truth farther and make the light clearer and brighter. We must never allow ourselves to feel we have attained all understanding. That erroneous position has caused the spiritual demise of many a movement of the past. We ARE NOT a movement and must NEVER allow ourselves to fall to the level to be one. This is a grave danger and must be recognized and resisted!

The Lord has great things on the prophetic horizon for the church! Yes, there will be fierce opposition, but there always has been when the Lord desires to do a great work. It is my prayer and sincere desire that the truths set forth in this book can be used to enlighten and encourage the people of God to be moved to a position to be the sacred vessels the Lord employs to accomplish the great work that is ahead. As I lay down the pen on this monumental effort, I pray another shall pick it up and take the truth further.

I want to thank Pastor Roger L. Decker for his unwavering support of these volumes over the years and of their production. I would also like to thank Sister Sheri Strelecky, who has served as my untiring editor these many years. Her dedication and many, many hours of editing have enabled these volumes to be what they are today.

I am indebted to the many other individuals in this labor—transcribers, typists, proofreaders, editors, printers, and all who have played a vital role. I am indeed thankful and confident the Lord will reward each for their labors.

I am not finished writing. I continue to have a burden for many more truths to be expounded. We are currently endeavoring to prepare two volumes concerning *The Prophecies of Ezekiel*, which should be our next books printed. Thus, we earnestly covet your prayers! Thus, it is with a grateful heart that I submit to the church the last volume of *The Book of Revelation Explained, Volume 6*. May the Lord use it in a great way to both enlighten and encourage His people.

I am humbled and honored that the Lord gave such a large task to such a small man. I have done what I could with my feeble ability. I know the Lord will make it enough. May the Lord gain glory from this volume and use it for His purpose.

Yours in Christ,  
Brother Earl R. Borders  
Newark, OH  
October 2020

## PREFACE

You will notice that *The Book of Revelation Explained, Volume 6*, begins with Chapter 20, not Chapter 1, and ends at the conclusion of Chapter 22. This is to correspond with the chapters in the Revelation. Chapters 1-3 cover the introduction to the Revelation and the seven letters to the seven churches of Asia and are explained in *The Book of Revelation Explained, Volume 1*. Chapters 4-8 cover the truths preceding the seal series and the opening of the seven seals and are explained in *The Book of Revelation Explained, Volume 2*. Chapters 8-11 cover predominantly the sounding of the seven trumpets and the witness series and are explained in *The Book of Revelation Explained, Volume 3*. *The Book of Revelation Explained, Volume 4*, begins with Revelation 12:1 and deals with the beast series. This volume concludes with Revelation 14:20. *The Book of Revelation Explained, Volume 5*, encompasses Revelation, Chapters 15-19, which is a very unique portion of the Revelation. Although they are actually a part of Series #5, each of these chapters describes events and conditions exclusively in the evening time portion of the Gospel Day.

The chapters of these volumes are designated in this manner for ready reference sake. The writing style of these volumes intentionally includes much repetition. This is due to the repetitive nature of the Revelation. In the seven series contained in the Revelation, though each series presents or accents another aspect of the Gospel Day, there is somewhat of a repetition of the basic truths in each series. Unlike conventional books, which are only meant to be read from beginning to end, these volumes were especially created for the purpose of not only being read but also serving as reference material. Thus, when studying a particular chapter in the Book of Revelation, you will be able to turn to the same numerical chapter in the corresponding volume of *The Book of Revelation Explained*. We trust this format will aid and facilitate your study.



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## CHAPTER TWENTY—PART ONE

### The Binding of the Dragon

*Revelation 20:1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.*

*2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,*

*3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.*

#### Basic and Essential Truths of the Book of Revelation

In this passage of the apocalyptic text, we are commencing a new series in the Revelation. No doubt, this is one of the primary chapters in the Revelation that has been severely misunderstood, mistaught, and misapplied. By the help of God, we want to examine this chapter and rightly divide the Word of Truth (2 Timothy 2:15). In so doing, we will find the Scriptures are not contradictory, but rather complementary. There is a scheme and a harmony to the Scriptures: what is true in the Revelation will be true in the Gospels; what is true in the Revelation will be true in prophecy.

Isaiah 28:13 tells us, "But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little." This teaches us to view the Word of Truth in its entirety. We cannot isolate any particular text from the scheme and harmony of the Scriptures. The Apostle Peter wrote in 2 Peter 1:20 that "no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation." Isaiah 34:16 instructs us, "Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them." For every dark, unclear saying in God's eternal Word, there is another Scripture somewhere that will bring understanding to it. We must allow the Spirit of God to mate up the Scriptures so we can rightly divide the Word of Truth.

Let us recall some very basic truths essential to the study of the Book of Revelation. First, we must recognize the Book of Revelation is broken down into seven distinct series. Second, we must remember the burden of the Revelation is to reveal (to make truth known), which is contrary to what false preachers and teachers advocate. Many of them say, "It is a hidden book." However, if God ordained for it to remain a hidden book, why did He give it? This apocalyptic writing commences with these words: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 1:1). The word *Revelation* in the original Greek is the word *apokalupsis*, which is composed of two parts: the word *apo*, which means "away from," and *kalupsis*, which means "a hiding or a veiling." Thus, *apokalupsis* means "an unhiding, a taking away of the veil, a revealing."

Revelation 1:1 tells us what this Book is a revealing of: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." Who is Jesus Christ? John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Verse 14 tells us, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of

#### Essential Truths to Studying the Revelation

- ① There are seven distinct series in the Revelation
- ② The burden of the Revelation is to "reveal"
- ③ The scope of the Revelation takes in the entire Gospel Day

grace and truth." Who is that? Verse 17 tells us "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The Revelation is a revealing of God's Word. Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." The Revelation reveals God's Word so we might know the way, see the truth, and maintain spiritual life. The very purpose and intent behind the Revelation is so we can maintain spiritual life in the face of all the many devices Satan has concocted down through the annals of time.

Second Corinthians 2:11 says, "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices." The only thing that keeps us from being ignorant of Satan's devices is the knowledge of the truth. The Spirit revealing God's Word enlightens our understanding so we are not a prey for the enemy. It is part of God's ordained plan to expose the enemy's devices through the Book of Revelation and bring a people to victory.

In Revelation 15:2 John said, "And I saw as it were a sea of glass [the Word of God; James 1:23] mingled with fire [the anointing of the Holy Spirit]: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass . . . ." Regardless of *what* they were gaining victory over, their victory came from a common source: they were all standing on the "sea of glass," or the Word of God. The Revelation enables the church to have and maintain spiritual victory.

Third, the scope of the Revelation takes in the entirety of the Gospel Day. There are those who want to attach a purely historical representation to the Revelation. They claim everything completely reverts back to what occurred merely in the dawning of the Christian Day. There are others who want to ascribe a futurist interpretation, saying it is all out in the future somewhere. Neither view is correct. In Revelation 1:19 Jesus told John, "Write the things which thou *hast seen* [past tense], and the things which *are* [present tense], and the things which *shall be* hereafter [future tense]." Therefore, the Revelation incorporates past, present, and future; in other words, all the Christian Dispensation. Isaiah 29:11 refers to it as "the vision of all" (all the Gospel Day).

Fourth, we must be keenly mindful of the nature of the language in the Revelation. Revelation 1:1 tells us the Revelation was sent in the form of being "signified." The word *signified* in the Greek is the word *semaino*, and it means "revealed by signs." *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines a sign as "a symbol." We are dealing in symbolic expressions, and that is not novel to the Revelation. It is as old as the entirety of the Scriptures. In Genesis 3:15 God used symbolism when He spoke to the serpent. We already read in John, Chapter 1, where Christ is referred to as the Word. Jesus Himself said: "I am the door" (John 10:9); "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:14); and "I am the true vine" (John 15:1). When He said He is "the door," He did not mean He was made out of wood with hinges and a knob. A door is a mode of entrance, and Jesus is the mode of entrance. He brought an image to our minds to convey a truth to us. Likewise, the Revelation is revealed by symbolic expressions. The last three chapters of the Revelation contain truths many fail to see because they view these texts with a tendency to literalism.

### **The "Angel" Is the Morning-Time Ministry**

**Revelation 20:1** begins Series Number Six. Revelation, Chapter 19, concludes by bringing us prophetically to the end of the Gospel Day. Verse 20 tells us both "the beast" and "the false prophet" were "cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." Our text begins the prophetic cycle again by starting a new series, which begins with its time setting at the beginning of the Gospel Day (A.D. 33). Chapter 20 is a series in itself, taking us from the inception of the Gospel Day to the conclusion of the Gospel Day. It is one of only two series that consists of a single chapter. (The other is Series Number Four, found in Revelation, Chapter 11.)

Let us begin by considering the binding of the dragon. How that lends itself to almost every type of imaginable conjecture! That is why we must study to rightly divide the Word of Truth (2 Timothy 2:15) and allow the Spirit to enlighten the eyes of our understanding (Ephesians 1:18). In **Revelation 20:1** John wrote, "**And I saw . . .**" He was receiving a vision (Revelation 9:17). John was banished to the isle of Patmos by the Roman Emperor Domitian. Domitian had tried to execute John by boiling him in oil, but the oil would not boil him. So he was sent to the rocky isle of Patmos. Revelation 1:9 lets us know John was there "for the word of God." God in His wisdom allowed John to be banished so He could give him the Revelation.

John was instructed in Revelation 1:11, "What thou seest, write in a book." Revelation 1:3 tells us, "Blessed is he that readeth . . ." After we read it, we are to write it on tables. Habakkuk 2:2-3 states: "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time [it was not for Habakkuk's day], but at the end [in this day and time in which you and I are privileged to live] it shall speak, and not lie." We are to write up John's vision on tables, so we can see it as he saw it. The purpose of writing the vision on tables is so we can see it with our eyes. (Therefore, we use pictorial charts, such as the one in the front of this book.) Educators tell us the more senses we can employ, the greater our retention in learning. If we see it and hear it, our retention is much better.

In **verse 1** of our text, John saw "**an angel come down from heaven.**" We need to give consideration to this "**angel.**" This is not portraying a fallen angel, because in the succeeding verses this "**angel**" binds up the enemy. This "**angel**" is not a celestial being either. Always keep in mind, we are dealing in symbolism. The word "**angel**" in the Greek is *aggelos*, and it means "a messenger"; it symbolizes a ministry.

In Galatians 4:13-14 Paul said he "preached the gospel," and they received him "as an angel." Paul was not a celestial being, but he was a messenger. Then in Revelation 19:10 and 22:8-9 John "fell down to worship before the feet of the angel," but the angel told him, "See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren." The angel told John to "worship God." The angel was one of the brethren, not a celestial being.

The "**angel**" in our text represents the morning-time ministry. It is the commencement of the Gospel Day. **Verse 1** says the "**angel**" came "**down from heaven.**" A very similar expression, which is used to speak of the church being instituted on the Day of Pentecost, is found in Revelation 21:2, which says, "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." The expression "coming down from God out of heaven" tells us the church was divinely instituted from a heavenly origin. Likewise, the "**angel**" in our text represents a divine-called ministry, a call that came "**down from heaven.**" There are those who try to advocate this "**angel**" is Christ. However, as we study, we will see this "**angel**" "**laid hold on the dragon**" (**verse 2**) and "**cast him into the bottomless pit**" (**verse 3**). Christ did not do that. He was only sent "unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 15:24). The morning-time ministry dealt with "**the dragon**" and accomplished casting him into the pit through the power of Christ.

Let us back up in the Revelation so we can see what is transpiring in our text. Revelation 12:1 says, "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet [a depiction of the morning-time church]." We find in verse 2, she was "with child." The church was in the parental phase; she was an expectant mother. Galatians 4:26 tells us the church "is the mother of us all." As soon as she appeared on the stage of action in A.D. 33, Revelation 12:3 tells us "there appeared another wonder . . . a great red dragon." Then verse 7 says "there was war." Verse 10 states, "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation . . ."



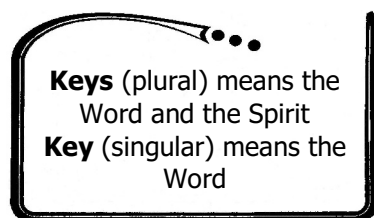
Those Scriptures are not talking about God's Heaven; salvation never needed to come to God's Heaven. There are three heavens in God's Word: the firmamental heaven where the sun, the moon, and the stars reside (Genesis 1:7-8); the celestial Heaven in which God dwells (Ecclesiastes 5:2); and the "third heaven," a place where you "come to visions and revelations of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 12:1-2); in other words, a spiritual position, an ecclesiastical heaven, "heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6). The third heaven is where the battle took place in Revelation, Chapter 12.

Revelation 12:10-11 says: "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven [the ecclesiastical realm], Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren [the great red dragon] is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they [the brethren] overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." These verses tell us the dragon was overcome by the brethren. They also let us know this event occurred while time was yet standing, because the blood was still doing its work. When time reels into eternity, the blood will no longer do a redeeming work.

### The Ministry Had the Key and the Chain

Our text portrays the morning-time brethren overcoming **"the dragon."** Notice how this divinely called ministry was equipped for victory: **verse 1** says they had **"the key"** and **"a great chain."** When the Lord calls a ministry, He equips them. In this day when there is great emphasis on formal education and seminaries, we need to be reminded many of the morning-time brethren were "unlearned and ignorant men" (Acts 4:13). Today, we have people with all kinds of advanced degrees trying to understand the Revelation; but the man who received it, John, was an "ignorant" fisherman.

The morning-time brethren were divinely called and divinely equipped. With **"the key"** and **"a great chain,"** they bound **"the dragon."** Then, **verse 3** says they **"cast him into the bottomless pit."** The converse of this God-called ministry in our text is the fallen ministry depicted in Revelation, Chapter 9. They only had **"the key."** Rather than binding something and putting it into the pit, they let something out. Revelation 9:1-3 tells us: "And the fifth angel [A.D. 1730-1880] sounded, and I saw a star [representing the ministry] fall from heaven unto the earth [from a position in heavenly places in Christ Jesus to a human level]: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit [when this ministry fell, light was extinguished, and in its place came up a smoke] . . . . And there came out . . . ." They were equipped with **"the key"** alone; thus, they had no power except to do a detrimental work. It is essential to have both **"the key"** and the **"chain."**



**Keys** (plural) means the Word and the Spirit  
**Key** (singular) means the Word

What do **"the key"** and the **"chain"** portray? Matthew 16:15-19 teaches us Jesus gives the "keys" to His ministers who have a divine revelation of truth. When "keys" are used in the plural, with no numerical designation preceding them, they simply mean two. There are two keys: the Word of God and the Spirit of God. To understand what the key in the singular represents, read Luke 11:52. It says, "Woe unto you, lawyers!

for ye have taken away the key of knowledge." Where does knowledge come from? Proverbs 23:12 says, "Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge." Knowledge comes from the Word. Jeremiah 3:15 says, "And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." The ministry is charged

to "Preach the word" (2 Timothy 4:2). So, **"the key"** in our text is the Word.

It is important to note, false religion has **"the key."** However, rather than binding up the powers of the enemy, they preach falsity, which works against the truth. It produces smoke that gets in men's eyes. Then the sun and the air (the Word and the Spirit of God) become obscured, and they cannot see clearly (Revelation 9:2). It takes more than just **"the key."** The false ministry in Revelation 9:1 had **"the key,"** but the ministry in our text had **"the key" and "a great chain."** They **"bound"** the **"dragon."**

In Matthew 12:28-29 Jesus said in very similar expressions to our text: "But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man?" The power to bind and the power to cast out comes "by the Spirit of God." That is what the **"chain"** is. A true ministry has the Word *and* the Spirit; they have **"the key,"** and they have **"a great chain"** to enforce it.

The Word, or **"the key,"** alone does a destructive work. If the Spirit of God is not with you, you can whip people to death with the Bible and do more damage than good. Second Corinthians 3:6 says, "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." Yes, we need the Word of God, but we have to have the Spirit as well. The Word under the anointing of the Spirit will do an enlivening work.

In Revelation, Chapter 9, when the fallen ministry let those locusts out of the pit, verse 10 tells us that "they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men." Scorpions symbolize rebellion (Ezekiel 2:6). The "stings in their tails" lets us know at the end of rebellion is death. A ministry that only has **"the key"** and does not have **"a great chain"** hurts men. False religion is the greatest plague society has ever had to endure.

### The Dragon and the Bottomless Pit

In **Revelation 20:1** notice **"the key"** is styled as **"the key of the bottomless pit."** That **"bottomless pit"** is what the **"dragon"** was **"cast into."** Before we can understand the **"bottomless pit,"** we need to understand what the **"dragon"** represents. The **"dragon"** was introduced in Revelation 12:3. Its "seven heads and ten horns" are identifying factors. **Verse 2** of our text says only **"the dragon"** because he was already introduced and identified. That happens many times throughout the duration of the Revelation.

What does the dragon's "seven heads and ten horns" represent? Isaiah 9:6 says, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given [prophesying of the incarnation of Christ]: and the government shall be upon his shoulder." The head is on the shoulder. Thus, Christ is the Head of the church (Colossians 1:18); thus, the government resides in Him. The first opposing force arising to contest the morning-time church was the pagan Roman Empire. It had seven different heads of government in its pagan form.

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**The seven distinct forms or heads of Roman government were:**

- Regal power
  - Consular
  - Decemvirate
  - Military tribunes
  - Triumvirate
  - Imperial
  - Patrician
- 

What do "horns" symbolize? Daniel 8:20 tells us, "The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings [or one rendering says 'kingdoms'] . . . ." Horns represent kingdoms. When Rome declined and divided, it broke into ten minor kingdoms (see box on page 6). This **"dragon"** is a representation in symbolic expressions of the pagan Roman Empire.

### **The ten minor kingdoms Rome dissolved into are:**

- Anglo-Saxons
- Burgundians
- Franks
- Huns
- Heruli
- Lombards
- Ostrogoths
- Sueves
- Vandals
- Visigoths

As soon as the "**dragon**" was introduced (Revelation 12:3), Revelation 12:7 says "there was war in heaven," but that is not God's Heaven. There never has been a war in God's Heaven, and there never will be. Many think this "**dragon**" is a picture of the devil who caused a rebellion in Heaven and was cast out. However, that is not true. Heaven is a holy place. Matthew 4:1 and 3 refer to Satan as "the tempter." If he was in Heaven before he was a devil,

who or what was there to tempt him? The "**dragon**" is not speaking of the devil personified, and we will prove it by the Bible.

When the morning-time brethren began to preach Jesus Christ, that there is no other name whereby ones could be saved (Acts 4:12), old paganism with its polytheism (multiple gods) became stirred. It rose to contest the truth and fought against the morning-time brethren. (That spirit is still loose. When you talk about the exclusivity of Jesus Christ, that there is salvation in no other, you stir that "**dragon**" spirit yet today.) A war commenced in A.D. 33. We read of that war in Revelation 12:7-9. The verses of our text are another depiction of that same war.

Let us consider the "**bottomless pit**." Something "**bottomless**" obviously has no foundation. When the ministry put the Word on the "**dragon**," its teachings and religious positions were shown to have no basis in truth. It was truly "**bottomless**," without any foundation (Bible basis, or basis in truth). Those under the influence of the "**dragon**" believed all kinds of ridiculous teachings. Diana, the goddess of fertility, was worshiped in Ephesus. The Temple of Artemis (also known as the Temple of Diana) was one of the seven wonders of the then-known world. A statue of Diana was erected and worshiped there. The people believed this "image . . . fell down from Jupiter" (Acts 19:35). There is no basis of truth in that belief. We know from modern science, when something enters the earth's atmosphere, unless it is tremendously insulated, it will disintegrate and mostly burn up.

When the morning-time brethren began to reveal there is only one Bible foundation upon which to build, it stirred the powers of that day, causing a great warfare for the hearts and minds of men. First Corinthians 3:11 says, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." That is the only Bible foundation upon which to build a life, a home, and a congregation. Isaiah glimpsed this foundation in prophecy, writing in Isaiah 28:16, "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation." Ephesians 2:20 tells us the cornerstone is "Jesus Christ himself." Jesus Christ is the only Bible foundation.

Our text introduces two principal parties: "**an angel**," depicting the morning-time ministry (**verse 1**), and "**the dragon . . . which is the Devil, and Satan**" (**verse 2**). Someone may say, "Right there it is in black and white: this '**dragon**' is '**the Devil, and Satan**'." However, we need to understand truth is not in black and white; it is in the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:6). We need to rightly divide it.

### **The Conflict Between the Morning-Time Ministry and the Religious System of Pagan Rome**

**Verses 2-3** of our text record the conflict and the conquest. The "**dragon**" is not the devil personified. Rather, it is a system through which he worked, just as he worked through the serpent in the Garden. Genesis 3:4 tells us, "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not

surely die." This serpent was not Satan personified, but he was an instrument being used to plant unbelief in the mind of Eve to tempt her to sin. Likewise, the **"dragon"** in our text was a system that was working to do the same thing to the morning-time church.

In 2 Corinthians 11:2 Paul said, "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." Paul was addressing "the church of God" (2 Corinthians 1:1). Then in verse 3 he said, "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." In the same manner, the enemy used the serpent as an instrument in the Garden to beguile Adam's wife, Eve, so the serpent in the New Testament worked to beguile the Second Adam's wife, the mother of the spiritually living, the Church of the Living God.

For those who still believe that great red **"dragon"** is the devil, I ask, "Do you believe the devil comes to church services?" Job 1:6 says, ". . . when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them." If the devil comes to church services, does he appear as a great red **"dragon"**? Of course not! This is not speaking of the devil personified. *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott's* intra-linear notes on **verse 2** of our text say, "An accuser and an adversary." In our text, notice the **"angel"** had **"a great chain" (verse 1) "and bound" the "dragon" (verse 2)**. People want you to believe you can use a chain to bind up the literal, personified devil. However, Mark 5:1-3 tells us about a man possessed with some devilish spirits, who could not be bound with chains. Therefore, how could the personified devil be bound with a **"chain"**?

The Hebrew word for "Satan" means adversary.  
The word for "Devil" means accuser.

Let us look at how the words **"the Devil, and Satan"** are used elsewhere in the Scriptures and see if these words mean the devil personified. John 6:70 says, "Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" That is the same Greek word as in our text. Verse 71 tells us that "He spake of Judas Iscariot." Was Judas the devil personified? If so, the devil would be gone because he hanged himself. However, the word *devil* means "an accuser," and Judas was an accuser. In Matthew 16:23 Jesus said unto Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan." Was Peter Satan personified? No, the word *Satan* means "adversary." He was an adversary to what Christ was saying.

Throughout the Old Testament, the Hebrew word *Satan* was used to indicate "an adversary." Numbers 22:22 says, "And God's anger was kindled because he went: and the angel of the LORD stood in the way for an adversary . . ." The Hebrew word *Satan* is used for the angel that stood in Balaam's way. Then in 1 Samuel 29:4 the Philistines, talking about David, said, "Let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary to us." The Hebrew says "*as Satan*." David was not Satan. Second Samuel 19:22 says, "And David said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruah, that ye should this day be adversaries unto me?" Again, the Hebrew says "Satan." Then 1 Kings 11:25 tells us, "And he was an adversary [the Hebrew says 'Satan'] to Israel all the days of Solomon . . ." Therefore, the words **"the Devil, and Satan"** do not necessarily speak of Satan personified, but merely speak of an *accuser* or an *adversary*.

Our text portrays the conflict between the morning-time ministry and the religious system of pagan Rome. The **"dragon"** has nothing to do with the devil personified, and the **"thousand years"** has nothing to do with a supposed Millennium. The word *Millennium* does not even appear in the Bible. Our text tells us the **"angel . . . laid hold on the dragon . . . and bound him [before, not during or after] a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit."** The

ministry had a knowledge of the truth, and they knew the system of paganism was "**bottomless.**" Because it had no foundation in Bible truth, they laid hold on it and bound it and cast it down from its exalted position in the minds of men through the Word and the Spirit.

We read in Acts, Chapter 19, those people believed a black statue fell down from Jupiter and landed in Ephesus for them to worship. That false belief held an exalted position in their minds, but truth cast that falsity down. Truth cast it out of the minds of those people, and a Church of God congregation was raised up in Ephesus, a pagan stronghold.

Let us look at a few more cases of where truth cast out falsity. Acts 16:16-18 says: "And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour." This caused Paul and Silas to be seized, beaten, and put into prison. Then God shook the prison, and verses 27-30 say: "And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Verse 32 says, "And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house." The jailer and his whole house were saved. That old "**dragon**" was "**cast**" out of his exalted position, those teachings were shown to be false, and people were saved.

Acts 17:16 tells us, "Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry." They had idols for every god imaginable. Paul said in verse 23, "For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." Paul started casting down falsity in verses 24-26. He let them know they should not worship "gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device" (verse 29); but rather, they should worship the true and living God. When he finished preaching, verse 34 says that "certain men clave unto him, and believed." Again, there is the "**dragon**" being "**cast**" down. When truth was preached, the false pagan deities were shown to be nothing at all. They no longer held an exalted position in the minds of those people.

Acts 19:17-19 says: "And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver." By modern reckoning, that equates to six million, four hundred thousand dollars (2011 figures); The New Living Translation says "several million dollars." When the "**dragon**" was "**cast**" down, the people started burning false books. There were those who cried in Acts 17:6, "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither."

Our text shows the ministry taking the Word under the anointing of the Spirit, exposing paganism, and overcoming it. **Verse 3** says, "**And cast him into the bottomless pit.**" Revelation 12:9 says that "he was cast out into the earth." The earth and the "**bottomless pit**" are somewhat synonymous expressions. "**Bottomless**" means it has no Bible foundation, and "the earth" is men's ideas. Ecclesiastes 12:7 talks about man being the dust of the earth. Second Corinthians 4:7 tells us "we have this treasure in earthen vessels," and 2 Corinthians 5:1 mentions "our earthly



house." Casting this down to the earth shows us pagan religion is a concoction that came out of the earthen minds of men.

### Light Is Shone on the Falseness of Paganism's Teachings

Our text lets us know **"the angel" (verse 1) "shut him up" (verse 3)**. Thank God, truth can do that! In Titus 1:9-11 Paul said: "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake." Truth can stop "mouths." First Peter 2:15 tells us, "For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." Next, we read the **"angel" (verse 1) "set a seal upon him [the dragon]" (verse 3)**. What is the **"seal"**? Ephesians 1:13 says that "ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." Then, Ephesians 4:30 says, "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed . . . ." The **"seal"** is the Holy Spirit.

Look at the prophetic picture in our text. Paganism arose to contest the church, but the God-called morning-time ministry was well equipped with **"the key"** and a **"chain"** (the Word and the Spirit) to overcome the **"dragon"** (that paganistic system of religion). They **"bound him" (verse 2)** and **"cast him into the bottomless pit" (verse 3)**. Paganism's teachings were shown for what they truly were, so they could no longer deceive the people. **Verse 3** reads, ". . . that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled." *Fisher's History of the Christian Church*, page 98, says, "It was around two hundred years after Constantine, the first supposed Christian Emperor of the Roman Empire, that paganism had vanished." Constantine's reign was from A.D. 323 to A.D. 330. If you add two hundred years to that, it brings you to A.D. 530. The conflict we see portrayed in our text was from A.D. 33 up to A.D. 530.

We need to understand it was A.D. 530 when paganism's powers were finally vanquished as a system. Understanding this time delineation helps us to understand what our Scripture terms as **"the thousand years" (verse 3)**. The Revelation has many time symbols, but Chapter 20 is the only chapter that uses the term **"years"** (plural). It is an exception to the symbolism employed in the other expressions because **"years"** cannot symbolize years. In fact, it is the only place in the whole Bible where it speaks of a **"thousand years"** (other than Psalm 90:4, 2 Peter 3:8, and Ecclesiastes 6:6, which have no connection to the prophetic expression used in Revelation, Chapter 20). Revelation, Chapter 20, mentions the **"thousand years"** six times (**verses 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7**). It was the literal period of time when paganism was bound. However, Satan was very much loosed through the powers of papalism during this time (the Dark Ages; A.D. 530-A.D. 1530). Bibles were chained to the pulpit, the church was underground in the catacombs and caves, and the papal beast dominated the landscape.

The **"thousand years"** is the time period A.D. 530–1530.

The **"thousand years"** is not out in some future point in time. It started when Boniface II firmly amalgamated the power of the papacy (A.D. 530), beginning to rule over the many synods. He governed the church from Rome "where Satan's seat is" (Revelation 2:13) and became regarded as somewhat the first universal bishop of Rome. *Fisher's History of the Christian Church*, page 138, says, "In the year of A.D. 530 the decisions of the many synods were made by the Roman bishop, Boniface II." Boniface II firmly amalgamated the power of the papacy and became regarded as the first bishop of Rome with universal

powers. After the "**thousand years,**" **verse 3** of our text tells us that "**he must be loosed a little season.**" We will see this occur through the rise of Protestantism, and we will study that as we progress.

A glorious truth we see portrayed in our text is the triumphant power of truth. Second Corinthians 13:8 says, "For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." Then Paul said in Philippians 1:12, "But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel." This should serve as an inspiration to us. In every time period, the Lord provided what was necessary for His people to be "more than conquerors" (Romans 8:37).

## CHAPTER TWENTY—PART TWO

### The Thousand-Year Reign

*Revelation 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon 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.*

#### The Proper Prophetic Time Setting

As we view this verse, it is immediately clear the primary emphasis is to describe what occurred during the "**thousand years**." The expression "**thousand years**" has generated much confusion in the realms of religion. However, 1 Corinthians 14:33 tells us, "God is not the author of confusion." He never gave His Word to bring confusion. Confusion enters when men who cannot understand the things of God try to give a human application to God's Word.

The latter portion of our text says that "**they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years**." Revelation 20:6 reiterates that when it says, ". . . and shall reign with him a thousand years." To understand the Thousand-Year Reign, we must first place our text in its proper prophetic time setting. The "**thousand years**" was that period of time from A.D. 530 to A.D. 1530. It will not occur in the future; rather, it is something that occurred in the past. Many are yet awaiting this period of time, but it happened in the Dark Ages after the dragon (paganism) "was cast unto the earth" (Revelation 12:13), or "into the bottomless pit" (Revelation 20:3). While the dragon was bound for a thousand years, a beast arose that was very much loose. Revelation 13:1 describes it as "a beast [that rose] up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns." Those are the same identifying factors found on the dragon in Revelation 12:3. That tells us it must be something of a Roman nature.

In the previous section, we found the dragon was the first opposition to the morning-time church. Its "heads" and "horns" are symbolic for the seven distinct heads of government Rome had in its pagan form ("heads") and the ten minor kingdoms that comprised the pagan Roman Empire ("horns"). The only difference is the "crowns" have moved from the "heads" to the "horns," or the ten minor kingdoms, which happened at the decline and division of the pagan Roman Empire.

<b>V</b> .....	<b>5</b>	<b>F</b> .....	<b>0</b>
<b>I</b> .....	<b>1</b>	<b>I</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>C</b> .....	<b>100</b>	<b>L</b> .....	<b>50</b>
<b>A</b> .....	<b>0</b>	<b>I</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>R</b> .....	<b>0</b>	<b>I</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>I</b> .....	<b>1</b>	<b>D</b> .....	<b>500</b>
<b>U</b> .....	<b>5</b>	<b>E</b> .....	<b>0</b>
<b>S</b> .....	<b>0</b>	<b>I</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>112</b>	<b>Total</b> .....	<b>554</b>
<b>Grand Total (112 + 554)</b> .....		<b>666</b>	

It was cast down, but that did not mean the enemy of souls quit. If he is not effective through one tool, he will work through another tool. That is why a beast arose. Revelation 13:18 gives insight on the beast. It says: "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six." So one "man" best represents this beast, the man who has that number. VICARIUS FILII DEI is

the inscription on the triple crown of the popes of Rome. It is Latin for "Vicar of the Son of God." *Webster's Dictionary* says a *vicar* is "one who acts in the place of another." The pope of Rome claims to act in the place of Christ. Ascribing Roman numerals to that expression, VICARIUS equals 112 and FILII DEI equals 554, a grand total of 666. (See box on pg. 11.) So, the beast is the system of Roman Catholicism. By A.D. 530, the beast was fully entrenched in his seat of power. *Fisher's History of the Christian Church*, page 138, says, "In the year of A.D. 530 the decisions of the many synods were made by the Roman Bishop Boniface II." That is when he was first regarded as having universal powers.

Let us look at some prophetic time reckoning. Revelation 13:5 says that "power was given unto him [the beast] to continue forty and two months." That is forty and two prophetic months. Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6 both give us the delineation for prophetic time symbols as "each day for a year." If you take forty-two months times thirty days to a Jewish calendar month, you get 1,260 days, and applying "each day for a year" equals 1,260 years. Revelation 12:6 says, "And the woman [the church] fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days." When you apply the delineation of "each day for a year," that gives us 1,260 years.

Then, Revelation 12:14 tells us, "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time . . ." When you give prophetic designation to that, "time" denotes a year, "times" (without a numerical prefix) is two years, and "half a time" is half a year. Thus, if you take 30 days to a Jewish calendar month, one year is 360 days ("a time"); two years is 720 days ("times"); and half of a year is 180 days ("half a time"). Add all those together, and you have 1,260 days again. Then, apply the rule of "each day for a year," and you have 1,260 years.

The totality of the power of the papal beast was 1,260 years. If you take 1530 and subtract 270, you get 1,260 years. (The date of A.D. 270 is used because Henry Wickersham's *A History of the Church*, page 104, states, "Another great event that marks the close of this period of time, A.D. 270, is the division and decline of the Roman Empire.") That is the totality of the time in which the beast had operational power. However, the zenith of his power was a **"thousand years,"** from the time of Boniface II in A.D. 530 until the first Protestant creed was devised at the Diet of Augsburg in A.D. 1530. When the power of papalism was the prevailing condition, it was indeed a dark age. It was a time when no trumpet sounded, Bibles were chained to the pulpit, the Word and the Spirit were prophesying in sackcloth and ashes, and a man ruled in the place of God. However, that was not the only aspect to this age, and that is what our text gives insight into.

Revelation 12:6 says, "And the woman [the church] fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days [1,260 years; A.D. 270-1530]." Verse 14 tells us it was a place "where she is nourished [the

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### Prophetic Time Symbols

Forty-two months x 30 days to a Jewish calendar month = 1260 days  
 Time = 1 year or 12 months x 30 days to a Jewish calendar month = 360 days  
 Times = 2 years or 24 months x 30 days to Jewish calendar month = 720 days  
 Dividing of Time = ½ of a year or 6 months x 30 days to a Jewish calendar month = 180 days  
 Time + Times + Dividing of Times (360 days + 720 days + 180 days) = 1260 days  
 1260 days or "each day for a year" = 1260 years (A.D. 270 - 1530)

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same Greek word is translated as 'feed' in verse 6]." How was the church fed and nourished in the "wilderness," or in the catacombs and caves? Revelation 11:3 states, "And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days [the same period of time as Revelation 12:6; A.D. 270-1530] . . ." The "two witnesses" prophesied, or preached. They sustained the church.

Who are the "two witnesses"? Matthew 24:14 tells us one witness is the Gospel, or the Word of God; and Hebrews 10:15 lets us know the other witness is the Holy Ghost, or the Spirit of God. Thus, they are also the "two wings" the woman was given (Revelation 12:14). Let us read what Jesus said in the Pergamene letter, representing the time of A.D. 530 to A.D. 1530. Revelation 2:17 reads, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna . . ." Right in the Dark Ages, the "two witnesses" (the Word and the Spirit) were providing "hidden manna." God made provision for the saints to still be overcomers. Our text portrays a victorious people in the Dark Ages. That was a terrible time in history. A host of historians said there were at least fifty to sixty million martyrs during that time. However, our text is not speaking of martyrs. Remember, it is "signified" (Revelation 1:2), or the Greek *semaino*, which means "revealed by signs." *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines a *sign* as a "symbol." So, these are symbolic expressions. We must never lose sight of that truth.

### "Thrones" Are Symbolic of a People Who Are Reigning

Many ascribe our text to being disembodied spirits in a world beyond time, but let us consider what Jesus said about "**thrones**." Matthew 19:28 tells us, "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Our text also speaks of sitting on "**thrones**" and "**judgment . . . given unto them**." Jesus told the disciples "judging" will occur "in the regeneration." True regeneration was not available until the Son of Man sat on His throne. That was after He paid the ransom's cost on Calvary's tree, died as our Sacrifice, ascended on high, and then sat down at the right hand of the Father.

Hebrews 8:1 says, "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." Hebrews 10:12 tells us, "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." After Jesus ascended on high and assumed the throne, He sent the Holy Spirit, on the Day of Pentecost, which made regeneration possible. Paul wrote in Titus 3:5, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Regeneration is a New Testament reality; men and women were already enjoying it when Paul wrote the epistle to Titus. Every one who follows Christ in regeneration "shall sit upon . . . thrones" (Matthew 19:28).

Jesus said "*twelve* thrones" in that verse because He was talking to *twelve* men. There are as many thrones as there are people who have victory. There is a throne for everyone who is reigning, who has followed Christ in the regeneration. If you are waiting for a throne at some future point in time, you are waiting for a boat that will never come. In Luke 22:29-30 Jesus said, "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Many people take that literally, but what is the nature of this kingdom? Romans 14:17 tells us "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink [not literal, not physical]; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in



the Holy Ghost." The kingdom is spiritual in its nature, and so are these "**thrones.**"

First Corinthians 10:21 tells us, "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils." They were enjoying the Lord's table in the morning time. Psalm 23:5 says, "Thou preparest a table . . ." This table is prepared with meat and drink; it is prepared with the Word and the Spirit. Jesus said in John 6:54, "Whoso eateth my flesh [the Word], and drinketh my blood [the Spirit], hath eternal life." In Revelation 3:21 Jesus said, "To him that overcometh [not to him who is dead] will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Every overcomer can occupy a "**throne.**" Someone may say, "You are putting it too high." No, anything else would be too low.

Psalm 122:1-5 states: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem [a type of the church; Hebrews 12:22-23]. Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together [just as Ephesians 4:16]: Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the LORD. For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David." Those thrones are for everyone who is in the "house of the LORD" (verse 1), or the house of God, which is the church (1 Timothy 3:15). This is a picture of everyone who had a victorious experience during the Dark Ages.

### **Discernment, Judgment, and Authority**

The Greek word for "**thrones**" used in our text is *thronos*. As a noun, it means "a throne, a seat of authority." Jesus said in Luke 10:19, "Behold, I give unto you power [or *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says 'authority'] to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy." Authority is given to every child of God. Through Christ and the abundance of His grace, we reign in this life (Romans 5:17). Saints are kings. That is why we are to reign; that is why we are to occupy a throne. Revelation 1:5-6 says, ". . . Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God . . ." Revelation 5:10 tells us that "we shall reign on the earth," not in some supposed golden age, but right now on the earth.

Our text says that "**judgment was given unto them.**" What kind of "**judgment**"? First Corinthians 2:14-16 says: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things [this is the judgment an overcomer has], yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."

What was one of the main things the saints needed to judge in that dark age? Malachi 3:16-18 tells us: "Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not." In the Dark Ages, God's people desperately needed to be able to judge between who served God and who did not, and we still need this ability today. Is discernment the same as judgment? Look at what Solomon prayed for when the Lord asked him what he desired. In 1 Kings 3:9 he said, "Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great

a people?"

The expressions we see used in our text are a picture of a victorious, overcoming people. They had discernment and judgment and authority. They were reigning during the Dark Ages. They were the saints who were hidden away. This is inspiring! God always makes provision for His people, and victory has been possible in all ages. Hebrews 13:8 states, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." Stop and consider: what purpose would it serve to show martyrs victorious over in Heaven (which is commonly ascribed to in our text)? On the other hand, to show a victorious people right in the midst of the most adverse circumstances, reigning and having power, serves as a great inspiration to us.

### **"The Souls of Them That Were Beheaded"**

As we proceed in our text, we come to the heart of the verse that generates much confusion. It says that **"I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus."** In the Scriptures, the word **"souls"** does not always refer to the eternal portion of mankind. Many times it merely represents people. Let us read some Scriptures. Genesis 12:5 says, "And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls [the people] that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan." Genesis, Chapter 46, employs the word *souls* several times. Verse 15 says, "These be the sons of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob in Padanaram, with his daughter Dinah: all the souls of his sons and his daughters were thirty and three." (I wonder what is the difference in a son's and daughter's soul.) That verse is not talking about *souls*; it is talking about *people*. Verse 18 tells us, "These are the sons of Zilpah . . . and these she bare unto Jacob, even sixteen souls." I have never seen any woman yet just delivering souls, have you? Again, it is talking about people. Verses 22, 25-27 all use the word *souls* for people. Likewise, our text is speaking of people, not martyrs or disembodied souls in eternity.

The latter portion of our text says that **"they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."** Romans 6:11 reads, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Then Colossians 3:3-4 tells us: "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." When Christ appears in our lives, through our living, that produces glory. These verses are talking about spiritual life. Revelation 20:6 says, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection [that is a spiritual resurrection]: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." It says that "they shall be priests of God." Priestly functions are performed in time not in eternity.

Revelation 5:10 reads, "And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." Notice the phrase "on the earth." Peter said to the saints in 1 Peter 2:5, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices [we do that here on earth], acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." Verses 9-11 continue: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims [we will not be 'strangers and pilgrims' when we get to Heaven], abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." Peter was addressing priests here on the earth and in the flesh. It is the same with our text; it all transpired in time, not over in eternity or in a supposed millennial period.

Our text speaks of "**the souls of them that were beheaded.**" Stop and think. If this were literal, martyrs were not all beheaded. *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* tells us they were burned at the stake, strangled, drowned, and many other atrocities. This could not be literal, because the saints were martyred in many other ways besides being beheaded. The expression "**beheaded**" is a symbol. The English word *beheaded* appears two times in the Old Testament and five times in the New Testament. In the New Testament, four of the five times refer to John the Baptist being physically beheaded (Matthew 14:10; Mark 6:16, 27; and Luke 9:9). However, our text uses the Greek word *pelekizo*, and it is the only place the Bible uses this Greek word. According to *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon* it means "to cut off with an axe."

Psalms 74:4-7 says: "Thine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregations; they set up their ensigns for signs. A man was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees. But now they break down the carved work thereof at once with axes and hammers. They have cast fire into thy sanctuary, they have defiled by casting down the dwelling place of thy name to the ground." This is a description of the desecration of the temple that took place during the time of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar despoiled and desecrated the temple with axes and carried the kingdom of Judah into Babylonian captivity, a type of the Dark Ages, the "**thousand years**" we are studying.

Jeremiah spoke about Nebuchadnezzar smiting the land of Egypt. Jeremiah 46:22 says, "The voice thereof shall go like a serpent; for they shall march with an army, and come against her with axes, as hewers of wood." The Babylonians used axes in their conquest of the then-known world. Ezekiel 26:7-9 tells us: "For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon . . . He shall slay . . . and with his axes he shall break down thy towers."

The axes show the power of Babylon as they conquered the then-known world, which is a type of papalism. During the Dark Ages, when papalism captured all the then-known world, the cry was: "Be Catholic or die." The New Testament also shows how papalism desecrated and destroyed the temple, or the church. Revelation 11:2 states, "But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles [talking about the uncircumcised, a symbolic picture of papalism]: and the holy city [the church] shall they tread under foot forty and two months [the same forty-two prophetic months, 1260 years from A.D. 270 to A.D. 1530]." The church had to literally go underground in the catacombs and the caves; it was out of public view.

Daniel 8:12 says, "And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practiced, and prospered." That is a very vivid type of the Dark Ages; truth was cast down to the ground, or underground, while papalism practiced and prospered. Isaiah 63:18 tells us, "The people of thy holiness have possessed it but a little while: our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary." Just as Nebuchadnezzar came in with axes and started cutting up all the sacred furniture (2 Kings 24:13) that was within the temple and then carried the people into Babylonian captivity, so papalism did the same thing during the Dark Ages. The church went underground, and it was a period of spiritual Babylonian captivity.

For a "**thousand years**," God's people were "**beheaded**," or without the benefit of the head.

What do these Scriptures have to do with being "**beheaded**"? Well, it was under the iron axe of papal Rome that the body (the church) was separated from the head (Christ). Ephesians 5:23 tells us that "Christ is the head of the church," but during the "**thousand years**," because of the prevailing power of papalism, the people were publicly cut off from the benefit of the head. A *man* usurped

the position that belonged to Christ.

Catechism Number Four, Chapter 16, poses this question: "What is the Pope? He is like St. Peter the vicar of Jesus Christ on earth, and the visible head of the church" (*Small Catechism of the Catholic Religion* by Saint John Nepomucene Neumann). At the coronation of Pope Innocent X, the following words were addressed to him by Cardinal Colonna, who knelt before him: "Most Holy and Blessed Father, Head of the Church, Ruler of the World, to whom the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven are given, whom the angels in heaven revere, and whom the gates of hell fear, and whom the whole world adores; we venerate and adore thee" (*Commentary on the Old and New Testaments* by Chr. Wordsworth). The masses universally accepted the popes of Rome as the head of the church during this "**thousand year**" period.

In Revelation 2:13 Christ said in the Pergamene letter, "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is." Who was sitting in Satan's seat? Second Thessalonians 2:3-4 tells us, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 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."

### **Blasphemies From "Satan's Seat"**

Revelation 13:5-6 speaks about blasphemies. What are some blasphemies that came forth from "Satan's seat?" The Roman Emperor Decius said, "The Pope can do all things God can do." Speaking of himself, Pope Leo XIII said in 1890: "The supreme teacher in the Church is the Roman Pontiff. Union of minds, therefore, requires, together with a perfect accord in one faith, complete submission and obedience of will to the Church and to the Roman Pontiff as, to God himself" (Pope Leo's Encyclical Letter on the Chief Duties of Christians as Citizens). In 1894 he said, "We hold the place of Almighty God on earth" (*The Reunion of Christendom* by Pope Leo XIII). On April 30, 1922, in the Vatican throne room, a throng of cardinals, bishops, priests and nuns fell on their knees before Pope Pius XI. In haughty tones he reportedly said, "You know that I am the holy father, the representative of God on earth, the vicar of Christ, which means that I am God on the earth."

Of Pope Pius X, the Archbishop of Venice said: "The Pope is not only the representative of Jesus Christ, but He is Jesus Christ himself, hidden under the veil of the flesh. Does the pope speak? It is Jesus Christ who speaks" (*The Catholic National*, July 1895). Pope Boniface VIII in his *Unam Sanctam* made the following claim: "All the faithful of Christ by necessity of salvation, are subject to the Roman Pontiff, who has both swords, and judges all men, but is judged by no one . . . . Moreover, we declare, and assert, define and pronounce, that to be subject to the Roman Pontiff is to every human creature altogether necessary to salvation" (*A Treatise of the Pope's Supremacy* by Isaac Barrow).

Pope Nicholas in one of his speeches declared: "I am all in all, and above all, so that God himself, and I the vicar of God, have both one consistory, and I am able to do almost all that God can do . . . . Wherefore, if those things that I do, be said to be done not of man, but of God, what can you make me but God? Again, if prelates of the church be called and counted of Constantine for gods, I then, being above all prelates, seem by this reason to be above all gods. Wherefore no marvel, if it be in my power to . . . dispense with all things, yea with the precepts of Christ" (*The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe: A New and Complete Edition, Volume 4*).

The pagan Caesars were styled as "Our Lord and God." For centuries, the popes accepted the same title. On the arches raised in the honor of Pope Borgia were the words: "Rome was great

under Caesar; now she is greater, Alexander VI reigns. The former was a man; this is a god." Therefore, our text portrays the saints as being "**beheaded**." The predominant, prevailing condition was they were without benefit of the head during the "**thousand years**."

### The "Mark Upon Their Foreheads" and "in Their Hands"

Let us consider the balance of our text, which reads, ". . . **which had not worshipped the beast** [papalism], **neither his image** [Protestantism], **neither had received his mark upon their foreheads** [indoctrination in the mind], **or in their hands** [being fellowshipped, or accepted]; **and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.**" (For a full treatment of these truths, see *The Book of Revelation Explained—Volume 4*.)

The people in our text were truly a victorious people. They were "risen with Christ" (Colossians 3:1), they were enjoying "newness of life" (Romans 6:4), and they did not succumb to Roman papalism. Our Scripture text says they "**had not worshipped the beast**." Why does our text talk about the "**image**" and the "**mark**" when that was not transpiring so much during the "**thousand years**" (A.D. 530-530)? Although the Protestant systems and teachings did not become the predominant condition until the "**thousand years**" were expired, there were conditions working prior to that. Protestantism did not automatically appear like the flip of a light switch. Conditions were working prior to its rise to bring it to that precipitous point.

Let us look at some historical accounts. John Wycliff lived from 1324 to 1384. *Fisher's History of the Christian Church, Period 7*, page 273, says he "attacked the doctrine of transubstantiation, maintaining that the bread and wine remain unchanged." That is true, but then he taught "the body and blood of Christ are really present." He did not see the truth clearly; confusion was rising during the "**thousand years**."

Johann Heinrich Kurtz's *History of the Christian Church to the Reformation*, page 497, speaking of John Charlier of Gerson in 1429, says: "He was wont to appeal to the Bible as the only source and rule of Christian knowledge . . . Still he would have withheld the Scriptures in the vernacular from the laity, and branded every one as an heretic who did not implicitly receive the interpretation which the Church gave of a passage." Although John Charlier was in favor of the Scriptures as the rule and the source of knowledge, he did not think people should have them in their own language, and he thought anyone who taught anything that disagreed with Romanism was wrong.

"**Marks**" were arising during this period of a "**thousand years**." *A History of Christianity* by Paul Johnson, pages 274 and 275, says: "For Erasmus [who lived from 1466 to 1536], as for all reformers, the Bible then was at the centre of Christian understanding . . . In his own investigations, he had found himself obligated to eliminate the famous Trinitarian verse from 1 John 5:7. Erasmus argued . . . on many points 'everyone should be left to follow his own judgment, because there is great obscurity in these matters.'" *The History of the Reformation*, by J. H. Merle Aubigne, Volume One, states, "Protestantism was sometimes even stronger than the Papacy in the centuries immediately preceding the Reformation."

These brethren "**lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years**," because they were being fed that "hidden manna" by the Word and the Spirit. It was keeping them from being affected, not only by papalism but also from the falsities of rising Protestantism in the 1300s, the 1400s, and the 1500s. The glimmers of light, that were beginning to crack the dark papal night, were mixed with falsities that gave rise to "**his image**." Revelation 20:5 tells us, "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." This is portraying those who were dead

"in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1). They were dead while they lived (1 Timothy 5:6). A public message was not being proclaimed during the Dark Ages. Therefore, no trumpet was being sounded to bring resurrecting power. Sadly, the vast masses remained in a dead state of trespasses and sins because of the prevailing condition. The "first resurrection" (Revelation 20:5-6) is a spiritual resurrection, because a literal resurrection could never make one "Blessed and holy" (Revelation 20:6).

Although the Dark Ages were a terrible part of the Gospel Day, there were those who **"lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Revelation 20:4)**. God in His faithfulness made provision for them, and He has been faithful to make provision in every period that there might be a victorious people in every age, regardless of the prevailing conditions. As Jeremiah exclaimed, "Great is thy faithfulness" (Lamentations 3:23).



## CHAPTER TWENTY—PART THREE

### The Two Resurrections and the Two Deaths

*Revelation 20:5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.*

*6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.*

#### What Type of "Resurrection" Makes One "Blessed and Holy"?

In our text the Revelator spoke of "**the first resurrection.**" We must be mindful of the prophetic time placement of our text. **Verse 6** tells us they "**shall reign with him a thousand years,**" letting us know these verses are still speaking of what occurred during the thousand-year period of A.D. 530-1530. Advocates of the erroneous teachings of dispensationalism attempt to interpret this text in view of their doctrinal stance. One of them, Dr. John R. Rice, wrote in his book *Behold, He Cometh*, on pages 296 and 297: "So there are two resurrections. The first resurrection, that is the resurrection of saved people, as distinguished from the resurrection of the unsaved. The second resurrection of the unsaved dead is to be a thousand years later." That is a common teaching in the realms of religion, but let us rightly divide "the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

In **verse 5a**, the Revelator wrote, "**But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.**" I will defer consideration of "**the rest of the dead**" until we consider the prophetic time frame that succeeded the "**thousand years.**" However, when these "**dead lived,**" John was still speaking of "the first resurrection." **Verse 5b** states, "**This is the first resurrection.**" The ones who lived *after* "**the thousand years**" enjoyed the same "**resurrection**" as those who were enjoying it *during* "**the thousand years.**" Regardless of the time period under consideration, it is still "**the first resurrection.**"

We are considering those who "lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Revelation 20:4). As we studied earlier, this does not transpire in the eternal realm. **Verse 6** tells us they were "**priests**" and they were reigning right in the "**thousand years.**" When are we to be "**priests of God**"? The Apostle Peter wrote to those who were "born again" (1 Peter 1:23), those who had been given spiritual life. He said in 1 Peter 2:5, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices . . ." Everyone who is born again and comes to a knowledge of the truth is part of the "holy priesthood."

First Peter 2:9-11 says: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." Evidently, they were not in a supposed eternally secure position when they were "**priests.**" They were still "strangers and pilgrims" who were to "abstain from fleshly lusts." This definitely has a time setting during this time world. Every person who has been delivered from sin has the privilege of enjoying this "royal priesthood." **Verse 6** of our Scripture text is speaking of those who reigned with Christ "**a thousand years**" (A.D. 530-1530). **Verse 6** begins by saying, "**Blessed and holy**



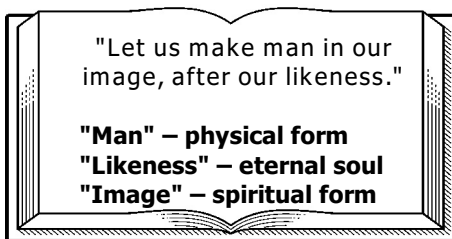
**is he that hath part in the first resurrection."** Thus, the first question we must address is, What type of "**resurrection**" makes one "**blessed and holy**"? Obviously, a resurrection takes place after one dies. However, the Bible is clear there is nothing after physical death that alters man's spiritual state. There is no limbo; there is no purgatory. The Scriptures are expressly clear that death *amplifies* man's spiritual state, but it does not *alter* it.

In Ecclesiastes 11:3 notice there are only two positions in which the tree is said to be falling: "toward the south" or "toward the north." Likewise, there are not a multiplicity of spiritual positions man can occupy. It is "south" or "north," saved or lost. Jesus said, "He that is not with me is against me" (Luke 11:23). Once a man's eyes close in the finality of death, his eternal state and destiny are forever sealed. Ecclesiastes 11:3 tells us that "in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be." There is no alteration of a person's spiritual state after death. Let us look at when Jesus uncapped eternity and allowed us to see the rich man in hell. The rich man was pleading for Lazarus to be sent over to cool his tongue with just the tip of his finger in water. In Luke 16:26 Abraham told him that "between us and you there is a great gulf fixed." There is always a great gulf between the righteous and the unrighteous, but during life, Jesus Christ is the "High Priest" of our faith (Hebrews 3:1) who can enable an individual to change positions.

The word *priest* in the Latin is *pontifex*, and it means "bridge builder." While time is standing and opportunity is afforded, Jesus builds a bridge from the unrighteous to the righteous, from the lost to the saved. Through Jesus Christ, we can change positions because He spanned the gulf and made a way for us. However, at death there will be "a great gulf *fixed*." Luke 16:26 continues, ". . . so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." Lazarus cannot be sent from Paradise down to Hades, and anyone in Hades cannot go to Paradise. Their fate and destiny are set, fixed, and sealed. A physical resurrection does not change people's spiritual state or make them "**blessed and holy**." Only a spiritual "**resurrection**" does that.

### Why Is a Spiritual Resurrection Necessary?

Before we consider "**the first resurrection**," let us address the second question, Why is a spiritual resurrection necessary? When we understand this, we will be able see what it is and what it does. Genesis 1:26 says, "And God said, Let us [a plural expression] make man in our [plural] image, after our [plural] **likeness**." This was before man was created. Therefore, the "us" and "our" are the Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. There is great depth to the expression, "Let us make man." The word "man" in Hebrew is *Adam*, which refers to the physical form. *Adam Clarke's Commentary* says that "Adam, which we translate as man, is intended to designate the species." "That verse talks about "after our likeness." What part of man is like God? Our soul is eternal, just as God is eternal (Deuteronomy 33:27). Notice the words "in our image." What is the image of God? John 4:24 tells us, "God is a Spirit." God does not have a physical form such as we have, but His image is a spiritual image. He created man with His spiritual image.



We can see what our spiritual image is by looking at how we are recreated. In 2 Corinthians 5:17 the Apostle penned, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [or *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says 'a new creation']." What form does that "new creation" take? Colossians 3:10 tells us, "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the

image of him that created him." When we become a new man through salvation, we are renewed "after the image" of God. That image is that which was created. Ephesians 4:24 says, "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." That is how man was created in his original state.

Acts 10:34 tells us that "God is no respecter of persons." Since man was created in righteousness originally, every child that is born must come into this world in the same manner. In Ecclesiastes 7:29 the wise man declared, "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." This was penned in the proximity of 977 B.C. (approximately 3,027 years after the fall of man). Even at this juncture, God was still making man "upright" (the Hebrew word is *yashur*, which means "righteous"), or in His image. In Ezekiel 28:12 the prophet was told to "take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus." That was in 588 B.C. (389 years farther from the fall of man). Verse 15 says, "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee." Man was not created depraved, nor was succeeding man born depraved.

*Webster's New World Dictionary* defines *deprave* as "to make crooked, make morally bad, corrupt." God does not make children with depraved natures, nor did we inherit one from Adam. Paul said in Romans 7:9, "For I was alive without the law once [prior to his age of accountability]: but when the commandment came [came to his understanding], sin revived [or came alive], and I died." When we come to the age of accountability, we are each confronted with a choice. Romans 5:6 speaks of being "without strength," which is how we are without the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Because we are without strength at the age of accountability, our choice is dictated by our flesh.

Isaiah 53:6 plainly tells us, "All we like sheep have gone astray [why?]; we have turned every one to his own way." That is a companion Scripture to Ecclesiastes 7:29 and Ezekiel 28:15. The problem was not what *God* did (He did not put sin in the heart or soul of a child); the problem was what *we* did. Also, it was not Adam's fault that iniquity was found in us. Isaiah 59:1-2 says: "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But *your* iniquities have separated between you and your God, and *your* sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." Paul said in Romans 7:9 when sin came alive, he "died." Romans 6:23 tells us that "the wages of sin is death." He did not die physically, but he died spiritually. Thus, our first birth is a *physical* birth, but our first death is a *spiritual* death. When we are born, we are in God's image: upright, righteous, and spiritually alive. However, when we come to the age of accountability, we are without strength, and we go our own way. That is when iniquity begins in our life, and we die spiritually.

### Spiritual Death Is Separation From God

In Genesis 2:17 the Lord instructed Adam in the Garden, "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." This was not a *physical* death but a *spiritual* death. After Adam was expelled from the Garden, Genesis 5:5 tells us, "And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died [physically]." But the Lord said that "in the *day* that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." That is spiritually.

**Physical death  
was ALWAYS  
part of God's  
plan.**

Some people believe when Adam and Eve disobeyed God, physical death was activated. However, physical death was always in the plan. Genesis 1:28 says, "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth . . . ." This was com-

manded prior to the fall of man. Why would one need to replenish the earth if man never died? Psalm 119:89 lets us know God's Word was forever settled in Heaven before He ever sent it down to man. The words found in Hebrews 9:27, which say that "it is appointed unto men once to die," were forever settled in the council halls of eternity past before God made the first man. Therefore, it was not physical death that was activated. Sin brings spiritual death. After Adam's sin occurred, Genesis 3:23-24 says: "Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden . . . he drove out the man." Sin brings a spiritual separation from God. That is what the first death is, a death you and I experienced as a spiritual separation from God brought about by sin at the age of accountability.

Ezekiel 18:20 states: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father [we will not bear the sin of Adam], neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." That verse is not talking about physical death, but it is talking about spiritual separation from God. James 1:15 states, "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Then, James 5:20 tells us that "he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death." Sin is equated with death.

Sin has bound mankind under the power of spiritual death; therefore, Christ came to defeat that power. He "condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:3). Jesus said in John 10:10, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." He came to defeat the power of sin and bring life. To receive the life Christ offers, we need a resurrection. That is "**the first resurrection**" spoken of in our text. It is a spiritual "**resurrection**," and it makes one "**Blessed and holy**." Concerning this "**resurrection**," Ephesians 2:1 tells us, "And you hath he quickened [made alive], who were dead in trespasses and sins." Remember, we died spiritually because of our choice at the age of accountability. *The Expanded Greek* says, "You being dead, with reference to your trespasses and sins, He made alive." The Amplified Bible reads, "And you [He made alive], when you were dead (slain) by [your] trespasses and sins." Another rendering says, "And you, likewise, He raised from death to life."

Colossians 3:1 says, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above . . ." The Amplified Bible says, "If then you have been raised with Christ [to a new life, thus sharing His resurrection from the dead], aim at and seek the [rich, eternal treasures] that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God." Verse 10 says, "And have put on the new man, which is renewed [made new again] in knowledge after the image of him that created him." Remember, the "image" of God is "righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:24). We receive that in "**the first resurrection**."

### **The First Death and the "First Resurrection" Are Spiritual**

"The power of his [Christ's] resurrection" spoken of in Philippians 3:10 is not merely the fact Jesus arose from the tomb. That was His "resurrection," but that is not "the power" of it. "The power of his resurrection" is His ability to provide us with our resurrection. Romans 6:4-6 says: "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death [Christ died for sin; likewise, we must be dead to sin]: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Verse 11 reads, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive

unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Just as the Holy Ghost resurrected Christ (Romans 8:11), He has resurrected every child of God from a dead state of trespasses and sins. Then we can be "alive unto God."

In our text "**the first resurrection**" was a spiritual resurrection. The brethren enjoyed it during this "**thousand years**" period. It enabled them to be resurrected from a dead state of trespasses and sins, so they could "**reign with him** [Christ]" (speaking of a spiritual work). Romans 5:17 tells us, ". . . they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." Jesus talked about two resurrections in John 5:24-29, which says: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

These two resurrections are not (as millenarians advocate) two separate physical resurrections. Let us look at them closely. Verse 25 says that "The hour is coming, and now is [present tense], when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live [an implication if you do not choose to hear, you do not have to; one has the power of choice]." This hearing and this living is a choice. Verse 24 says, "He that heareth my word, and believeth . . . hath everlasting life." In this case, when one "hears," or heeds, then they will "live." When they hear the Gospel and understand that they are in a dead state of trespasses and sins, and when they obey the tenets of the Gospel, they will live. There is a choice in this resurrection.

Speaking of the other resurrection, verses 28-29 say that "the hour is coming [future tense], in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice [there is no choice on that day], And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." Notice, Jesus said nothing about graves in the first resurrection (verses 24-25) because it is a spiritual resurrection. However, He did in the second resurrection because it is a physical resurrection. Everybody in the graves will come out of the graves in the second resurrection, which will happen at the end of time.

Let us look at verses 28-29 closely. Jesus said that "the hour [singular] is coming [future tense], in the which all [saved and unsaved] that are in the graves [have experienced physical death] shall [no choice on this day] hear his voice, And [a conjunction] shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." These two verses are not speaking of two separate resurrections, but they are showing the two different fates of the "all." There is only one physical resurrection coming. In Acts 24:15 the Apostle Paul told Governor Felix that "there shall be a resurrection [singular] of the dead, both of the just and unjust." In that resurrection, some will be just and some will be unjust; their state will determine their fate. In 1 Corinthians 15:52 Paul said, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead [saved and unsaved] shall be raised . . ."

### **"The Second Death" and the Second Resurrection Are Physical**

The first birth is a physical birth in an upright spiritual state. Then, the first death is a spiritual death. "**The first resurrection**," our text speaks of, is a spiritual resurrection. Concerning

this, **verse 6** tells us, "**on such the second death hath no power.**" Other than the Revelation, the expression "**the second death**" is found nowhere else in the New Testament. It is only mentioned four times (Revelation 2:11; 20:6; 20:14; and 21:8). "**The second death**" is a "**death**" that can or cannot hurt people depending on the condition they are in when it occurs. In Revelation 2:11 Jesus said, "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." "**The second death**" is a physical death that forever seals man's spiritual state.

First Corinthians 15:55 says: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Death may or may not have a sting. Verse 56 tells us, "The sting of death is sin." Sin determines whether or not it has a sting. If one does not die with sin in his life, death has no sting. However, if one dies in a sinful condition, then there is a sting. "**The second death**" will cause them to have eternal "hurt." **Verse 6** of our text lets us know that "**the second death hath no power**" when you have partaken of "**the first resurrection.**" If you die in a holy state, without sin, there is no sting. Instead of being a dreaded harbinger of ill bodings, death could be a welcome friend.

Many people fear physical death because of what comes after it. First Corinthians 15:56-57 tells us: "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory. . . ." God gives us victory over what? Verse 54 tells us that "Death is swallowed up in victory." When we die in a state where Jesus Christ has removed our sin, removed the sting, He takes victory away from death and gives it unto us! When our eyes close in the finality of death, we can know that we are going into the Glory World. "**The second death**" has no power, because there is no sin.

"**The second death,**" spoken of in our text, has a sting, and it separates, if it overtakes one with sin in his life. Jesus said in John 8:21, "I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come." If an individual dies with sin in his life, he cannot go to Heaven. Charles Naylor wrote a song entitled "Sin Can Never Enter There." Verse 1 says, "*Heaven is a holy place, Filled with glory and with grace—Sin can never enter there; All within its gates are pure, From defilement kept secure—Sin can never enter there.*" The expression "**second death**" is a Rabbinical expression familiar in Judaism. It commonly meant "separation from God and eternal punishment." Remember, John was a Hebrew, and many of the expressions and imagery in the Revelation are Hebrew expressions and imagery.

Hebrews 9:27 tells us that "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." "**The second death**" is a sealing of one's spiritual fate at physical death. When death overtakes one who is dead in trespasses and sins, one who has never experienced "**the first resurrection,**" there will be no alteration of his state. When the Judgment Day comes at the Second Coming of Christ, the dead will be raised, and he will stand before the Judgment Seat. His reward will not be *altered*, but it will be *amplified* as he goes from there into his eternal destiny.

"**The second death**" is a picture of a combination of physical death in an unregenerate spiritual state and the sad destiny it provides. The first two places that expression is employed deals more with the physical aspect of death in the sense it can or cannot hurt, or it can or cannot have power (Revelation 2:11 and 20:6) based on the individual's spiritual condition. Then, the last two passages where it is used address the terrible eternal aspect of one who dies in an unregenerate condition (Revelation 20:14 and 21:8). It will forever seal their doom. "**The second death**" is a permanent separation brought about by physical death and one dying in the state of sin and lasts throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity.

In truth, "**the second death**" only has power on the lost, because Biblically, in reality, the saved do not experience death. In 2 Timothy 1:10 the Apostle Paul wrote Jesus Christ "abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." The Gospel brings

understanding and offers life. When one embraces spiritual life, death is abolished. At death, a saint will just fall asleep and go into another world. I trust we can see why our text says, "**Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection.**" Victory replaces the sting of death. Our text continues, ". . . **on such the second death hath no power.**" Hebrews 9:27 lets us know that "it is appointed unto men once to die," but it does not have to hurt.

Look at what Paul said when he was waiting to be executed by Nero's henchmen. His head was to be severed from his shoulders; he was to die a martyr's death. He said in 2 Timothy 4:6, "For I am now ready . . ." It does not sound like he was dreading it too much. In fact, he said in Philippians 1:23-24: "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." He wanted to go, but his work at that juncture was not done. However, when he wrote to Timothy, he was on his way out. He did not say: "Oh, pray for me, saints! Oh, get me out of this! Oh, I don't want to die!" He said in 2 Timothy 4:6-7: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand [I already have my ticket; I am ready to make the flight; I am just waiting for them to call for the boarding passes]. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

"**The first resurrection**" that gives us victory over "**the second death**" can occur anytime people hear and take heed to the call of the Gospel. Our text is not setting forth multiple physical resurrections; but it is showing during "**the thousand years**" God had a people who enjoyed "**the first resurrection.**" Even if they were caught and became martyrs, "**the second death**" did not have any "**power**" over them. The Lord has made and will make provision for His people to be victorious in every age. In the letter series (Revelation, Chapters 2-3), Jesus spoke of those who "overcometh" seven times, in every period. Regardless of what they faced, there was provision for them to be overcomers.

I trust we can see the truth of the two resurrections and the two deaths. Also, we can see our text has reference to those mentioned in verse 4 who "lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (A.D. 530-1530). We can see who these souls were, how they lived and reigned, and the type of resurrection they enjoyed. "**The second death**" had no power over them. Thank God, "**the second death**" does not have to have power over any man, woman, or child yet today. They just need to do as Jesus said: hear His Word, regard it, believe it, and obey it. Then they can be resurrected from their dead state of trespasses and sins. They can be risen with Christ. Sin will be taken out of their lives. Death will be swallowed up in victory.



## CHAPTER TWENTY—PART FOUR

### When the Thousand Years Are Expired

*Revelation 20:7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,*

*8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.*

#### "Satan Shall Be Loosed Out of His Prison"

These verses of Scripture reveal the next segment of the Christian Dispensation (A.D. 1530-1880). As we view Revelation, Chapter 20, we must recognize some truths that have a great bearing. This chapter is a series in itself, because it covers the entire Gospel Day. In its presentation, it does not go into great detail in some aspects, but it goes into explicit detail concerning truths that the other series do not mention. That is the unique approach of the various series: each of them approaches the Gospel Day from a different perspective and accents different truths. When they are all put together, we have a complete and clear message.

#### Four Major Epochs

**The Morning Time**  
**The Dark Ages**  
**The Dark and Cloudy Day**  
**The Evening Time**

With Chapter 20 being so condensed, it only deals with the Gospel Day epochally, rather than by the seven periods. The sixth-seal brethren divided the Revelation into four major epochs prior to the opening of the seventh seal. Because we are in the seventh-seal period, we now realize there are seven periods; but if you compress them, you will see four epochs. The four major epochs are: the morning time, the Dark Ages, the dark and cloudy day, and the evening time. We must also recognize many of the symbols in Revelation, Chapter 20, were introduced earlier in the Book of Revelation. They were given more description when they were initially introduced. Any writer, after he has introduced a subject, will not go through the introduction again when he speaks of it later. He assumes you are already somewhat familiar with it.

In the context of our text, "**Satan**" is the dragon. Revelation 20:2 says that "he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan [*The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says 'the accuser and adversary']." We found the dragon was symbolic of the first opposing force against the morning-time church, which was the pagan Roman Empire. When our text says that "**Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,**" it is paganism that was loosed. The Greek word for "**prison**" is *phulake*. It is the same Greek word translated in Revelation 18:2 as "hold" and "cage." So, the dragon was let out of the "cage," or a "hold," where he had been held that "he should deceive the nations no more" (Revelation 20:3).

Paganism was a rampant force in the morning time. Roman society was polytheistic; they worshiped a multiplicity of gods (Acts 17:22-25). Idolatry and paganism saturated society in the morning time. When there was such a great insurrection caused in Ephesus over the goddess Diana, the town clerk said in Acts 19:35, "Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter?" They were deceived by all sorts of superstitions and false teachings. Even Paul was regarded as a god in Acts 14:11 and in Acts 28:6. The Ephesians com-



monly revered many things.

When the apostles preached the truth in a heathenish society, they cast the dragon down, bound him up, and put him in a position where he could no longer deceive the people. Men became enlightened, and they no longer worshiped images, idols, and pagan deities. Paganism, as a whole, had been defeated. During the "**thousand years**," Revelation 20:3 lets us know paganism could "deceive the nations no more." It was bound, because during that time it was "be Catholic or die." However, verse 3 continues, ". . . till the thousand years should be fulfilled." Once "**the thousand years**" were fulfilled, paganism would do a deceptive work again, only in another form.

Verse 7 of our text tells us that "**when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed.**" The question is: How? We must remember verse 5 says, "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." Quite a few things would occur after the Dark Ages. Let us study what these expressions are depicting. "The rest of the dead" verse 5 speaks of are those who (as Ephesians 2:1 says) "were dead in trespasses and sins." The masses could not enjoy "the first resurrection" because there was not a public message being heralded during the Dark Ages. The Bible was chained to the pulpit. There were those in the catacombs and caves who were being fed by the Word and the Spirit and maintaining a victorious experience underground, but the predominant condition was "the rest of the dead lived not."

Catching a glimpse of the Dark Ages, Amos 8:9 says, "And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord GOD, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day." When the sun should have been at its strength, there was a spiritual eclipse. The Dark Ages took place right amid the Gospel Day. Amos 8:11 states, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD." That was the famine they had to endure during the Dark Ages. The Bibles were written in Latin; the common man could not read them even if he could find them.

The Lord warned the Pergamene age (A.D. 530-1530) in Revelation 2:16, "Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." Words come out of your mouth. The "sword" represents the Word of God (Hebrews 4:12). The Lord told the Pergamene age to "repent, or else I will . . . fight against them with the sword of my mouth." He would turn the Word of God loose on them. Papalism did not repent (they have never even taught repentance), so the Lord turned the truth loose. It was just like the songwriter Julia Ward Howe penned in that famous song "Battle Hymn of the Republic." Verse 1 says, "*He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible, swift sword.*" Revelation 13:3 tells us the papal beast received a "deadly wound." Revelation 13:14 lets us know it was a "wound by a sword," or by the Word of God.

Gospel light broke forth in the sixteenth-century Reformation, and it forever banished the dark papal night. Revelation 8:10 lets us know, "And the third angel [A.D. 1530-1730] sounded, and there fell a great star [ministry] from heaven, burning as it were a lamp . . ." The ministry was referred to as "a *great* star" because the darkness had been a *great* darkness. It was similar to the time when Christ came in His First Advent. For four hundred and thirty-four years (Daniel's prophetic "threescore and two weeks [62]"; Daniel 9:25, the time between Malachi the Prophet and John the Baptizer), man had not heard a public message from God. Matthew 4:16 tells us, "The people which sat in darkness saw great light."

The "great star" that appeared and broke the papal darkness included Martin Luther. He was enveloped in the darkness of Roman Catholicism, but he was not satisfied. He saw things that greatly troubled him. So, he started studying the Book of Romans. He read Romans 1:17, which

says, "The just shall live by faith," and he meditated on it. Tradition tells us, one day, as Martin Luther was going up "the Sacred Stairs" (known in Latin as "*the Scala Sancta*") at the Church of Saint John the Lateran in Rome on his knees, bowing on all of those steps and worshipping, God said, "Martin, the just shall live by faith." He took that glimmer of truth and used it as a sword to break papal darkness forever! He laid a "deadly wound" to the papal beast (Revelation 13:3) "by a sword" (Revelation 13:14), just as the revelator described.

When the truth began to be heralded, it brought light and life. Light and life are inseparable. People think they can walk behind light and still have life, but they cannot do it! John 1:4 states, "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." When "**the thousand years**" were finished and the "great star" arose preaching a message of salvation, "the rest of the dead lived" (Revelation 20:5). They were resurrected from a dead state of trespasses and sins, because when they saw the light, they walked in the light, and it brought life. Thus, the first aspect revealed in Revelation 8:10 is that the sixteenth-century Reformation was a divine move.

What message did the Reformation brethren have? Revelation 8:10 lets us know the "great star" was "burning as it were a lamp." Isaiah 62:1 tells us that "salvation thereof [is] as a lamp that burneth." The lamp that was burning, or the message they had, was salvation. That is why "the rest of the dead" could live again. That message broke the papal darkness. Salvation is not in the pope, the priest, rites, rituals, or catechisms; but salvation is by faith! "The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17). "For by grace are ye saved through faith" (Ephesians 2:8).

### "Satan," or the Dragon, "Shall Go Out to Deceive"

Our text reveals another aspect: something deceptive and devilish arose. Sadly, those Reformation brethren did not maintain the position they were called to occupy. They did not stay true to the message. That is why when this "great star" (Revelation 8:10) went down, something else came up. Our text says, "**And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive . . .**" The dragon was shut up, so "he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled" (Revelation 20:3). That lets us know after "**the thousand years**," he would start his deceptive work again. When we are first introduced to the dragon and this warfare, Revelation 12:9 tells us, "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan [again, the Greek says *accuser* and *adversary*], which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth . . ." Remember, this was not a carnal warfare (2 Corinthians 10:4); they were engaged in a spiritual warfare.

Revelation 12:13 reads, "And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth . . ." Earth represents man (Jeremiah 22:29; 2 Corinthians 5:1). When the dragon was "cast unto the earth," it merely means the paganistic system of religion was shown for what it was: a man-made idea. Revelation 20:3 says the dragon was cast "into the bottomless pit." Some may think that is contradictory, but it is not contradictory at all; it is more explanatory. It shows us the false teachings of man have no Bible foundation, no basis in truth whatsoever. That is why the "pit" is referred to as "bottomless." First Corinthians 3:11 tells us, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." He is the only Bible foundation: He is the Word. The pagan systems of religion had no Bible foundation ("into the bottomless pit"); they were just inventions of men's minds that were brought down from the exalted position they held in men's minds ("cast unto the earth").

Let us look at how the dragon was loosed. Remember, we have to go "here a little, and there a little" (Isaiah 28:13), because Revelation, Chapter 20, is a very compacted chapter. Revelation 13:11 says, "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth." The dragon had been cast

unto the earth (Revelation 12:13), and now we see a "beast coming up out of the earth." Verse 11 says that "he spake as a dragon." That is how the dragon was loosed, right through the beast that came up "out of the earth."

Revelation 13:12 mentions "worship," revealing this beast is a system of worship, or a religious system. Verse 14 tells us it "deceiveth them." This beast works "to deceive," just as Revelation 20:8 says would happen. Let us identify what Revelation 13:11 calls "another beast." Revelation 11:3 says, "And I will give power unto my two witnesses [the Word and the Spirit], and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days." Prophetically, that is 1,260 years (Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6). If you take A.D. 1530 and subtract A.D. 270, you get 1,260 years. The Word and the Spirit were prophesying (feeding the church in the wilderness, catacombs, and caves) during that period of time (A.D. 270-1530).

Verse 7 states, "And when they [the two witnesses] shall have finished their testimony [the same time period we are studying, A.D. 1530], the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war . . ." What happened in A.D. 1530? On June 25, 1530, in Augsburg, Germany, a session known as the Diet of Augsburg adopted a document known as The Augsburg Confession, which essentially was the first Protestant creed. That forever broke the exclusive rule of papalism.

As we study this, we find God was in the sixteenth-century Reformation. He is the One who turned "the sword" of His Word loose (Revelation 2:16). He is the One who enabled a ministry to have enough understanding and light to lay a deadly wound to the papal beast (Revelation 13:3). However, God was not in what followed the Reformation. Many of the reformers became just like what they were protesting against. They turned around and made "an image" to the first beast (Revelation 13:14). They became just like it.

Revelation 13:11 tells us that "another beast" came "up out of the earth," or out of the minds of mortal men. God did not ordain it. Revelation 11:7 lets us know it ascended "out of the bottomless pit." There was no Bible foundation for the moves that caused that religious system to arise. The religious system of Protestantism has divided up God's people into various sects and denominations. It is no more a Christian system than papalism or paganism; they are all of the devil.

The dragon arose in the form of "another beast" (Revelation 13:11). We know this beast symbolizes the religious system of Protestantism by several ways. Revelation 13:11 lets us know it "had two horns." Horns represent kingdoms (Daniel 8:20). There were two kingdoms that predominantly gave Protestantism its power: Germany (in the Lutheran Era) and England (in the Wesleyan Era). Those two kingdoms sustained the religious system of Protestantism. Next, it followed in direct chronological succession to papalism. In Revelation, Chapter 13, the first ten verses speak of the papal beast, and then verse 11 introduces to another beast, which represents the system of Protestantism. We also see in Revelation 11:7, when the Protestant beast arose "when they [the two witnesses] shall have finished their testimony." That occurred in A.D. 1530. Again, we have a definite time fixation.

We need to recognize the religious system of Protestantism is an adversary to God and truth. I know many people have a real soft spot for Protestantism. They say, "Well, they are almost like the Church of God." However, there is nothing *almost like* the Church of God. Solomon said that "she is the only one of her mother" (Song of Solomon 6:9). In 1 Corinthians 6:16, the Apostle Paul posed a serious question, "What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body?" In verse 18 he instructed, "Flee fornication." This verse contextually is not speaking of literal "fornication," but spiritual. When a saved individual goes out to a false religious system or function, even organizations that are supposedly "*almost like*" the Church of God, they are committing spiritual adultery.

Protestantism is not a Christian system, even though it has some lamb-like features; that makes it so deceptive. Revelation 13:11 tells us it "had two horns like a lamb." If it did not have some lamb-like features, it could deceive no one. So it adorns itself in a Christian garb. Its members will carry Bibles and sing about Jesus; but all along, it is of the devil. When I speak of Protestantism, I am not speaking of individuals. Do not allow some good person to come to your mind. (Ephesians 6:12 says, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood . . ." We are not warring against people, but systems and spirits that work against people's spiritual warfare.) I am talking about a religious system contrary to God's eternal Word. That system is deceiving, duping, and damning the souls of mankind.

### Protestantism Has Divided God's People

Our text refers to Protestantism as an adversary. It opposes the will of God and the plan of God. The devil used Peter in that way. The same word "**Satan**," or adversary, used in our text was employed by Christ. Matthew 16:21 says, "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." That was the Plan of God. Jesus was the Lamb slain *before* the foundation of the world (1 Peter 1:19-20). Verses 22-23 read: "Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan [or adversary]: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." That is the kind of adversary Protestantism is. They are not minded to "the things that be of God," but to "those that be of men." The Protestant system that "came up" (and all the denominations of which it is comprised), came out of men's minds. God never ordained His people be all divided up. Protestantism has splintered God's people into schisms and scattered them. That grieves the great heart of God.

Do you think Peter learned his lesson after Jesus rebuked him? When he was on the Mount of Transfiguration, he said in Matthew 17:4, "Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; [He was ready to make three churches! He still had not caught on.] one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." That stirred God. Verse 5 says, "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud [Peter needed some light] overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." When Peter looked again, he saw "Jesus only" (verse 8). That is the foundation of the church.

The thinking exhibited by Peter is the thinking that comes out of the unregenerate minds of men. At this juncture, Peter was not regenerated because regeneration was not available until the day of Pentecost. What he said was coming out of a natural, unregenerate mind. That is exactly what produced the religious system of Protestantism.



**The Pantheon at Rome**

How does Protestantism speak "as a dragon" (Revelation 13:11)? In 27 B.C. Marcus Agrippa had a building constructed. This was while the dragon (paganism) was operating with worldwide domination. This structure was called in Latin, The Pantheon. *Pan* means "all" and *theos* means "a god." A website entitled *Romeinfo* tells us, "It was dedicated to all the gods of pagan Rome." People would go into the Pantheon and see idols of all the various national gods. They could choose the god of their choice,

do their obeisance, and go on their merry way. Likewise, our newspapers today say, "Choose the church of your choice." That is one way Protestantism speaks like a dragon.

Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, "I will build my church [singular]." Ephesians 4:4 tells us that "There is *one* body." All the organizations of men, commonly called churches, "came up" out of the minds of men; they "came up" out of the bottomless pit. God ordained no one to be a Lutheran, a Wesleyan, a Baptist, etc. John the Baptizer himself said, "He [Jesus] must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). That does not sound like a man trying to start a church. However, Protestantism has used his name. Protestantism does not care which supposed church you belong to, just as long as you say nothing about anybody else's church. That spirit is loose today. If you tell about the evils of Protestantism, people will say, "Now don't you judge." However, Paul said, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Corinthians 6:2).

When the bottomless pit was opened in the Protestant era, Revelation 9:2 tells us that "there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air [the Word and the Spirit] were darkened." False religion puts out such a smoke to where people cannot see clearly. So if they come into a service where the unadulterated Gospel is preached, they have a hard time seeing the truth. They have smoke in their eyes.

Revelation 9:3 tells us, "And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power . . . ." "Locusts" symbolize men who are leaders (Nahum 3:17). Thus, these "locusts" are the leaders of false religion. During the plague of locusts, "the land was darkened," because "they covered the face of the whole earth" (Exodus 10:15). A false ministry gets between the people and the light. What type of "power" do the "locusts" have? Revelation, Chapters 13 and 20, let us know false religion has the powers of deception. They tell people: "God is a loving God. He wouldn't send anyone to hell. God knows you are just doing your best, and that is all God expects. Nobody can be perfect. You sin, I sin, we all sin. God understands, we are human." That is how they talk, and that is the deception.

Revelation 9:7 reads, "And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses [they are militant] prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold [not crowns *of* gold; they are just imitation], and their faces were as the faces of men." Man is the head of every sectarian organization. There is one Protestant beast, but there are all kinds of locusts. *The Center for the Study of Global Christianity* estimated in 2012 there were forty-three thousand supposed Christian denominations. That is an adversary to truth and to God.

Our text in **Revelation 20:8** tells us the intent of Protestantism is "**to deceive.**" What type of deceptions does that system engage in? Revelation 11:7 states, "And when they [the Word and the Spirit] shall have finished their testimony [in A.D. 1530], the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit [the system of Protestantism] shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them." This Protestant beast made "war," just as the dragon did in Revelation 12:17. It has the same spirit the dragon has: they both fight against truth.

If you give the Word of God to those who Protestantism has deceived, they will rise up and make war on you. I have preached in funeral services and watched people squirm and endure, because their spirit was making war with the truth. Earlier in my ministry, I preached in a Pentecostal service because they asked me to preach. One man got so mad while I preached that he stood up, went back to the door, and just looked at me. Then he took that door like he was trying to throw it all the way to the pulpit and slammed it as he went out. During the Protestant era, Revelation 11:7 tells us the Protestant beast "shall overcome them, and kill them." It did not physically or literally kill the Word and the Spirit; it killed their influence by its teachings and doctrines, and it killed their effectiveness. When you show them what the Word of God says, they will rise up and say, "Well, my church doesn't teach that."

Revelation 11:8 reads, "And their [the Word's and the Spirit's] dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city [Babylon; Revelation 14:8], which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt [symbols of wickedness and bondage], where also our Lord was crucified." Protestantism is a system full of wickedness that keeps people in bondage. They kill the effectiveness of the Word and the Spirit, and they crucify Christ afresh, because they profess Christianity. Verse 8 tells us that "their dead bodies shall lie in the street." There are only two streets in the Revelation; both of them are in the singular. One street goes through the middle of Babylon, the other one, found in Revelation 22:2, goes through the middle of the city of God. Those two streets are the *broad* way and the *narrow* way (Matthew 7:13-14).

Why did the "dead bodies" of the Word and the Spirit lie in the street? Protestantism did not want to completely do away with them and bury them. They wanted to keep them around, so they could say, "We have the Word and the Spirit here," even though they were unable to operate. For all intents and purposes they were "dead." Verse 10 states, "And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another." People who are indoctrinated with the teachings of Protestantism are glad the Word and the Spirit do not cramp their style. They want to gratify the flesh.

Concerning gifts, Ephesians 4:11 says, "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." The Spirit of God distributes the gifts from God (1 Corinthians, Chapter 12), but Protestantism gives their own gifts. If you go through their college or their seminary, they will make you a doctor or a reverend. Then they determine whether you should be a pastor or an evangelist or some other ministerial office. That is how they give "gifts one to another." It did not matter what the Holy Spirit had to say; He was dead in the street.

Revelation 11:11 tells us, "And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet." The three and one-half days were the three hundred and fifty years of Protestantism (from A.D. 1530 to A.D. 1880). The famed historian J. H. Merle D'Aubigne's *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century* says this: "It has been said that the last three centuries, the sixteenth, the seventeenth, and the eighteenth, may be conceived as an immense battle of three days' duration."

### **Paganism Has Disguised Itself as Protestantism**

Our text reveals the Protestant system of religion is a work of deception. **Verse 8** says it "**shall go out to deceive.**" In reality it is paganism, disguised in a supposed-Christian cloak! We must recognize since Protestantism's inception, it has deceived: its organization deceives, its operation deceives, its doctrines deceive, and its spirit deceives. "The spirits of devils" (Revelation 16:14) motivate it. It is not a Christian system! I do not advocate anyone going to sectism's singspirations, songfests, or concerts. I do not recommend buying their books and CDs. We must recognize Protestantism is of the devil. It promotes and practices deception.

In Matthew 24:24 Jesus said, "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets [what Protestantism is called in Revelation 16:13], and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if possible, they shall deceive the very elect." I left out "*it were*" in that verse, because those two words were put in by the translators. Notice they are italicized. Jesus did not say them, because it is possible for the elect to be deceived. If God's people overstep the teachings of God's Word, they can be deceived just as fast if not faster than anybody else. They must walk in the light while they have the light (John 12:35).

During the Protestant epoch (A.D. 1530 to A.D. 1880), it was a cloudy and dark day (Ezekiel

34:12). One minute you saw the sun, the next minute you saw the clouds. It was a mixture of light and darkness, truth and error; it was a day of deception. Division and sect-making is a work of the flesh. Galatians 5:19-20 says: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness [loose living], Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies [or *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says 'sects']." Sectism is as repugnant and vile in God's eyes as adultery, hatred, and witchcraft. Division, schisms, and sect-making are works of the flesh; they are not of God.

**Revelation 20:7** says that "**when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed.**" Verse 3 tells us he was "loosed a little season." The same expression "a little season" is spoken of in Revelation 6:11, which says, "And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." The holiness people, during the Wesleyan era, were burdened. They wanted to see the walls of sectism that separated and divided God's people come tumbling down like Jericho of old. However, they were told to rest for "a little season," for the remainder of the Protestant era.

Our text reveals "**Satan**" was "**loosed**" through the religious system of Protestantism. Protestantism never was a Christian system, and it never will be. Second Corinthians 6:17 tells us, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing." We need to not only come out, but we also need to stay out and not touch it. We need not grab Babel's stones to build the Church of God. Psalm 87:7 tells us that "all my springs are in thee." God provides everything we need to build up the Church of God. May God help us guard ourselves against this sectish spirit that wants to infiltrate congregations and the lives of the saints. Let us keep our hearts with all diligence and walk in the light as He has given us the light so we can truly be that city set on a hill.

## CHAPTER TWENTY—PART FIVE

### The Consolidation, Conflict, and Confirmation

*Revelation 20:7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,*

*8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.*

*9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.*

#### Who Are "Gog and Magog"?

In our previous study, we found "**Satan**," or the adversary, was "**loosed**" in the form of the Protestant beast, after "**the thousand years**." As we proceed further, we see three major points of truth contained within these verses. By the help of God, we want to consider: The Consolidation, Conflict, and Confirmation. **Verse 8** of our text shows the tenor of the moves described is "**to deceive**." Protestantism is motivated by deceitful and devilish spirits. Its deceptive moves have a broad impact, yea, even a universal impact. The expression, "**the four quarters of the earth**," denotes worldwide impact. As we proceed in **verse 8**, we see the scene, the characters, and the activity change. Along with "**Satan**," or the dragon, we have the characters "**Gog and Magog**." Their activity is "**to gather them together**," and their purpose is "**to battle**." This is a much broader move.

First, let us identify "**Gog and Magog**." Three principals are spoken of: "**Satan**," or the dragon, "**Gog**," and "**Magog**." They are now all working together. We know that because **verse 9** says, "**And they**"; it speaks of them in the plural, as a unit. We have progressed beyond the Protestant era to another epoch. We see a consolidated move "**to gather**" and "**to battle**." We have seen this portrayed with greater detail earlier in the Revelation. Revelation 16:19 tells us "the great city was divided into three parts." The "great city" is Babylon (Revelation 14:8), and the word *Babylon* means "confusion." We are dealing with systems of religious confusion.

What are the "three parts" of Babylon? Revelation 16:13 says, "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon [paganism], and out of the mouth of the beast [papalism], and out of the mouth of the false prophet [Protestantism]." These are the three parts that compose spiritual Babylon. Verse 14 tells us "spirits of devils" are what motivates these systems. Their activity is portrayed in that they "go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle." Their common activity is "to gather," and their purpose is to "battle." That is the same activity and the same purpose depicted in our text. By common deduction, the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet are the same three principals spoken of in our text as "**Satan**," "**Gog**," and "**Magog**."

**All Seven Vials Are  
Poured Out in the  
Evening Time**

- **Vials 1-3 in the Sixth Seal**
- **Vials 4-7 in the Seventh Seal**

Notice the time setting in Revelation, Chapter 16. Verse 12 says, "And the sixth angel poured out his vial . . . ." That is when John saw these "unclean spirits" in verse 13. The sixth vial is being



poured out in this seventh-seal period of time (A.D. 1930 to the consummation of human history). How do we know that? Revelation 16:2 tells us the first vial angel "poured out his vial" on those who "worshipped" the "image," or Protestantism. Therefore, it had to have been a period of time subsequent to the Protestant era. Thus, the prophetic time setting is in the evening time. The first three angels poured out their vials in the sixth seal, and the last four poured out their vials in the seventh seal.

The forces of evil are consolidating to work against the true Church of God, right in this day and time in which you and I live. Revelation 16:13 deals with paganism, papalism, and Protestantism individually, and then verse 14 refers to them as "they." They are no longer individual spirits working through individual systems, but now they have come together for a common activity and a common purpose. They are working to gather a force against truth. Again, this is the same as described in our text. When we see them working together in harmony, as in **verse 8** of our text, we know that time has advanced from the Protestant era to the Fourth Epoch, or the evening time of the Gospel Day (A.D. 1880 through to the Consummation).

The symbolism in **verse 8** of our text of "**Gog and Magog**" is Hebrew imagery. The name "**Gog**" in our text comes from the Hebrew word *Gowg*. It appears eleven times in the Bible: ten in the Old Testament and only once in the New Testament, which is in our text. In the Old Testament, nine of the ten times it appears is in Ezekiel, Chapters 38 and 39.

Ezekiel 38:1-3 says: "And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal." These verses show us "**Gog**" was considered an enemy of God and of His people. I will not deal exhaustively in this study with "**Gog and Magog**" (see my book entitled *Prophecy and Revelation Concerning Gog and Magog*, which deals extensively with them), but I want to consider them enough to clarify our text.

Many people either have looked for or are looking for a literal fulfillment of Ezekiel, Chapters 38 and 39. Some have claimed "**Gog**" was the Lydian King Gyges; others have said he was Cambyses, and yet others have said he was Antiochus Epiphanes. They have tried to identify to whom these prophecies have reference. However, there are many things in Ezekiel's writings that do not have a literal fulfillment. Ezekiel 1:1 tells us Ezekiel "saw visions of God," or visions of divine origin. He received spiritual visions depicting spiritual truths. So it is when he speaks of "**Gog and Magog.**"

Speaking of "**Gog**," Ezekiel 38:16 says, "And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes." This prophecy has its time setting in the New Testament Dispensation, just as many of Ezekiel's prophecies. We know that by the phrase "the latter days." In Ezekiel 38:18-19 we see much the same tone as is found in our text. In verse 18, Ezekiel said that "Gog shall come against the land." Then verse 19 speaks about "the fire of my [God's] wrath." **Verse 8** of our text says, ". . . **Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle.**" Then, **verse 9** tells us that "**fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.**"

The word "**Gog**" literally means "roof, covering, or a mountain." That is fitting! The papal beast arose "out of the sea" (Revelation 13:1), after "a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea" (Revelation 8:8). That mountain represents the church (Revelation 21:9-10). When it went into the sea of apostasy, its fire was extinguished. The church went out of visible view. Then out of that ensuing apostasy rose the papal beast. "**Gog**" represents papalism, which came from a fallen mountain. It became a "roof" and a "covering" for "every foul spirit, and . . . every

unclean and hateful bird" (Revelation 18:2). They can all be housed under the roof of Roman Catholicism and never be troubled.

**Verse 8** of our text also speaks of "**Magog**." Ezekiel 39:6 tells us, "And I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles: and they shall know that I am the LORD." The word "**Magog**" comes from the Hebrew word *Magowg*. It appears five times in the Bible: four times in the Old Testament and only once in the New Testament, which is in our text. The word means "expansion, or increase of family, Gog's region." What a clear picture of Protestantism! Protestantism, or "**Magog**," expands and increases their family to take in everything and everyone regardless of whether you come through a real experience of salvation or not.

Ephesians 3:14-15 says: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ [God], Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." These verses tell us the family of God, the Church of God, belongs to God, the Father. They show us whose name the family is to bear: the Father's name. They also reveal to us there is only one acceptable mode of entry. How do you become a member of a family? You have to be born into the family.

Psalms 87:5 tells us, "And of Zion [the church] it shall be said, This and that man was born in her." It takes a birth to be brought into the family of God. After that birth, Ephesians 2:19 lets us know that "ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God." First Timothy 3:15 tells us the house of God "is the church of the living God." Jesus said in John 10:9, "I am the door." We can only become a part of the Church of God through an experience of salvation by Jesus Christ. Jesus said in John 3:3, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." *Christianity Today* states, "There are approximately thirty-eight thousand Christian denominations in the world." The Center for the Study of Global Christianity estimated in 2012, there were 43,000 supposed Christian denominations. Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, "I will build my church [singular]." So who built the other 42,999 supposed churches? Man did.

The word "**Magog**" also means "Gog's region." That lines up with the truth revealed to us in Revelation 13:14, which lets us know the system of Protestantism made "an image to the [papal] beast." Protestantism is part of "Gog's region"; it is just an image of papalism. During the Protestant era, each sect built very defined walls between itself and all other sectarian institutions. However, our text shows those walls are no longer separating the various sectarian orders. There is a more deceptive move being wrought. They are bringing about a false unity and working to consolidate all the systems the enemy has used throughout human history. We now see "**Gog and Magog**" in conjunction with "**Satan**," or the dragon. So, we have advanced to the final epoch—the evening time.

### **The Eighth Beast Is a Gathering of Evil Forces**

In January 1880, Brother D. S. Warner became the editor of a magazine called *Herald of Gospel Freedom*. In an article entitled "Prophetic Times," he began to sound the sixth trumpet, the message of the unity of the faith and the oneness of God's people. He began to call a people out of the realms of Babylon. This final epoch (since we are dealing in Revelation, Chapter 20) goes to the Consummation. When did the consolidating move of the enemy appear in the prophetic time scheme? Revelation 17:1 tells us that "one of the seven angels which had the seven vials" gave a revelation concerning the great whore and the eighth beast. We have already found all seven of the "vials" have been and are being poured out in the evening time. So the eighth beast began to appear and to develop in the evening time, the final epoch of the Gospel Day.

What exactly is the eighth beast? Revelation 17:11 says, "And the beast that was, and is not,

even he is the eighth, and is of the seven . . ." The eighth beast is a consolidation of evil forces. It has the characteristics of all the previous seven beasts that have worked throughout human history. Daniel 7:1-7 tells of the first four beasts that represent the four heathen kingdoms: Babylon, Medio-Persia, Grecia, and the pre-Christian era pagan Rome. The fifth beast is the Christian era pagan Rome (Revelation 12:3), the sixth beast is papal Rome (Revelation 13:1), and the seventh beast is Protestantism (Revelation 13:11). So the eighth is "of the seven." It is an ecumenical move, a gathering.

For what purpose did all the beasts gather together? Revelation 17:13 says that "These have one mind." That depicts a unity, but it is a false unity. They take in everything but the truth. Their purpose is to "make war with the Lamb" (Revelation 17:14). They fight the truth! In Revelation, Chapters 16, 17, 19, and 20, we see the same picture set before us. When the brethren began to preach the message of "the unity of the faith" (Ephesians 4:13) in A.D. 1880, the enemy changed his tactics. We are past the age of sectism, past the age of sectarian division; we are now in the age of ecumenicalism, which is a false unity. **Revelation 20:8** describes it as, "**to gather them together.**" Revelation 16:14 says, "to gather them"; Revelation 19:17 says, "Come and gather yourselves together"; and Revelation 19:19 lets us know they were "gathered together."

Ecclesiastes 1:9 says that "there is no new thing under the sun." The gathering of evil forces has worked in various manners throughout history. When Nehemiah traveled to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls (a type of the evening time), Nehemiah 4:7-8 tells us: "But it came to pass, that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth, And conspired all of them together [a type of the eighth beast] to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it." Those who fight truth have always made strange bed-fellows. Have you ever noticed that? When people who cannot get along with each other get cross-grained with the truth, they will lock arms together to fight the truth.

Matthew 16:1 states, "The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him [Jesus] that he would shew them a sign from heaven." The Pharisees and the Sadducees locked arms and linked forces against Christ. Normally, they could not agree with one another. Acts 23:8 tells us, "For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both." They were at opposite ends of the poles in doctrine, but they locked arms to fight truth. Let us look at another incident. Luke 23:12 says, "And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves." When they stood against Jesus, it brought them together.

As we study our text, we can see "**Gog**," "**Magog**," and the dragon are working together against truth. Notice, **verse 8** speaks of "**the four quarters of the earth.**" That means it is all-inclusive; it is a worldwide move. **Verse 8** also tells us that "**the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.**" Genesis 32:12 lets us know the expression "the sand of the sea" means it "cannot be numbered for multitude." The enemies of the truth are massive and innumerable, which is not a new thing either.

Deuteronomy 7:7 says, "The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people." God's people have always been a decided minority. We must not allow that to disturb us. It has never kept God from accomplishing His plan in any age. God allowed Samson to whip a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of an ass. He slayed the mighty Goliath with a young shepherd boy. When Gideon had so many men God would not get the glory, He reduced them from thirty-two thousand to three hundred. With God, all things are possible. Mark 9:23 tells us that "all things are possible to him that believeth." That brings it down to where we can get a hold of it. In Matthew 7:14 Jesus said

in the Sermon on the Mount, "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." It is not a few in the sense of a very small number, but it is a few in relation to the "many" who go in at the "wide" gate and walk the "broad" way (verse 13). God's people have always been in a minority.

### **Evil Forces Are Gathering "Together to Battle" Against the "Beloved City"**

In our text, the evil forces have a common, underlying goal for their activity. **Verse 8** tells us it is **"to battle."** This is the same battle spoken of in previous chapters. Revelation 16:14 calls it "the battle of that great day of God Almighty." Revelation 16:16 says they were gathered "into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." Revelation 17:14 says, "These shall make war . . ." Then Revelation 19:19 says they were "gathered together to make war."

As we have found in our prior studies, this **"battle"** is a spiritual **"battle."** Many are looking for some sort of a literal carnage to take place. However, 2 Corinthians 10:4 tells us that "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal." Christ will not come back riding on a white horse with a sword going out of His mouth. There will not be a great literal battle with blood coming up to the horses' bridles. Jesus will not literally go back into Jerusalem and sit on David's throne and establish the kingdom. All that thinking came from the concoctions of carnal minds.

Paul told us in Ephesians 6:11 to "Put on the whole armour of God," and he did not mention one thing that is carnal. The "armour" consists of spiritual articles. Ephesians 6:12 says, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness [the Greek center reference says 'wicked spirits'] in high places." The **"battle"** is against all the wicked spirits and the systems they motivate that are working to deceive the souls of mankind.

The spiritual conflict we are currently in is a conflict over the truth, over the faith. Paul said in 1 Timothy 6:12, "Fight the good fight of faith." Then, when Paul was closing out that final epistle of his life, he wrote in 2 Timothy 4:7, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." In **verse 8** of our text, the Greek word for **"battle"** is *polemos*. *Strong's Dictionary of New Testament Words* defines it as "a single encounter or a series." To determine whether it is "a single encounter" or "a series," we must view it in its context. **Verse 8** of our text tells us they are going **"to gather them together to battle."** Then **verse 9** tells us they were **"devoured."** That lets us know this **"battle"** is a singular, final, and decisive battle.

Remember, in our text, the prophetic time setting deals with the period of time from A.D. 1880 to the Consummation. That means some events in our text have occurred, and some have not yet taken place. Although there has been war since the morning time, the final decisive **"battle"** has not yet been fought. We know that because the unclean spirits are still gathering, and the eighth beast is not totally formed yet.

As the deceptive eighth beast amasses its numbers and becomes innumerable, **verse 9** tells us that **"they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints."** The word **"compassed"** is the Greek word *kukloo*, which means "to encircle, surround." The powers of darkness are doing everything they can to surround us, to bring pressure to bear. We are living in a time when many feel the pressures of conformity. We are pressured to just go along, get along, say nothing about anything, just let it go, be quiet, and be politically correct. If you need to correct a child, you are almost afraid to do it in a public place, for fear someone will report you to Children's Services. The enemy will make you feel you cannot really testify at work, because you are on the clock, and you may stir up your coworkers. The enemy will do everything

he can to get you to be silent and to conform. When things go the wrong way and people act in manners they should not, rather than say anything, the enemy wants you to stifle yourself.

As the eighth beast amasses its size and influence, God's people will be surrounded in an even greater way with the presence of falsity and pushed to be ecumenical. Beware of prayer breakfasts, ministerial associations, singspirations, songfests, and community revival meetings. These are ecumenical moves. However, while the enemy is working his deceitful work, God is still working. "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth" (Revelation 19:6)! He will let the enemy play right into His hands.

Deuteronomy 33:17 says, "His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together . . ." What does this mean? God is going to use the conditions to start pushing His people to a greater unity. Greater unity brings greater power! He is going to use this compassing to "the furtherance of the gospel" (Philippians 1:12). He is going to start binding up the breaches (Isaiah 30:26) that have separated the various camps of the people of God. Psalm 122:3 states, "Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together."

Remember what the fight is over. Revelation 17:14 tells us, "These shall make war *with the Lamb*." The enemy is against the true sacrificial work of Christ. **Verse 9** of our text says they are against "**the beloved city**," or the church. They are against the true church that preaches and upholds the message of salvation and deliverance. They do not want men to see the work of Jesus Christ, to attain it, or to maintain it. Ephesians 4:16 says, "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth . . ." As the "**beloved city**" becomes compacted by the "horn of the unicorn," it will start binding up the breaches. It will effect a greater unity as it becomes a city more compacted by what those various joints begin to supply.

Matthew 5:14-15 tells us: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house." *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says "lamps" for the word "candle" in verse 15. Isaiah 62:1 lets us know a lamp represents salvation. When we each have an individual experience of salvation, we have a lamp. However, when our lamp is under a bushel, or out in man-made religion, it does not shine very much. That is why Jesus wants us to put it on a candlestick, or *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says "lampstand."

Revelation 1:20 tells us what the lampstand is: "The mystery of the . . . seven candlesticks [the Greek says 'lampstands'] which thou sawest are the seven churches [the church through the seven periods of the Gospel Day]." The lampstand represents the church. As more and more of the lamps (the people who have an experience of salvation) are brought together into the lampstand (the church), it will cause a greater brightness and brilliance to be seen. It will become the "light of the world" (Matthew 5:14), so honest hearts can see and come to the truth.

### **"Fire Came Down From God Out of Heaven"**

John 3:21 tells us, "But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." The lampstand will enable those in Babylon who are honest to be emptied out. Jeremiah 51:2 states, "And will send unto Babylon fanners [the ministry], that shall fan her, and shall empty her land." Then the final honest hearts will be saved. In the midst of the "**battle**," our text tells us "**fire came down from God out of heaven**" (**verse 9**). Many have commonly held that as the fires of the Consummation, but we must remember we are dealing in symbols. That expression has a reminiscent ring to it; it is Hebrew imagery that

is connected to the Prophet Elijah.

The Hebrews considered Elijah to be the greatest prophet. The last prophecy of the Old Testament concerned "Elijah the prophet" (Malachi 4:5). The Rabbis of Judaism believed when the Messiah arrived, He would be accompanied by Elijah. When Jesus stood on the Mount of Transfiguration, Elijah appeared (Matthew 17:1-3). He was vindicating and validating that Jesus Christ was indeed the Messiah. One of the greatest events that marked Elijah as a true prophet was calling fire down from Heaven on Mount Carmel. Elijah was compassed by "the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred" (1 Kings 18:19). He was greatly outnumbered and surrounded by false religion (just as it is portrayed in our text). They were representatives of falsity; he represented God and truth. He was a true prophet, and the fire confirmed it.

First Kings 18:36-39 tells us: "And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice [a type of the evening time of the Gospel Day], that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God." It was very convincing that Elijah was the true prophet.

Elijah confirmed his position with fire coming down from Heaven a number of times. Second Kings 1:9-12 says: "Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him: and, behold, he sat on the top of an hill. And he spake unto him, Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down. And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty. Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty. And he answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly. And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty." Notice, Elijah said, "If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven" twice. It proved he was a true prophet.

When the false prophet, Protestantism, came up, let us see what it tried to do to cause people to believe it was a true prophet. Revelation 13:13-14 says: "And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them . . ." He tried to prove he was a true prophet by making it appear that fire came down from heaven, but it was just a lying wonder (2 Thessalonians 2:9).

**Verse 9** of our text reads, "**And they ['Satan,' 'Gog,' and 'Magog'] went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.**" This is a symbolic expression indicating despite all the falsity they are working, God will make truth stand out clear in the end. He is going to let the city be set on a hill and be a light in such a way that all honest men will see! The "**fire**" in our text is confirmation "**the beloved city**" is where the truth is and where the true prophets are.

What does our text mean when it says the "**fire . . . devoured them**"? In Revelation 12:4 the first opposing force to the church (the dragon, or paganism) "stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born." Those who were to be born were new converts. Paganism did not devour them all, or there would be no church. So, let

us study the word *devour*. In Matthew 23:14 Jesus said, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation." We can read the same account in Mark 12:40 and in Luke 20:47. The same Greek word for *devour* is used in these Gospel accounts and in our text. It means "to take away their substance." When these scribes and Pharisees devoured widows' houses, the widows' houses did not cease to exist. They did not annihilate them, but they took of those poor widows' substance, took of their income and properties. Likewise, the **"fire"** in our text did not cause the enemies to disappear; but rather, it took away their power over honest hearts by showing them a revelation of the truth.

What is the **"fire"** in our text? What devours the powers of falsity and deception? Well, what did Elijah say when he prayed? First Kings 18:36 tells us he said that "I have done all these things at thy word." The **"fire"** is a picture of the Word. Jeremiah 23:29 says, "Is not my word like as a fire?" Then John 17:17 lets us know that "thy word is truth." Truth is the only thing that devours falsity.

Our text is not portraying the Consummation. Again, **verse 9** says that **"fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them ['Satan,' 'Gog,' and 'Magog']"**. It did not devour everything; it only devoured them. On the day of Consummation, everything is going to be destroyed or consumed. Second Peter 3:10 says, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." Verse 12 reads, "Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" It says nothing at all in our text about the heavens being on fire; it just talks about the powers of darkness being on **"fire."** The Consummation will literally occur, but our text is not speaking of such.

Ezekiel 38:22 states, "And I will plead against him ['Gog'] with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone." "Rain" is doctrine (Deuteronomy 32:2), hailstones are solid truth (Isaiah 28:17), and "fire, and brimstone" is the judgment of God's Word. At the sounding of the seventh trumpet, Revelation 11:19 says there was "great hail." When the seventh angel poured out his vial, Revelation 16:21 says that "there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven." Also, **verse 9** of our text says **"fire came down from God out of heaven."** These symbolic representations show the effect of truth in the seventh-and-final period of time.

Our text reveals the consolidation of the powers of the enemy in this deceptive day, a day of ecumenicalism. Next is the conflict. All the enemy's forces will gather one last time to contest truth. However, 2 Corinthians 13:8 lets us know, "For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." As the pressures of this **"battle"** increase, it will only effect a greater unity. Then the Lord will be "confirming the word" (Mark 16:20), when He sends **"fire"** and vindicates the church. He will put the church in a victorious, exalted position prior to the end of time, and that is the confirmation. When the morning-time church came in her pristine glory, she was dressed in fire, "clothed with the sun" (Revelation 12:1). The sun is just a fireball. She was radiating and shining brilliantly, and she is going to go out the same way, brilliantly as a ball of fire.

I trust the picture set forth before us in our text is clear. It should encourage us. Yes, there are things on the horizon that to our humanity look unfavorable, but God's "grace is sufficient" (2 Corinthians 12:9). God is working for the good of souls and for His glory, and to expose falsity and vindicate the truth.

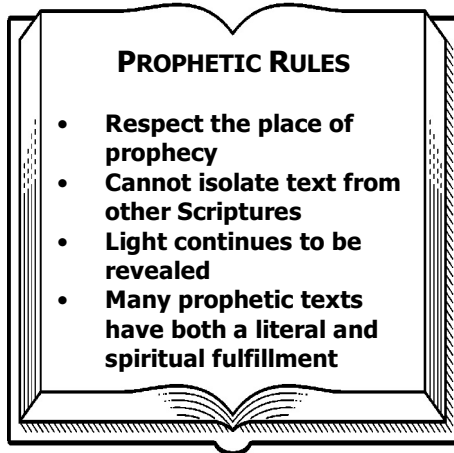
## CHAPTER TWENTY—PART SIX

### The Lake of Fire and Brimstone

*Revelation 20:10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*

#### Some Prophetic Rules

Our Scripture text describes the position and perdition in which the enemies of truth are placed. In the preceding verses, we saw the consolidation of the forces of evil. Verse 9 refers to Satan, Gog, and Magog collectively as "they" and "them." This consolidation advances the prophetic time setting to the evening-time epoch, or the final epoch of the Gospel Day (from A.D. 1880 through to the consummation of human history). The forces of evil have not completely consolidated their power, as of yet. We know that because we have not seen the complete formation of the eighth beast. The final battle is yet on the prophetic horizon; God's fire will intervene, as Revelation 20:8-9 reveals. When that battle is completed, time will reel into eternity.



We have found a portion of Revelation 20:8-9 is prophetic, speaking of that which yet lies ahead; so it is with our text. As our text enters a prophetic realm, we must recognize some prophetic rules. The first rule is we must respect the place of prophecy. Prophecy is sure, or certain. The Apostle Peter wrote in 2 Peter 1:19, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy." Isaiah 42:9 says, "Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them." Then Isaiah 44:6-8 states: "Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me,

since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them shew unto them. Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any."

First, 2 Peter 1:20 lets us know that "no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation." The second truth we must understand is we cannot isolate a text from the rest of the Scriptures. There is an overarching harmony and scheme to the Scriptures. We must lay "line upon line; here a little, and there a little" (Isaiah 28:13) and allow the Spirit of God to mate up the Scriptures (Isaiah 34:16). The third truth we must recognize is, as the songwriter penned, "*purser light is coming fast*," that the light of truth continues to be revealed as this seventh seal progresses. Jesus told us in Matthew 13:52, "Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."

As we lay "line upon line," there will be some well-worn truths, what we may term (as Jesus



did) as "old" truths, and there will be truths that may seem somewhat "new" to us. Brother F. G. Smith, in the Preface to his book *The Revelation Explained*, penned these words: "The future doubtless will witness a still greater development of this subject, for men of God will arise who, beginning where we have left off, will continue its investigation and throw upon it additional light as yet unrevealed." Also, the brethren who began to preach the seventh-seal message wrote in their book *The Revelation With Gospel and Prophecy*, on page 173: "Some of the things in these Chapters we see only dimly. And if we should not be able to understand them entirely now, we will, perhaps, before the end and when time is fulfilled, they will be made clear." God is ever revealing light, bringing understanding in this seventh-seal period of time. We must be willing to accept it.

A fourth prophetic rule we must bear in mind is that many prophetic texts have both a literal and a spiritual fulfillment. Many prophecies have a dual application. Let us consider a few passages to substantiate this truth. In Isaiah, Chapters 36-37, we find Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, was trying to discourage Hezekiah and the people of God through one of his leaders, Rabshakeh. He tried to make them feel that their resistance was futile, their defense was worthless, and there was no way God could protect them against his army. Isaiah 37:3 says, "And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth." That verse refers to a localized circumstance, but it also has a spiritual application that reaches into the New Testament dispensation. It fits the morning-time apostasy.

Next, Isaiah 1:21 tells us, "How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers." This describes the apostate condition of old Israel, but it also refers typically to the morning-time apostasy, how the enemy overcame much of the morning-time church in the sense it went out of public view, and a harlot body replaced it. Again, we see a dual application. Then, Isaiah 21:9 says: "And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, with a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen." The literal application is the fall of Babylon by the hands of the Medo-Persians. We know there is also a spiritual application, because we see these same words repeated in Revelation 18:2, which tells us that "he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen." We see a *literal application* under the old economy and a *spiritual application* under the new economy, a dual application.

Jeremiah 51:34 states, "Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon hath devoured me, he hath crushed me, he hath made me an empty vessel, he hath swallowed me up like a dragon, he hath filled his belly with my delicates, he hath cast me out." This is talking about how Nebuchadrezzar besieged and overcame the people of God. He carried them away into captivity and spoiled their city. Verse 37 reads, "And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwellingplace for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing, without an inhabitant." That tells of the judgment God poured out on literal Babylon, because they took His people away captive. However, these Scriptures have spiritual applications as well. They have dual applications.

Let us lift another one. Isaiah 44:27 is prophesying of Cyrus and Darius, the Medo-Persian kings. It is astounding that it even names out Cyrus approximately 176 years before it even happened. You can read how God put it in their hearts to overthrow the Babylonian Empire. Babylon was a seemingly impregnable fortress with a wall about it, and there seemed to be no way they could gain entry. The Euphrates River ran right up through the middle of the city of Babylon, and there were leaved gates where the water ran through. God put it in the hearts of Cyrus and Darius to divert that water into another channel so that the riverbed would be dry.

That night God had seen to it the gates were left open (Isaiah 45:1). When they diverted that

water, Cyrus and Darius went in dry-shod and overthrew the Babylonian Empire. They slew Belshazzar that night, and the Medo-Persian Empire came into place as a worldwide power. Look at the prophetic words of Isaiah 44:27, which states, "That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers." Why were the rivers to be dried up? So Cyrus and Darius could come in. The overthrow of the Babylonian Empire by the Medo-Persians was a literal fulfillment.

Consider Revelation 16:12, where the sixth angel is pouring out his vial in the seventh-seal period of time in which you and I are privileged to live. It says, "The sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east [spiritually, the Word and the Spirit] might be prepared." This was to take place so spiritual Babylon could be overthrown. So, we see a literal fulfillment and a spiritual fulfillment. We must keep that in mind, because when we look at certain texts, our minds are ever prone to run purely to the literal aspect. Much of prophecy has both a spiritual and a literal aspect to it.

Our text also has a literal and spiritual fulfillment. Traditionally, many have ascribed only a literal application to our text, but that poses several difficulties. Notice that **"the devil,"** or the dragon, **"was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are** [or *The Emphatic Diaglott* says, 'were cast'] . . ." It implies the dragon was cast into **"the lake of fire"** at a different time than **"the beast and the false prophet"**; they were already there. If this were solely speaking of the end of time, they would all be **"cast"** in at the same time.

Revelation 19:20 tells us: "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." What about the dragon? It says *"both* were cast" with no mention of the dragon. Verse 21 says, "And the remnant . . ." If this was at the end of time, who are "the remnant"? If time was reeling into eternity, there could be no "remnant." Consider the phrase in our text, **"shall be tormented day and night."** Is there **"day and night"** in eternity? Is there any measurement of time in eternity? There is certainly not! Therefore, we must conclude our text has a broader application than conventional thinking. There are more truths being conveyed than we have previously considered.

### Several Divine Realities Span Both the Time Realm and the Eternal Realm

Let us consider **"the lake of fire and brimstone"** in our text. This phrase is mentioned five times in the Bible, and all are in the Book of Revelation (Revelation 19:20; 20:10; 20:14; 20:15; and 21:8). The word **"lake"** appears ten times in the Bible, and all are in the New Testament (five times in Luke's Gospel and five times in the Revelation). This will take on more significance as we study.

Remember, Revelation, Chapter 20, is very condensed, and many of the expressions have been introduced in the preceding chapters. **"Fire and brimstone"** is mentioned in the Trumpet Series when the sixth trumpet began to sound (A.D. 1880). Revelation 9:17 says, "And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone." Horses were an article of warfare; they denote militancy (Zechariah 10:3).

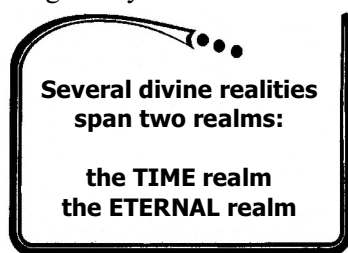
The sixth-trumpet ministry went forth as a militant force, much as in the morning time (Revelation 6:2). They wore breastplates covering their heart. The source of life was covered with "fire . . . jacinth, and brimstone." Their heads were like "the heads of lions." Each of this ministry had "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" (Revelation 5:5), Jesus Christ, as their head. Christ had been

restored to His proper place as the Head of the church. "Fire and smoke and brimstone" came "out of their mouths." Their power was in their message. The prophetic time setting for this verse is the sixth seal (A.D. 1880-1930). Therefore, the "fire" and "brimstone" in Revelation 9:17 has nothing to do with eternity.

"**Fire**" is a dual symbol. Jeremiah 23:29 lets us know it is God's Word. Then Acts 2:3-4 says: "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire . . . . And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." The fire that came "out of their mouths" was a Holy Ghost anointed message of truth. The fire produced "smoke." What was the smoke? Revelation 15:8 tells us that "the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God." The message they preached produced the glory of God. I have an old tape that purportedly is of Brother D. S. Warner leading some singing. There was so much glory in the camp, you could hardly hear some of the words for all the people shouting.

What is the "brimstone" that came "out of their mouths"? Brimstone represents judgment. Luke 17:29 states, "But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all." Isaiah 1:27 lets us know that "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment." The sixth-seal brethren had a fiery message of truth that put "**fire**" on Babylon. One songwriter wrote, "*We'll shout as her city doth burn.*" A message of truth will still produce some "**brimstone.**" From the perusal of these verses, fire and brimstone in the sixth seal is a symbolic picture. It has no reference to the eternal realm.

In Revelation, Chapter 14, we see "fire and brimstone" mentioned again. Revelation 14:1 says, "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion . . . ." Again, the prophetic time setting is in the sixth seal. Revelation 14:10 says, "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone [now hold that thought] in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb." Christ is only a Lamb while time is still standing. Verse 11 states: "And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night . . . ." Again, is there any day or night in eternity? "Fire and brimstone" is a symbolic expression of the realities that happened in the sixth seal—the fiery message of judgment on false religious systems.



Several divine realities span two realms:  
the **TIME** realm  
the **ETERNAL** realm

We need to recognize another truth that has particular relevance in the New Testament. There are several divine realities that span the two realms. They span the time realm and the eternal realm. Let us consider a few. In Ephesians 3:14-15 the Apostle Paul penned, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family [one family, singular] in heaven and earth is named." There is only one "family," but it spans two realms: some of the family are here on the earth and some are over in the eternal realm; but it is the same family. Look at the kingdom.

Colossians 1:13 says, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." The Kingdom of God is a present reality in the realm of time. We enjoy the realities of the kingdom now (Luke 16:16; Romans 14:18). However, 2 Timothy 4:18 states, "And the Lord . . . will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom." There is an aspect of the kingdom over in eternity as well. In Luke 13:28 Jesus spoke of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets "in the kingdom of God."

Jesus told the dying thief in Luke 23:43, "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Not much later He "gave up the ghost" (verse 46). Where did He go? He went to Paradise; the dying

thief went there as well, beyond the realm of time. Jesus said in Revelation 2:7, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." That verse says nothing about dying; it just said overcomers will enjoy Paradise. Some think Revelation 2:7 is talking about ones being faithful until they die, but let us look closer at the "tree of life" in the "paradise of God."

Revelation 22:1-2 tells us: "And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." Will there be months in eternity? Are you going to need any *healing* in eternity? Will there be different *nations* and *boundaries* set up in Heaven? This is not talking about eternity. Where is the "paradise of God"? Verse 2 says, "In the midst of the street of it . . . ." What is the "it" referred to in this verse? If you read Revelation 21:9-27, you will see the "it" is the "great city," the church. That is where the "paradise of God" is and where the "tree of life," Jesus Christ, is while time yet stands. Paradise also spans two realms: time and eternity. So many divine realities span two realms: the family, paradise, and the church. Likewise, the realities of our text span two realms.

Second Corinthians 5:1 says, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." We know there is a Heaven in eternity, but let us see what Jesus said to Nicodemus. John 3:13 states, "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." Jesus was standing there talking to Nicodemus, yet, He said He "is in heaven." *The Englishman's Greek New Testament* offers the Greek as "the Son of man which is in the heaven." Ephesians 2:6 says we "sit together in heavenly places [or the original Greek says 'the heavenlies'] in Christ Jesus." Thus, Heaven is in two realms.

Our text is spoken of in the same vein of truth. There is an aspect of "**the lake of fire and brimstone**" that is in the realm of time, and there is another aspect in the realm of eternity. Revelation 20:10 says, "**And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night [the realm of time] for ever and ever [the eternal realm].**" It also spans two realms.

### The Realm of Time

First, let us consider "**the lake of fire and brimstone**" during the realm of time. Just as a real experience of salvation allows God's children to enjoy peace, those who are devoid of that experience and fight truth have torment. That is why they do not want to be in the church services. That is why they do not want to hear the preaching. The same Word that produces joy for the child of God torments them. In John 14:27 Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace [a divine peace] I give unto you: not as the world giveth . . . ." The only peace the world knows about is the absence of trouble. However, Jesus' peace works right in the middle of trouble. Philippians 4:7 tells us, "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

How will "**the devil**" (the dragon) be "**tormented day and night**"? Malachi 4:1 says, "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." What is going to "burn them up"? Verse 2 reads, "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise . . . ." The "Sun of

righteousness," Jesus Christ, is the Word of God. That Word burns up the works of darkness and the workers of darkness. Some people make the expression, "Well, you can go anywhere, but don't go to the Church of God." That is because they get "**tormented**." Many times the remark has been made, "That preacher just burns me up!" This is how the "**fire**" works during time, and there is a progression of it as it intensifies.

In 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 Paul said: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones [these will take the fire], wood, hay, stubble [these will not]; Every man's work shall be made manifest: [How? Titus 1:3 tells us the Lord has 'manifested his word through preaching.' This is what tries man's works.] for the day [the Gospel Day] shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

The fire of God's Word is what tries people's works. It will reveal what they are building their life out of, what they are building their experience out of, and of what they are building their organization. It will show whether it is built out of the Word of God, precious things like gold and silver, or out of something that will not stand up, like wood and hay. This "fire" is put on "man's work" during "the day," the Gospel Day, while time is still standing!

Let us consider Jesus' words in the second of the seven prophetic parables, which correlate with the seven periods of the Gospel Day. The Parable of the Tares depicts the morning-time apostasy. Jesus said in Matthew 13:24-25: "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept [the apostasy], his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat." Verses 28-30 read: "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."

Notice that it was not time to separate the tares in that period (A.D. 270-530). They were to grow together with the wheat "until the harvest." When did the "harvest" begin? Revelation 14:15 tells us, "And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe." That commenced in A.D. 1880; thus, "the harvest" is the evening time.

Jesus explained the Parable of the Tares later in the chapter. Matthew 13:41-42 says: "The Son of man [Jesus Christ] shall send forth his angels [the ministry], 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." The "furnace of fire" does the separating. That same expression is used in the seventh-and-final parable, corresponding with our day (Matthew 13:50). What is the furnace of fire? Isaiah 31:9 tells us the Lord's "fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem."

The fire is God's Word (Jeremiah 23:29). Deuteronomy 33:2-3 states: "And he said, The LORD came from Sinai . . . from his right hand went a fiery law for them. Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words." The "fiery law" is God's words. Psalm 18:8 says, "There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured." Verse 13 reads, "The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail stones and coals of fire."

Someone may say, "Well, the furnace of fire and the lake of fire are not the same thing." That is correct, as far as the comparison between a furnace and a lake is concerned. However, as the furnace increases and expands during the seventh seal, it will become a "**lake**." Notice with what

the word *lake* is associated in Luke 5:1, which says, "And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret." It is associated with the Word of God. Next, Luke 8:33 tells us, "Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked." So, those possessed with evil spirits went into the lake.

Jesus told of the conditions preceding the end. He let us know it will be "as it was in the days of Lot" (Luke 17:28). Luke 17:29 says, "But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all." Notice that verse 28 says "days," which is plural, but Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed in *one* day. What happened in the "days of Lot"? Genesis 19:24 tells us, "Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven." Verse 28 says, "And he [Abraham] looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace." The "fire and brimstone" is associated with the "smoke of a furnace."

What occurred after the fire and brimstone descended on Sodom? Genesis 14:3 describes "the vale of Siddim, which is the salt sea." This is referring to the Dead Sea. Moses wrote Genesis years after it happened. He was writing about a location known as the valley of Siddim, but after the "brimstone and fire" fell on Sodom and it quit smoking as "a furnace," it became the location of the Dead Sea. Scholars tell us the Dead Sea is not really a sea; it is a land-locked lake. So, we have gone from a furnace to a lake. When Jesus said "in the days of Lot," that reveals to us it will start as a "furnace of fire," but it will intensify and become a "**lake of fire.**"

During time, the "furnace of fire" and the "**lake of fire**" are the same. The "**fire**" represents the Word. Our text in **Revelation 20:10** lets us know they were "**tormented.**" Does the Word, or the "**fire,**" torment? Matthew 8:28-29 tells us: "And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" The presence of Christ (who is the Word) is a torment to people possessed with devilish spirits.

Remember what motivates "**the devil,**" or the dragon, in our text. Revelation 16:13-14 says: "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon [paganism], and out of the mouth of the beast [papalism], and out of the mouth of the false prophet [Protestantism]. For they are the spirits of devils . . ." Devilish spirits motivate those systems. People who possess those spirits are tormented by the Word, or by the presence of Christ.

When sinners come to the Church of God, they may get uncomfortable, they may get under conviction, they may hang their head, and they may grab the pew until their knuckles turn white, but they will not normally fight you. However, those who have a religious spirit, a devilish spirit, will get hateful, they will get nasty, and they will get mad. They will run their mouths all over the country, because the Word torments them; it burns them up.

What does "**brimstone**" represent in our Scripture text? It also is commonly associated with Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:24). The Hebrew word for "**brimstone**" is *gophriyth*, which comes from a root word meaning "resin." *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines *resin* as "an organic substance." So, it represents a physical representation of God's judgment. What or who in the New Testament is a physical representation of God's judgment? First Corinthians 6:2 states, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" Saints are a physical, organic manifestation of God's judgment when they hear the truth, put it on, and live it out. That puts judgment on other people; it makes them uncomfortable, and it works conviction.

What is the picture being portrayed in our text? As the battle (Revelation 20:8) intensifies (we have not yet reached that point), God is going to send a fiery message that will reveal where the true prophets of God are. "The beloved city" will then be seen more clearly. The "**fire**" (the message) and the "**brimstone**" (the saints who embrace and live the message) will cause the powers of falsity to be burned up. Then truth will shine in a more glorious manner, and those who are deceived will be "**tormented day and night**," while time stands.

Was there any "**fire and brimstone**" in Stephen? Those who possessed a religious spirit were tormented by him, and he just gave them a light dose. Acts 6:15 says, "And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." Then he began to preach. Afterward Acts 7:57 tells us, "Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord." They were being "**tormented**"; the preaching was burning them up.

### The Realm of Eternity

The "brimstone and fire" in Genesis, Chapter 19, went from the realm of the seen to the unseen, from the realm of time to eternity. Genesis 19:24-25 tells us: "Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground." That was visible, but it is still burning. Jude 7 states, "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering [present and continual] the vengeance of eternal fire." They are still suffering. For that verse, *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* interlinear says, ". . . are undergoing the vengeance of eternal fire."

The "**lake of fire**" in our text is going to go from the realm of the seen into the realm of the unseen. The last words of **verse 10** say, "**for ever and ever**." Verses 14-15 reveal the final and eternal separation. Jesus spoke of this aspect of "**the lake of fire**." He said in Mark 9:43-48: "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

Notice five times in six verses Jesus said "the fire that never shall be quenched" or "the fire is not quenched." This denotes the eternal fire after the Resurrection. We know that because Jesus spoke of "hands," "feet," and "eyes" being cast into "hell fire." The Greek word for "hell" in those verses is *Gehenna*. It is also used in Matthew 18:9. In verse 8, Jesus spoke of "everlasting fire." That is the fire that is not quenched; that is hell (*Gehenna*). Some may question that "**fire**" is the Word during time, but it will be literal in eternity. Again, that is because prophecy has two fulfillments: spiritual and literal. The literal fire will still be a product of the Word. Second Peter 3:7 tells us that "the heavens and the earth . . . are kept in store" by the "word," and the same will produce "fire" in "the day of judgment."

We can see the position and the perdition of false religion in our text. As the pressure intensifies in the midst of the final battle, and the saints are pushed together (Deuteronomy 33:17), it will effect a greater unity. It will produce "**the lake of fire and brimstone**" that will torment false religion. Finally, the "**fire**" on their position will turn into the fire of perdition.

When God says, "It is enough," the same Word of God holding the heavens and the earth in place is going to turn loose the supernatural fire that has been reserved.

Let us consider the eternal side of the **"lake of fire"** spoken of in our text. The supernatural **"fire"** in our text is very similar to the fire portrayed in Exodus 3:2, which states, "And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed." A fire that does not consume is a supernatural fire. Likewise, the **"lake of fire"** in our text does not consume, but it torments. There are many aspects to the torment of the **"lake of fire."** When Jesus uncapped eternity and let us look into Hades, one thing He brought up is what Abraham said to the rich man. In Luke 16:25 Abraham said, "Son, remember . . ." That is part of the worm that "dieth not," the gnawing memory. Those in a lost eternity will remember the Word of God, remember the message, and remember their many opportunities. That will add to their torments.

In order for the truth of God's Word to not be a torment to us here or in the eternal realm, we need to make certain our name is "found written in the book of life" (Revelation 20:15). If we have become partakers of God's divine nature, truth is not a torment to us. Jeremiah 15:16 says, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart." God's Word only burns those who are proud and those who do wickedly (Malachi 4:1). Thank God, those who follow truth, God will vindicate, because truth will be vindicated in the end.





## CHAPTER TWENTY—PART SEVEN

### The Judgment Scene—The Spiritual Aspect

*Revelation 20:11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.*

*12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*

*13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.*

*14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.*

*15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

### Prophecy in the New Testament Dispensation

The concluding verses of Revelation, Chapter 20, are prophetic. As such, we must be mindful of the rules for the study of prophecy. (See previous segment for an explanation of prophetic rules.) As it is prophetic, fulfillment yet lies ahead. When John the Revelator received the Revelation, at that juncture of time (A.D. 96), most of it was prophetic. But even in this seventh-seal period of time in which you and I are privileged to live, there are portions of Chapter 20 that are yet prophetic, portions we have not yet seen fulfilled. Because our text is prophetic, it describes that which is on the horizon. Previously, we found all the foes of truth have not yet reached their full consolidation, the zenith, or apex of their effectiveness. It is a work in progress. Also, the final battle has not yet commenced. When that battle is truly underway, verse 9 tells us "fire" will come "down from God out of heaven." God is going to vindicate the truth and the church.

Prophecy has a decided place in God's eternal Word. Isaiah 46:10 says, "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." God knows what the end is going to be before it ever starts. Nothing ever takes God by surprise. Did it ever occur to you that nothing ever occurred to God? "His understanding is infinite" (Psalm 147:5). Ezekiel 12:25 declares, "For I am the LORD: I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall come to pass; it shall be no more prolonged: for in your days, O rebellious house, will I say the word, and will perform it, saith the Lord GOD."

Many disparage prophecy in the New Testament dispensation, but it is a New Testament office. Ephesians 4:11-13 tells us: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity . . . ." To come in the unity of the faith, we need apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers.

Romans 11:29 lets us know that "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." God set the members in the body in the first century, and they are still vital today. Let us read about a prophet named Agabus in the New Testament. Acts 11:27-30 says: "And in these days came prophets [plural] from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus,

and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul." The church was blessed by the work of a prophet.

Acts 13:1 tells us, "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets [plural] and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul." There were prophets (plural) operating in the congregation at Antioch. Thus, prophecy holds a valid place in the New Testament.

Jesus prophesied. Matthew 24:1-2 tells us: "Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." That was prophecy; it was fulfilled with the desolation of Jerusalem under Titus and the Roman armies in A.D. 70.

Paul prophesied numerous times. In 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 he said: "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [speaking of the Second Advent] shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 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." The fulfillment of that prophecy is found in the office of the popes of Rome. In 1 Timothy 4:1 Paul prophesied, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith." He saw an apostasy coming. In our text, John was prophesying. Revelation 1:9 says, "I John . . . was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." Revelation 19:10 says that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Therefore, prophecy has a vital role even in this New Testament dispensation.

### "A Great White Throne"

**Verse 11** of our text says, "**And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it . . .**" Throughout the Scriptures, there have been those who have envisioned the "**throne.**" Isaiah 6:1 speaks of seeing "the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up." Ezekiel 1:26 talks about "the likeness of a throne." First Kings 10:18 portrays a truth in type. It tells us King Solomon, the son of David, "made a great throne of ivory," or "**a great white throne**" (just as our text). When God appeared to Solomon and said, "Ask what I shall give thee," Solomon answered, "Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?" (1 Kings 3:5, 9). Solomon asked for an understanding heart to judge. Then, 1 Kings 3:28 tells us, "And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment."

In our text, the predominant action from this "**great white throne**" is judgment. **Verse 12** says that "**the dead were judged.**" **Verse 13** says that "**they were judged.**" We read in **verse 11**, "**And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it . . .**" Who was the Revelator describing? Remember, the action taken was judgment. In type, the son of David, the king of Israel sat on the white throne. When the prophets got a glimpse of the One on the throne, they saw Christ. We need to understand Christ is pre-existent and eternal. Too many do not see Christ any farther back than the Incarnation, but He is "from everlasting to everlasting" (Psalm 90:2). Again,

Isaiah 6:1 tells us Isaiah "saw also the Lord," which is the Hebrew word *Adonay*. It means, "Lord and Master." Jesus said in John 13:13, "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am." Furthermore, John 12:39-41 refers to Isaiah, Chapter 6. When it says, "Esaias . . . saw his glory," it is referring to Isaiah 6:1, when Isaiah "saw also the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up." Who was it? Jesus Christ.

Ezekiel 1:26-27 says: "And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man [Christ] above upon it. And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire . . ." This "man" (or Christ) had a yellowish amber appearance, the appearance of fire. We also see that description in the Book of Revelation. Revelation 1:13 states, "And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man [Christ; Matthew 16:13], clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps [the chest area; Luke 11:27] with a golden girdle." Above His loins was gold, just as the amber in Ezekiel's vision. Verse 15 reads, "And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace." There is the fire Ezekiel saw from the loins down.

The One who occupies the "**throne**" in our text is Christ, as well. He is the son of David, the king of Israel. Speaking of the throne, 1 Kings 10:20 says that "there was not the like made in any kingdom." Glory be to God! Just as Solomon's throne was singular and unique, so there is no other kingdom that has a "**throne**" like the one Jesus Christ occupies! Just as Solomon assumed the ivory throne and judged the kingdom, so Christ, "a greater than Solomon" (Matthew 12:42), is portrayed in our text on His "**throne**," judging. **Verse 12** of our text says, "**And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God.**" That is referring to Jesus Christ. Romans 2:16 lets us know that "God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ." In John 5:22 Jesus said, "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." Then Hebrews 1:8 tells us, "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." God, the Son, is still God.

**Verse 11** of our text does not say, "I saw Him *assume* His position on the great white throne," but rather, He was already seated: He "**sat on it.**" This is depicted at the end of the Gospel Day, but from the spiritual aspect, taking this first symbolically, when did this happen? (I am not discounting the literal application of this text, but in this study we are considering the spiritual aspect.) **Verse 12** tells us that "**the books were opened.**" Where else do we see descriptions similar to this? Daniel 7:9-10 says: "I beheld till the thrones were cast down [the beasts or the previous kingdoms], and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened."

Those verses in the Book of Daniel are very similar to our text, but what are they describing? They are not speaking of the eternal realm. We know that because verses 11-12 continue: "I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time." If this was the end of time, how would their lives be "prolonged"? Also, there is no "time" or "season" in eternity. These verses are speaking of a judgment that commenced with the Day of Pentecost.

## Christ Brings Judgment

Let us examine this prophecy in Daniel, Chapter 7. First of all, who is "the Ancient of days" in verse 9? Look at the description given. His "garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool." We see that type of description employed in Revelation 1:13-14, speaking about Christ. So, "the Ancient of days" is portraying Christ. Verse 9 says that "the Ancient of days did sit." When did He sit on His throne? After He made "one sacrifice for sins," after He died, was buried, was resurrected and ascended, He "sat down on the right hand of God" (Hebrews 10:12).

Hebrews 1:3 also tells us that "when he [Jesus Christ] had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Verse 8 speaks of His "throne"; that is where He sat. After Christ sat, Daniel 7:10 tells us, "A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him." That is a symbolic representation of the Day of Pentecost when Christ sent the Holy Spirit. In John 16:7 Jesus said, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." Revelation 8:5 gives us the same truth in symbolic language, stating, "And the angel took the censer [only the high priest could do this; Hebrews 3:1 tells us Christ Jesus is the 'High Priest of our profession']; and filled it with fire of the altar [the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Ghost; Luke 4:1], and cast it into the earth."

Christ sent the "fiery stream," the Holy Spirit, when He assumed the throne, after He ascended back on high. Daniel 7:10 lets us know that "the judgment was set." Judgment started the minute Peter stood up and preached on the Day of Pentecost. He preached to the same Jews who fifty days earlier had said, "Crucify him! crucify him!" Peter, emboldened by the Holy Ghost, said in Acts 2:22-23: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." That sounds like judgment to me! First Peter 4:17 says, "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God." It began in the morning time, and it has continued throughout the Gospel Day.

Let us see how judgment was portrayed during the sixteenth-century Reformation. Speaking of the "little horn," or the office of the popes of Rome, Daniel 7:25-26 says: "And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws . . . . But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion." That was at the end of the twelve hundred and sixty years of the Dark Ages. In A.D. 1530 the "sword of truth" broke the dark papal night; judgment was put on that system! That judgment happened in the realm of time, not out in eternity. Verse 26 continues, ". . . they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end." Judgment caused the exclusive power of Roman Catholicism to be broken in 1530, and it will never rise as an exclusive power again.

Judgment has been a major aspect of the evening time. Revelation 15:4 says, ". . . for thy judgments are made manifest." When was this to take place? Right in the sixth-seal portion of the evening time. Revelation 16:5 tells us, "And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus." We are in a day of preliminary judgment.

Concerning the "**great white throne**" in our text, one scholar said, "This white means splendid or shining, and when we see it associated with Christ, so it is." When Christ was on the Mount of Transfiguration, Matthew 17:2 tells us that "his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." It was a dazzling, brilliant, bright white, which denoted purity and

utter holiness. All three synoptic Gospel writers spoke of it. Mark 9:3 says, "And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them." Luke 9:29 states that "his raiment was white and glistening." The purpose of the scene in our text is to reveal Christ is ready to have judgment (**verse 12**).



Keep in mind, we are viewing the spiritual aspect of our Scripture text first. We are viewing it symbolically. Remember the contest: all the forces of evil are gathered "to battle" (verse 8). Next, remember who this contest consists of: "Gog and Magog" (verse 8), which are papalism and Protestantism, and "the devil" (verse 10), which verse 2 lets us know is "the dragon [or paganism]." These are the principals working together against the cause of Christ, "the camp of the saints . . . the beloved city" (verse 9), or the church! Spiritually speaking, in this context, who is "**the dead**" (**verse 12**) that "**the sea gave up**" (**verse 13**)? Revelation 8:8 tells us that "a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea." A "sea" is a density of water. Revelation 17:15 tells us "The waters" represent people. So, "**the sea**" is a massive move of people.

In Revelation 8:8 and in our text, there is a massive apostasy. The morning-time church went into that sea of apostasy, and the beast, representing Roman Catholicism, arose out of it (Revelation 13:1). Out of the apostate minds of those people, a system was produced. **Revelation 20:13** tells us that "**the sea** [of apostasy] **gave up the dead.**" In other words, Christ was putting judgment on the very cause of why these people ended up in such a pitiful spiritual state. The "**dead**" are those who are "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1). They had been engulfed in the sea of apostasy and overcome by an apostate spirit and succumbed to the system produced by it. God has judgment for the system of Roman Catholicism. He told the Pergamene age in Revelation 2:16, "Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." The "**sword**" is the Word of God (Hebrews 4:12).

### Judgment Is Sent to All

Let me widen our text just a little. **Verse 13** does not just say Roman Catholicism "**gave up the dead,**" but it talks about all that apostasy produces when it says "**the sea gave up the dead.**" Today, people are being overcome with a spirit of apostasy and falling right back into the same "sea." They are raising up congregations and supposed "fellowships" that are contrary to God's Eternal Word. They are under that same spirit and same domination. In Revelation 16:3 the second vial angel "poured out his vial upon the sea." Judgment was not just poured on the beast, but it was poured on that which caused the rise of the beast, on "**the sea,**" or on apostasy. God is going to let the judgment be poured out in such a way those who are in "**the sea**" (who are overcome) are going to be awakened and see their condition. They may not respond appropriately, but they will know their condition.

The spiritual aspect of our text is this: regardless of religion or prevailing conditions, Christ will be faithful to every soul. In Matthew 24:14 Jesus said, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Christ is going to be faithful to the honest and the dishonest. Titus 2:11 tells us, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to *all men.*"

Are the Gospel and grace considered judgment? Psalm 119:43 says, "And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth; for I have hoped in thy judgments." Verse 160 reads, "Thy word

is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever." God's Word is His judgments; they go together. John 1:17 tells us, "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." John 17:17 lets us know that "thy word is truth." You cannot separate the Word and grace; they work together. To the Laodicean age, Jesus styled Himself as "the faithful and true witness" (Revelation 3:14). Lamentations 3:23 says ". . . great is thy faithfulness." He is faithful to bring judgment to all.

Ezekiel 33:32-33 states: "And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not. And when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them." God knew before He ever sent Ezekiel the people would not listen, but He needed a witness on the Day of Judgment. He said, "I am going to be faithful to them so they cannot say I was not." Today, He knows there are those who are dishonest, but He still gives them an opportunity.

The expressions in our text, the portrayal of the "**throne**" and of being "**judged**" has been used in a host of Scriptures. Jesus said in Matthew 19:28, "Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging . . ." Psalm 9:4-8 says: "For thou hast maintained my right and my cause; thou satest in the throne judging right. Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever. O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end: and thou hast destroyed cities; their memorial is perished with them. But the LORD shall endure for ever: he hath prepared his throne for judgment. And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness."

### **Judgment Is Put on Religious Systems of Worship**

Let us go a little farther in our Scripture text. **Verse 13** states, ". . . **and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them.**" We were introduced to "**death and hell**" earlier in the Revelation. Revelation 6:7-8 says: "And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him." "Death, and Hell" in Chapter 6 are the same Greek words as in our text. They are capitalized in this verse because they are used as proper nouns. These are speaking of the rider. These symbols are speaking of the militant spirit that gave rise to Protestantism. Horses denote militancy (Zechariah 10:3), and the coloration of them denotes the kind of spirit they are (Zechariah 6:5).

Revelation 6:8 talks about "a pale horse," but Zechariah 6:3 speaks of "grisled and bay horses." The Hebrew word for "grisled" is *barod*. According to *Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon of the Old Testament*, it means "sprinkled with spots." The Hebrew word for "bay" is *amots*, which means "a strong color." The same horse is referred to as "speckled, and white" in Zechariah 1:8. It is a deceptive mixture, a mixture of light and darkness. The spirit of the "pale horse" is a spirit of compromise; the spirit that gave rise to the religious system of Protestantism.

In our text, Christ is not only putting judgment on the systems, but He is also putting judgment on the spirits that produced them. The spirits are no longer merely working in those systems, because they have come out. They may not have a particular sectarian name, but they are still just as devilish and damnable; and judgment is being poured out on them. Our text says that "**death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them.**" In this final portion of the evening time, Christ is going to be faithful to those who have "hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains" (Revelation 6:15), or in earthen, man-made systems of worship. They may not

want to be exposed or come out to light, but He will uncover them so they can see their true state.

Isaiah 28:15-18 states: "Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell [**'death and hell'** again] are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand." The Lord will be faithful to every heart.

There is definitely a literal aspect to our text, but in this segment we have studied the spiritual aspect. We have found no one dies lost without making a choice. In Deuteronomy 30:19 Moses said, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." Life or death is every man's choice. Somewhere along life's way, a true witness has been faithful to everyone's soul (Isaiah 30:20-21). No one will be deceived without the faithfulness of the Spirit of God telling them not to make that turn.

In our lesson text, we see portrayed prophetically, from a spiritual aspect, in this final portion of the Gospel Day, judgment is going to go forth to where the **"dead"** in **"the sea"** and in **"death and hell"** will hear "a cry made" (Matthew 25:6); all will be awakened. Just as in the Parable of the Ten Virgins, all did not respond appropriately, and from our text, it appears these in those positions do not, as well. But they were all awakened, and God was faithful. This proves, once again, the faithfulness of God. The spiritual aspect of our text reveals the judgment during this realm of time, particularly that time immediately preceding the end. In our next study, we will consider the other aspect of our text, the literal application, as the Gospel Day ends and time reels into eternity. I trust we can see the Judgment Scene portrayed here in its spiritual aspect during this realm of time.





## CHAPTER TWENTY—PART EIGHT

### The Judgment Scene—The Literal and Eternal Aspect

*Revelation 20:11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.*

*12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*

*13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.*

*14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.*

*15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

#### All Will Be at the Judgment

In the previous segment, we considered the spiritual aspect of these verses during the realm of time. Now, we want to consider the literal, or eternal, aspect of the Judgment scene. Recall, we found many Biblical realities span two realms—time and eternity. So it is with the Judgment. We have found the One on the "**throne**" in **verse 11** is Jesus Christ. Christ will be the Judge on that fateful Judgment Day. Romans 2:16 declares that "when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ." Romans 14:10 says that "we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." In 2 Corinthians 5:10, the Apostle Paul reiterated that truth when he said, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." The Judgment is not only for the lost, but it is also for the saved.

All will be judged at the same time, not a thousand years apart, as some false teachings promote. Acts 17:31 tells us that "he hath appointed a day [singular], in the which he will judge the world . . ." There will not be two separate times of judgment. In Matthew 25:31-34 Jesus said: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats [the saint from the sinner]: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Verse 41 reads, "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." This description is of one event, not two.

**Verse 11** of our Scripture text says, "**And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it [Jesus Christ], from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away.**" This "**heaven**" refers to the firmament, the aerial heavens in which the sun, the stars, and the moon reside (Genesis 1:8). The Apostle Peter spoke of this when he wrote in 2 Peter 3:10, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." Some advocate Christ will come and steal away the church, but the Bible tells us in Exodus 20:15, "Thou shalt not steal." Christ is not a thief. Acts 20:28 lets us know He purchased

the church with His own blood, so He is not going to steal anything. Second Peter 3:10 simply means "the day of the Lord will come" at an unguarded, unexpected hour. That is when a thief would strike. Also, a thief would not make all kinds of noise while he was stealing something.

Second Peter 3:12 reads, "Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens [the firmamental heavens] being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat." This day is unfathomable in our human comprehension, but it is coming; it is on the horizon. First Thessalonians 4:16-17 tells us: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout [not a secret stealing away], 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." What is "the voice of the archangel?" It is Christ. The Bible only uses the word *archangel* twice (1 Thessalonians 4:16 and Jude 9). Both times it is in the singular, and both times it refers to Jesus Christ. The word "archangel" means "chief or master of angels." He is the Master of Angels! The "voice of the archangel" is not Gabriel or any other celestial angel; it is the Lord Himself. His voice is "the trump of God."

John said in Revelation 1:10-11: "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 . . . ." Who is this? Revelation 22:13 uses the same expression, "I am Alpha and Omega." Verse 16 tells us He is "Jesus." He is the One who has "the voice" of "the trump." **Verse 12** of our Scripture text says, "**And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God.**" When we consider those words, they reiterate the truth that God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). Presidents and paupers will be there. The rich and the reviled will be there. Saint and sinner will be there. We shall all appear before the Judgment seat of Christ. God is no respecter of persons (Romans 2:11).

There are those who want to dismiss the idea of a coming Judgment. They want to make us feel all judgment is either past or occurring currently. There is an aspect of judgment that occurs during time, but it does not nullify the Scriptural truth a Day of Judgment is coming. Second Peter 2:9 states, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." There is a Day of Judgment. Second Peter 3:7 says, "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day [singular] of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." Then 1 John 4:17 tells us, "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment." Thus, there is coming a Day of Judgment.

### What Are "the Books"?

Let us examine "**the books**" (**verse 12**) in the light of Biblical truth. There are those who say "**the books**" are simply the sixty-six books of the Bible. Others state it means the Old Testament and the New Testament. However, Isaiah 45:21 tells us God is "a just God." How could it be "just" to judge a man by that which was not available to him? How could God judge a man by the New Testament if he did not live in the New Testament dispensation? How could He judge one by the Bible if it was not written or available?

Chronologically, Job is the oldest Book of the Bible, written in the proximity of 2058 B.C. Moses, who wrote the Pentateuch, did not receive the Law until 1491 B.C. Prior to these, there was not any written Word. Think with me. There was no Bible for Adam and Eve, for Cain and Abel, for Noah and his sons, and for the people at Babel. Abraham did not have a Bible; Sodom had no Bible; Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph did not have one; and on we could go.

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## THE FOUR AGES

**The Age of the Moral Law**  
**The Age of the Mosaic Law**  
**The Age of the Law & the Prophets**  
**The Age of the Law of Christ**

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The "**books**" are the books of the ages. All will be judged according to the book of the age, or the period of time in which they lived. There are at least four ages: the age of moral law (or the law of conscience), the age of the Mosaic law, the age of the law and the prophets, and the age of the law of Christ. Let us consider them. First John 1:5 tells us that "God is light." Psalm 119:105 brings light a little

closer and says, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." God's Word is light, but His Word was not always in the form of a written text. He spoke to the patriarchs audibly, but it was still God's Word. He speaks in our day through the Holy Spirit; it is not audible, but it is His Word.

Psalm 119:130 tells us that "light" is "understanding." Then Psalm 147:5 says, "Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite." His light is infinite. It is so infinite, 1 Timothy 6:16 states, "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see." God is a light that is unapproachable.

Only as God reveals light, or gives understanding, do we begin to see divine verities. In the early portions of human history, truth was revealed in a way somewhat unfamiliar to us. God worked through moral law and through the conscience, because there was no written Word. As we think of the Judgment, it will be based on the light or understanding God gave and the opportunity the people had in their particular age. The Old Testament brethren did not have the understanding we have. Noah got drunk. Abraham was willfully deceptive, not once but twice. Solomon had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. We can go through the Scriptures and see where those brethren conducted themselves in ways you and I cannot. They lived in a different age; they had a different level of understanding. God bases our judgment on our spiritual education and how we exercise that light.

Look at the words of Jesus. Matthew 11:20-22 says: "Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you." It is going to be more tolerable for some people at the Judgment than for others because of the amount of light or understanding available in their day and how they exercised the light they received.

Matthew 11:23-24 tells us: "And thou, Capernaum [Jesus' adopted hometown; Matthew 4:13], which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: [Why?] for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee." Capernaum had far greater spiritual education, enlightenment, and opportunity because of Christ's presence and ministry, but they failed to walk in that light. That will provide a weightier judgment in the Day of Judgment for them than for Sodom.

### The Age of Moral Law and Conscience

Let us consider the age of moral law and conscience. Romans 5:13-14 tells us: "For until the law [prior to the Mosaic law] sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses . . . ." The time from Adam to Moses was approximately 2,500 years. Sin was not imputed during that time because there was no written

Law. Moral law emanates from God's nature. God is the moral Governor of the universe, and His nature is just. Moral law includes laws incorporated into the Mosaic law, such as "Thou shalt not kill." Murder violates God's moral nature. The Golden Rule is also a moral law. It emanates from a moral nature that is good, holy, and wholesome; it has no desire to harm others.

We can see moral law working throughout the patriarchal era. When Adam sinned, why did he hide? He had a guilty conscience; that is a moral law. When Cain slew Abel, he tried to cover it. His conscience told him he had done wrong, because he violated a moral principle God had in place. People in that dispensation were under moral law.

Romans 4:3 says, "For what saith the scripture [Genesis 15:6]? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." Abraham did not have the righteousness a New Testament convert has, but he had imputed righteousness, based on the fact he "believed God." Verse 5 tells us, "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Verse 8 reads, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." In the age of moral law, understanding and the opportunity for understanding was very deficient compared to the light of our day. If people responded to the moral law of God, acted in clear conscience, and operated by faith, they were judged to be righteous. They did not have sin imputed to them, because they had no knowledge.

The Gentiles had the same moral law that governed the patriarchs, because neither had the Mosaic law. Romans 2:14 says, "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law [speaking of the Mosaic law], do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves." They still have the moral law, the law of conscience. Verse 15 says, "Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another." The moral law either accused them or excused them, based on whether or not they acted according to their understanding. When Adam violated his understanding, his conscience condemned him, and he hid. However, no one told Abraham he should not deceive those kings; so he was *excused*, not *accused*. Those who were under the law of conscience will be judged by the moral law.

### **The Ages of the Mosaic Law, the Law and the Prophets, and the Law of Christ**

Second, there is the age of the Mosaic law. Romans 3:19 says, "Now we know that what things soever the law [the Mosaic law] saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." Or the Greek center reference says, ". . . subject to the judgment of God." They will be subject to the judgment of God based on the Mosaic law delivered in their age. Romans 2:12 states, "For as many as have sinned without law [the Mosaic law] shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law."

The third age is the age of the law and the prophets. There had just been the books of the law by Moses, but as time advanced, God sent prophets, who added to the spiritual education and enlightenment of the people and penned many prophetic writings. Thus, people became more responsible. In Luke 16:29 Abraham told the rich man in hell, "They have Moses [the Mosaic law] and the prophets; let them hear them." That man and his brothers were responsible for how they exercised their enlightenment in the age they lived: the age of the law and the prophets. Romans 3:21 says, "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets."

Fourth is the age of the law of Christ. This is the day and time in which we live. Some people say, "We are not under a law." However, Galatians 6:2 states, "Bear ye one another's burdens,

and so fulfil the law of Christ." James 1:25 calls it the "law of liberty," and James 2:8 calls it "the royal law," but we are under the law of Christ. In John 12:48 Jesus said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." We are judged by the law of Christ, the New Testament light and understanding we have.

Jesus mentioned three of the four ages. Luke 24:44 states, "And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me." We see the age of the law of Moses, the age of the law and the prophets, and the age of the law of Christ in that verse.

### "The Book of Life"

**Verse 12** of our text not only tells us "**the books were opened,**" but it also says that "**another book was opened, which is the book of life.**" The "**book of life**" is also mentioned in **verse 15**, in Revelation 21:27, and in Revelation 13:8. In fact, it is referred to throughout the Scriptures. Exodus 32:32-33 says: "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book." That is the "**book of life.**" We find that sin, which is a willful transgression, takes your name out of it.

Sin is not imputed when there is no law. You are not responsible when you have no knowledge. However, if you are willingly ignorant (2 Peter 3:5), God will hold you for what you could have known. If you deliberately miss a church service, do not think, "Well, I didn't hear that message, so I'm not responsible." If you could have been there to hear the message, but you just willfully chose not to be, you are responsible for it.

The "**book of life**" is mentioned in Psalm 69:28, Isaiah 4:3, Daniel 12:1, and Malachi 3:16. Jesus said in Luke 10:20, "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." Philippians 4:3 speaks of Paul's "fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life." It is obvious the "**book of life**" contains the names of all who have spiritual life. Also, Revelation 17:8 lets us know the "book of life" is "from the foundation of the world." It has existed that long.

Let us consider the Judgment scene in our text. The final Judgment is not designed to determine one's eternal destiny; whether one goes to Heaven or hell. That is not the purpose of it. **Verse 12** tells us that "**the dead were judged . . . according to their works.**" **Verse 13** says that "**the dead . . . were judged every man according to their works.**" Remember, our text is predominantly speaking of "**the dead.**" When one's eyes close in the finality of death, the next second they are dispatched to Paradise or to Hades.

In Luke, Chapter 16, when Jesus uncapped eternity, He let us look into the realm of the lost. Luke 16:22-23 tells us that "the rich man also died . . . And in hell he lift up his eyes." As soon as he died, he was immediately dispatched to his destiny. There is no soul sleeping between death and the Judgment. As soon as an individual's eyes close in the finality of death, they automatically go to Paradise or Hades. Jesus told the thief on the cross, in Luke 23:43, "Verily I say unto thee, *To day* shalt thou be with me in paradise."

Once people die, their destiny is sealed. There is no alteration of their spiritual state after death. The Judgment will merely amplify their spiritual state. Ecclesiastes 11:3 tells us that "if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be." There are only two ways it can fall—either "south" or "north"; either lost or saved, saint or

sinner. There is no in-between destiny. There is not a Purgatory or limbo to go to and have the sin purged out. The tree either falls in one of two positions. Jesus said you are either for Him or against Him; you are gathering together or scattering abroad (Matthew 12:30); you are either a good tree or a corrupt tree (Matthew 7:17-18); and you are either on the broad way or the narrow way (Matthew 7:13-14).

In Luke, Chapter 16, the rich man wanted Lazarus to come over from being in "Abraham's bosom" (or Paradise) and dip the tip of his finger in water to cool his tongue in hell. His request was denied because Luke 16:26 says, "And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." There is always a great gulf between the righteous and the unrighteous, but during time there is a "bridge builder." The Latin word for *priest* means "bridge builder," and Jesus is the "High Priest of our profession" (Hebrews 3:1). During life, you can bridge that chasm from being one of the unrighteous to becoming one of the righteous through Jesus Christ, but once you die, that gulf is forever fixed.

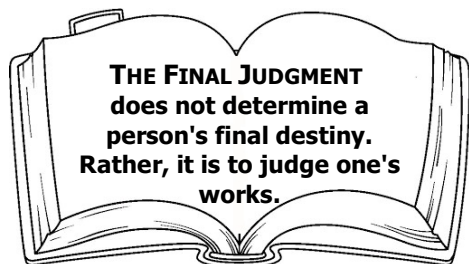
### Our Works Are "Written in the Books"

The purpose of the final Judgment is not to determine the destiny of the soul; but rather, it is to view and weigh an individual's works. Your works and my works will be viewed against those things **"which were written in the books."** We will be judged in accordance to our understanding. The Old Testament speaks of judgment according to works. Ecclesiastes 12:14 states, "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Psalm 62:12 says, "Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work." Proverbs 24:12 tells us, "If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?" God judges a man's works based on his knowledge and intentions.

Jeremiah 17:10 reads, "I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." Sometimes the enemy will try to get the saints to believe, "Well, if I thought it or felt it, I may just as well have done it." No, that is not right, because you will be judged on what you *do*. You are not guilty of a thought until you take hold of it, exercise will, and are willing to do it. Watch carefully what your works are, what your doings are. Jeremiah 32:19 says, "Great in counsel, and mighty in work: for thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men: to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."

Judgment according to works is also set forth in the New Testament. In Matthew 16:27 Jesus said, "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works." This ought to cause a certain soberness; we need to be very cautious. Jesus said in Matthew 12:36, "But I say unto you, That every idle word that

men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." Second Corinthians 5:10 states, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Then Romans 2:5-6 tells us: "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation



of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds." Notice the phrase "treasure up." The more an individual does wrong, does things contrary to the understanding God has given him, the more he treasures up wrath with every passing act.

The final Judgment will not determine a person's state; but rather, it will mete out the degree of that person's reward or punishment. There are degrees of reward and there are degrees of punishment, all based on works. We just read it in Scripture after Scripture. Again, when Jesus said in Matthew 11:24 it will be "more tolerable" for Sodom than Capernaum, it was because their degree of understanding was different and their level of spiritual education was different. They will be judged accordingly.

There are degrees. Matthew 23:14 says, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation." This lets us know that there is going to be greater and lesser damnation. Verse 15 says, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves." There are those who commit "greater sin." In John 19:11 Jesus answered Pilate, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee [Judas] hath the greater sin." People who have heard the Word of God and do contrary to truth (as Judas) have a "greater sin" than someone like Pilate who did not know as much. Sin's depth is based on enlightenment.

James 3:1 states, "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation." Another rendering says, "Be not many teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment." Hebrews 10:28-29 tells us: "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" The Judgment portrayed in our text will call for "a just recompense of reward [or an adequate penalty]" (Hebrews 2:2).

## **"Death and Hell"**

In our previous study, we considered the spiritual aspect of "**death and hell**" (verse 13), but now let us view the literal application. Even though the Bible tells us it will occur "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Corinthians 15:52), there is a sequence of events which will take place on that fateful Judgment Day. First Thessalonians 4:16 tells us, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." It will be such a shout that the dead will rise. John 5:28-29 states: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

Then 1 Corinthians 15:51-54 says: "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep [we are not all going to be dead], but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump [the voice of Christ]: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." Next, 2 Peter 3:10 tells us that "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that



are therein shall be burned up." After that, we will all be ushered to the Judgment seat of Christ.

First Corinthians 15:26 states, "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Let us consider "**death and hell.**" "**Death**" is where the bodies are held. "**Hell,**" or the Greek word *Hades*, is where the departed lost souls are held while time is yet standing. *Expanded Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* says the word *Hades* "never denotes the grave, nor is it the permanent region of the lost; in point of time it is, for such, intermediate between decease and the doom of Gehenna [the place of everlasting punishment, the other hell]." When time reels into eternity, Hades and Paradise will be emptied out, because they are just intermediate places. When Christ descends with a shout, all the graves will burst forth. At the same time, the lost will empty out of Hades and the saved will empty out of Paradise. They will all be reunited with their bodies in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. Then they will go to the Judgment scene.

Why will the bodies of all, saved or unsaved, be reunited with their souls? Second Corinthians 5:10 tells us, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body . . ." We will be rewarded or punished in the same body we did our deeds in. We are responsible for what our body, the instrument of our soul, does. In the Resurrection, when our bodies come forth, we will be changed. We will no longer have a mortal body; instead, we will have an immortal body. Our vile body will be changed to a glorious body (Philippians 3:21).

For those who are lost, their eternal body will be tormented with fire throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity, yet never be consumed. You might wonder, "How can that be?" We have an example with the fire in the bush before Moses (Exodus 3:2). It was burning, but it was not consumed. The "**lake of fire**" in **verse 14** of our text is the hell Jesus spoke about in Mark's and Matthew's Gospels—the eternal one after the Resurrection. Mark 9:43-44 says: "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

The Greek word for "hell" in verse 43 is *Gehenna*. It is a form of the word *Hinnom*. It draws an image to mind of a ravine outside of Jerusalem, the Valley of Hinnom. King Josiah, in his reformations, declared it "an unclean place," because of its evil history in the days of Ahaz and Manasseh. The valley had been set apart for the refuse of Jerusalem to be burned. Worms bred on the refuse, which smoked and smoldered at all times like some vast incinerator, according to *Dr. William Barclay's Daily Study Bible, Mark's Gospel*, pages 231-232. Second Chronicles 28:3 states, "Moreover he [Ahaz] burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burnt his children in the fire, after the abominations of the heathen whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel." Speaking of Manasseh, 2 Chronicles 33:6 says, "And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom." They made human sacrifices of their own children to pagan deities in that valley.

Jesus likened the perpetual, continual fire in the Valley of Hinnom to the place where the souls that were clay, which refused to be molded in the potter's hand, will be cast aside like refuse into an eternal, burning hell. Matthew 18:8 calls it an "everlasting fire." That everlasting place, *Gehenna*, is the literal and eternal aspect of "**the lake of fire**" in **verse 14** of our text. In **verse 15** of our text, we see the final and permanent separation of God's "sheep from the goats" (Matthew 25:32). It says, "**And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.**" At the final and fateful Judgment Day, time will have vanished, and eternity will commence its unfathomable march.

As Series Six in the Book of the Revelation concludes, the words of Daniel O. Teasley, who wrote the song entitled "Eternity," come forcibly to mind. The chorus reads: "*Oh, eternity! Long*

*eternity! Hear the solemn footsteps Of eternity.*" The footsteps of eternity are closer than they have ever been in human history. May God ever help us to "give diligence to make your calling and election sure" (2 Peter 1:10). The Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:11, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." This Judgment is coming; its sentence is irrevocable, and there will be no appeals. May God help the saved to feel the urgency to persuade men as we ought.



## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE—PART ONE

### The New Heaven, New Earth, New Jerusalem & Bride

*Revelation 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.*

*2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

#### What Was the First Heaven and the First Earth?

As we view this portion of the apocalyptic writing, we have entered a new chapter and a new series. In the closing portions of Chapter 20, John took us right up to the end of human history and the Judgment scene. Chapter 21 begins the final series in the Revelation, Series 7. Seven is a Biblical number for completeness, and this series completes John's vision. Since we are beginning a new series, the prophetic time setting is at the commencement of the Gospel Day. **Verse 2** speaks of "**new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven.**" That is a symbolic picture of the institution of the church in A.D. 33. Then, in Revelation 22:20 Jesus said, "Surely I come quickly." With those words, we are at the end of the Gospel Day and at the Second Advent.

As we look at our Scripture text, we must recall John was receiving a vision, and the nature of the language of that vision is symbolic. Also, we must recognize (contrary to popular religious teaching) Chapters 21 and 22 are not referring to God's Heaven. They do not refer to the eternal realm or something yet to come. We can establish that firmly by the Scriptures. **Verse 2** of our text says that "**John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven.**" So the "**holy city**" is not Heaven, because it came "**out of heaven.**"

Revelation 21:6 states, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." That is an offer of salvation, and salvation will not be offered in eternity! Jesus said in John 7:37-38: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." The "water of life" (Revelation 21:6) is believing on Christ and gaining a real experience of salvation. John 7:39 says, "But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." After Jesus was glorified, the Holy Ghost was given. When one believes the Gospel, the Spirit of God births the believer. Second Corinthians 6:2 tells us "now is the day of salvation," not some future point in time.

The thought of the need for a literal new Heaven springs from the false thought there was once an uprising, a rebellion, in Heaven. However, there is no truth or merit to such an appalling thought! Supposedly, the devil was cast out of Heaven, but let us look at the words of Jesus. Speaking of the devil in John 8:44b, He said, "He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth." He was not some sort of angel in Heaven; He was a devil "from the beginning." Heaven is a holy place. There is no need for God to create a new celestial Heaven. There is nothing wrong with the one He has now. Isaiah 57:15 says, "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place [not the defiled, corrupted place] . . ." Deuteronomy 32:4 tells us God's "work is perfect"; therefore, Heaven is a *perfect* place. We must recall John was a Hebrew, and much of the imagery of the Revelation is Hebrew imagery. The "**new heaven**" and "**new earth**" in our text were spoken of in Isaiah



65:17-18, which says: "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy." (It is also mentioned in Isaiah 66:22.) We see here a Hebrew parallelism, where one expression expands and enlightens the other. Verse 17 says, "I create new heavens," and the parallel in verse 18 says, "I create Jerusalem." The "new heavens" is "Jerusalem," and the "new earth" is "her people."

Parallelism was a common Hebrew teaching style. In Psalm 119, David employed it a number of times. Verse 43 says, "And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth [there is the first statement, then the second clarifies and expands it]; for I have hoped in thy judgments." God's Word is His judgments. Then verse 130 uses a parallelism when it tells us, "The entrance of thy words giveth light." The balance of the verse clarifies it: "it giveth understanding." Verse 160 tells us God's Word is His "righteous judgments." Jesus also employed this same teaching style. He said to Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:9, "My grace is sufficient for thee [What is grace?]: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Grace is strength.

Isaiah, Chapter 65, brings insight concerning the "new heavens" and the "new earth." Our text teaches us the same truth. **Revelation 21:1** says, "**And I saw a new heaven and a new earth.**" Then verse 2 speaks of "**new Jerusalem**" and "**a bride.**" Again, they parallel one another. There are two aspects of truth in our text: prophetic and practical. Let us view it prophetically first to understand what John was conveying to us. To understand the "**new heaven**" and the "**new earth,**" we must identify the old. **Verse 1** continues, ". . . **for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.**" If we can understand that rightfully, it will eliminate much confusion. Isaiah 65:17 tells us that "the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind."

The "**first heaven**" is what "**passed away**" when the New Testament dispensation was instituted. Hebrews 8:10-13 states: "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." The first covenant, or the old covenant, is what "**passed away.**" It was gone when the new covenant was instituted.

Second Corinthians 3:11 says, "For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious." One rendering says it in this manner: "If the old system that faded into nothing was full of heavenly glory . . ." The "**first heaven**" was the exalted position the old Law held. Hebrews 8:4-5 states: "For if he [Christ] were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount [Mount Sinai]." Then Hebrews 9:23 tells us, "It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these." Notice the phrases "shadow of heavenly things" and "patterns of things in the heavens."



**Mount Sinai – the "first heaven"**

Second Corinthians 3:7 tells us, "But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of

Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away." What "heavenly things" did the Old Testament have? Moses ascended Mount Sinai, and God came down (Exodus 19:20-21). Heaven came down (Exodus 20:22), angels were there (Psalm 68:17; Acts 7:53), and God was there. They were given the Mosaic law "engraven in stones," and it was "glorious." The "**first heaven**" was heavenly, but it was "done away" with. That is what "**passed away**" in our text.

Isaiah 51:4-6 is prophesying of the New Testament dispensation. These verses tell us that "the heavens shall vanish away like smoke" when God's "salvation is gone forth." How did the "heavens . . . vanish away like smoke"? Smoke is a symbol of the glory of God (Isaiah 6:3-4; Revelation 15:8). The old Law vanished away with the institution of the new. When salvation was ushered in, the old vanished like a smoke. The glory of God in the new caused the old to vanish away as far inferior. Again, 2 Corinthians 3:11 says, "For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious." The "**first heaven** [the exalted position which the Law and the old economy held] . . . **passed.**" That is what our text is speaking about.

### **The Things That Have Passed Away**

Revelation 21:4 says that "the former things are passed away." Then verse 5 reads, "And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new." This is much the same truth the Apostle Paul penned in 2 Corinthians 5:17, saying, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [or *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says 'creation']: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Let us look at the context to see what he was he speaking of. In verse 16, he talked about "the flesh," and that is all the old covenant was based on. He was letting us know the old covenant had passed away. In verse 16, he made it so strong that he said, ". . . yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." We are no longer in a fleshly dispensation. We are not governed by the flesh, but we are now in a spiritual dispensation. Therefore, Paul wrote in verse 16, ". . . know we no man after the flesh." The old economy and old Israel were based on the flesh.

Notice all the genealogies in Matthew, Chapter 1. It starts with Abraham in verse 2 and then brings us to the birth of Christ in verse 16. From there on, there are no more literal genealogies. It was after the flesh until Christ came. Then the fleshly genealogies ceased to exist. That was Joseph's genealogy, but Luke, Chapter 3, gives us Mary's genealogy. This time it starts with Christ and Mary's father, Heli, in verse 23. Then it continues all the way back to Adam (verse 38). Again, the genealogy did not go past Christ, because it moved from the flesh to the Spirit. The old economy and old Israel were based on the flesh. In John 8:15 Jesus said, "Ye judge after the flesh." Verse 13 lets us know He was talking to "Pharisees," or Jewish individuals. Verse 33 says, "They answered him, We be Abraham's seed . . . ." Their claim was after the flesh.

The Apostle Paul said in Philippians 3:3, "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." He was trying to establish it is no longer about the flesh. Paul gave his fleshly credentials when he said in verses 4-6: "Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." Those were all tenets of the old Law. However, Paul let us know in verse 7, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." That dispensation had passed. He was telling them they could no longer rest in the flesh. "**The first heaven**" in our text was the exalted position the old

Law held in the minds of the people. They needed "**a new earth**," something that could bring them deliverance from the weakness of the flesh and the powerlessness of the old Law.

"**Earth**" is symbolic of man. When Isaiah 65:17 talks about "a new earth," verse 18 lets us know it is "people." Ecclesiastes 12:7 tells us, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was." Man is dust of the earth. Jeremiah 22:29 states, "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD." The prophet was talking to man, because he is an earthen vessel (2 Corinthians 4:7). Second Corinthians 5:1 says, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved . . ." Verse 4 lets us know that is our "mortality." It is the mortal portion of man that was formed from the dust of the earth.

In Romans 9:8 Paul said, "That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." "The children of the flesh" were of the literal lineage of Abraham. They made up "**the first earth**." They could not be delivered under the old Law. Romans 8:3 tells us, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh . . ." Then Galatians 3:22 states, "But the scripture [the Old Testament Scripture] hath concluded all under sin . . ." Through the old Law, there was no ability to be delivered or to gain a victorious experience as we can enjoy today.

**Verse 1** of our Scripture text says that "**the first heaven and the first earth were passed away**." Whatever expression you want to lift from the Scriptures ("**passed away**," "done away," or "gone"), all tell us the same thing. Colossians 2:14 says, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." A new dispensation, a new economy with new ordinances and new people, took their place. Our text is portraying the New Testament dispensation being ushered in. The saints no longer come to the truths of the *Old Testament*, but they come to the truths of the *New Testament*. Hebrews 12:18 tells us, "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest." That is speaking of Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:17-18), "**the first heaven**." Thank God, there is "**a new heaven**"!

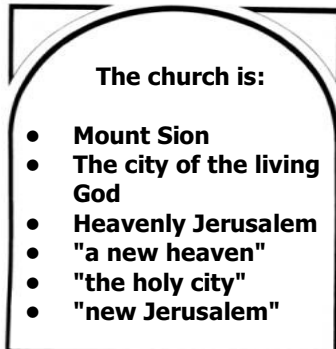
We read in Hebrews 12:22-23: "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church . . ." This gives us an insight what the "**new heaven**" is. It is a heavenly Jerusalem, brought about by a new covenant, a New Testament. The nineteenth-century expositor, John Brown, wrote this: "A person at all familiar with the phraseology of the Old Testament Scriptures knows that the dissolution of the Mosaic economy and the establishment of the Christian is often spoken of removing the old earth and heavens and the creation of a new earth and heavens."

### **The "New Jerusalem" Came "Down From God Out of Heaven"**

Let us consider what our text calls "**a new heaven and a new earth**." Just as in Isaiah 65:17-18, the "**new heaven**" of **verse 1** is the "**new Jerusalem**" of **verse 2**. Let us identify the "**new Jerusalem**," or the "**new heaven**." Again, Galatians 4:22-26 says: "For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid [Ishmael was by the bondmaid Hagar], the other by a freewoman [Isaac was by Sarah]. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh [it was never God's plan Ishmael be the heir, and it was never God's plan the Old Testament be perpetual]; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants [the Old Testament and the New Testament]; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage [which was weak through the flesh], which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage [literal Je-

Jerusalem that was still in bondage, which concluded all under sin] with her children. But Jerusalem which is above [heavenly Jerusalem] is free [that is what the new covenant instituted], which is the mother of us all." Hebrews 12:22-23 tells us "the heavenly Jerusalem" is the "church."

What position does the church, or heavenly Jerusalem, occupy? Ephesians 2:6 says, "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places [or *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says, 'the heavenlies'] in Christ Jesus." The position the church occupies is the exalted position of the **"new heaven."** When the fifth series began at the commencement of the Gospel Day, John wrote in Revelation 12:1-2: "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered." We just read in Galatians 4:26, the church "is the mother." These verses are representing the church.



The Hebrew writer used several expressions to denote different aspects of the church. He mentioned "mount Sion," "the city of the living God," and "the heavenly Jerusalem" in Hebrews 12:22. Also, our text mentions **"a new heaven," "the holy city,"** and **"new Jerusalem."** By laying line upon line, precept upon precept, we know the Revelator was also speaking of the church.

**Verse 2** of our text talks about the **"new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven."** When did this occur? Our text is not portraying something that takes place after some supposed Millennial reign or after the end of time. We have already found the **"new Jerusalem"** is the church. Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, "I will build my church." Then, Acts 20:28 tells us Jesus "purchased [the church] with his own blood." He purchased it when He shed His blood on Calvary's tree.

Jesus told His disciples in John 16:7, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." This is vital! The Holy Spirit is who inducts us into the church. First Corinthians 12:13 tells us, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized [or inducted] into one body . . . ." When Jesus ascended back to Heaven, Revelation 8:5 tells us He "took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth." On the Day of Pentecost, they were all filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts, Chapter 2). That is when the church came **"down from God out of heaven."** Acts 2:47 tells us that "the Lord added to the church." That was when the church was instituted, when the **"new Jerusalem"** came **"down from God out of heaven."**

Although the church is spoken of in a collective sense as **"the holy city"** and the **"new Jerusalem,"** it is still comprised of individuals. Again, Isaiah 65:17 speaks of "a new earth," and verse 18 tells us it is "her people." So the **"new earth"** is what the church is comprised of: people. Peter said in 2 Peter 3:13-14: "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." What is "without spot, and blameless"? Ephesians 5:27 tells us it is the "church." That is the **"new heaven."**

### **The "First Earth" Has "Passed Away"**

Let us now look at our Scripture text practically. Prophetically, **"the first earth"** was the old covenant after the flesh, but practically, it is a picture of the old man. Romans 6:6 says,



"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." That was not possible under **"the first earth."** The Old Testament did not enable a man to die out to sin, but the new covenant does. Romans 6:5 states, "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death [practically, **'the first earth,'** which **'passed away'**], we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection [there is the **'new earth'**]." Then Romans 6:4 says, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Ephesians 4:22-24 reads: "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man [**'the first earth'**], which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man [**'the new earth'**], which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

Remember, Isaiah 65:17 tells us that "the former shall not be remembered," and Ephesians 4:22 just said to "put off." When our old man is "put off" and the new man is put on, when **"the first earth"** passes away and the **"new earth"** comes into being, our sins are put "into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:19), never to be remembered against us again! Psalm 103:10-12 tells us: "He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."

**"The first earth"** in **verse 1** of our Scripture text could not be changed under the old covenant, but now we can "put on the new man" (Ephesians 4:24). That is the **"new earth."** Now we are able to have "righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:24). Colossians 3:1-10 says: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above [the **'new heaven'**], where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man [**'the first earth'**] with his deeds; And have put on the new man [the **'new earth'**], which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him."

### **The Bride's Adornment**

In **verse 2** of our Scripture text, the **"new earth"** of **verse 1** is likened to **"a bride adorned for her husband."** Isaiah 54:5 tells us that "thy Maker is thine husband." Who is "thy Maker"? Ephesians 3:9 says that God "created all things by Jesus Christ." Furthermore, 2 Corinthians 11:2 says, "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." Christ is the husband.

Revelation 21:9 speaks of the **"bride"** as "the Lamb's wife." Revelation 19:7-8 says: "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." If the wedding garment is "the righteousness of saints," it only stands to reason that the **"bride"** (or the wife) in the garment is the saints.

According to **verse 2** of our Scripture text, she had "**adorned**" herself. The Book of Isaiah talks a little more about her adornment. Isaiah 52:1 says, "Awake, awake [you awake in the morning; this is a prophecy about the morning time of the Gospel Day, which is when the '**new Jerusalem**' came '**down**']; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean." Thank God, there is no unclean thing in the church! It is a "glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Ephesians 5:27). Isaiah said "put on thy beautiful garments." What are the church's "beautiful garments" that she adorns herself with? Isaiah 61:10 tells us they are "the garments of salvation" and "the robe of righteousness." This is talking about the saints and their individual experiences that comprise the glorious Church of God.

As we begin a new chapter and a new series, we are seeing a symbolic portrayal of the passing away of the Old Testament dispensation and the ushering in of the New. Hebrews 7:18-19 tells us: "For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before [talking about the old covenant] for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God." The Hebrew writer contrasted the old covenant with the new covenant. Likewise, in this new series, we are seeing described the vast contrast between the powerlessness of the old covenant, which according to Romans 8:3 "was weak through the flesh," and the institution of the new covenant, styled in 2 Corinthians 6:2 as "the day of salvation." **Verses 1-2** portray the distinctions in these covenants and the beautiful church comprised of a victorious people that was instituted on the Day of Pentecost.



"The Brasen Sea"

**Verse 1** of our text closes by saying that "**there was no more sea.**" This has two applications. The first application is related to "the brasen sea" (1 Chronicles 18:8) Solomon made. It was "the laver of brass" that stood before the Old Testament tabernacle. Exodus 30:18-20 tells us: "Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, [What for?] to wash withal: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet

thereat: When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the LORD." Our Scripture text lets us know we are no longer under the old covenant. Hebrews 9:10 states, "Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation." The day of mere externals, which has no ability to meet the needs of the souls, is "**no more.**" We have moved from external observances to an internal reality.

Let us look at the second application of the expression: "**there was no more sea.**" A "**sea**" is a massive body of water. Revelation 17:15 tells us that "The waters which thou sawest . . . are peoples." We are no longer in a fleshly dispensation where people are dominated by a Law that was weak through the flesh. Isaiah 57:20 says that "the wicked are like the troubled sea." Now, there is an experience that can eliminate wickedness and calm the troubled waters of your soul.

As this Scripture text begins a new chapter and a new series, it is drawing a clear distinction between the two dispensations. When the Hebrew writer talked about the new dispensation, it is no wonder one of the most recurrent words he used was "better." Everything about the new covenant is "better" and far superior to the old.



## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE—PART TWO

### The Tabernacle of God Is With Men

*Revelation 21:3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.*

*4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*

*5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.*

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

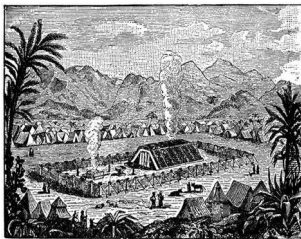
*7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.*

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

### God Now Dwells With Men on a Personal Level

Revelation, Chapter 21, begins the seventh-and-final series in the Revelation. The prophetic time setting of the initial verses is at the commencement of the Gospel Day (A.D. 33). The predominant truths portrayed in our text are the changes wrought by the establishment of the new covenant. (We considered that at length in the previous section.) As we proceed to **verses 3-8**, we see additional descriptions concerning the transition from the old covenant to the new covenant. The most remarkable aspect is the proclamation in **verse 3** that says, "**And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men . . .**" It is a proclamation for which mankind awaited throughout the annals of time. Then, **verses 4-7** describe the covenant and the experience that makes this possible.

As we examine these verses, we want to focalize around the predominant truth that "**the tabernacle of God is with men.**" Why is this such an outstanding declaration? Verse 3 says God "**will dwell with them.**" That is a distinct contrast to the Old Testament dispensation where God merely dwelt *among* them. Leviticus 26:11-12 reads: "And I will set my tabernacle *among* you: and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk *among* you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people." Under the Old Testament dispensation, God was not truly with them on a personal level as we can enjoy in the New Testament dispensation. That is a tremendous difference! That is what makes the New Testament far superior to anything the old covenant afforded mankind.



The Tabernacle

In Numbers, Chapter 2, the twelve tribes of Israel were broken into four main divisions, which camped on the four sides of the tabernacle. Numbers 2:17 tells us, "Then the tabernacle of the congregation shall set forward with the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camp: as they encamp, so shall they set forward, every man in his place by their standards." God did not personally dwell with them, but He dwelt in the tabernacle. Let us consider exactly where God dwelt in the Old Testament. **Verse 4** of our text says that "**the**

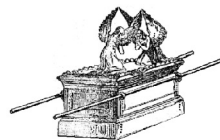
**former things are passed away."** Where did God "**dwelt**" (**verse 3**) formerly?

First Samuel 4:4 says, "So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth between the cherubims." That is where He dwelt. Also, 2 Samuel 6:2 tells us, "And David arose, and went with all the people that were with him from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the LORD of hosts that dwelleth between the cherubims." (This is also substantiated by 2 Kings 19:15 and Isaiah 37:16.)

Where were these cherubims located? Moses received instructions from the Lord concerning the construction of the Old Testament tabernacle when he was on Mount Sinai. Exodus 25:17-19 says: "And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof." These cherubims of beaten gold are a picture, in type, of the redeemed. They were connected to the mercy seat, and they were connected to one another through that mercy seat. They were one work with the mercy seat. They were also facing one another, which is a picture of unity.

Verses 20-22 read: "And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel." Under the Old Testament economy, that is where the presence of God dwelt, overshadowing "the mercy seat."

Where was the "mercy seat"? It was on "the ark," but where were they located? Hebrews 9:3-5 tells us: "And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly." The Old Testament tabernacle (look at the chart in the front of this book) had two rooms: the holy place and "the Holiest of all," which were separated by a veil. The priests daily ministered in the first room, but into the second room only the high priest went once a year (Hebrews 9:7). "The mercy seat" being in the second room is teaching us man did not have access to the presence of God. God dwelt among them in a tabernacle, and they camped around Him. Even when He moved into Solomon's temple, He was still among them, but it was a great distance from man personally.



**Ark of the Covenant**

Second Samuel 7:2 says, "That the king [David] said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains." David was burdened to build God a house. Nathan thought it was a good idea, but God stopped him and sent him back to David. Second Samuel 7:6 states, "Whereas I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle." God was in "a tabernacle" behind curtains, out of public view, and beyond the access of man. Not even the priests could access Him; He was only available once a year to one man. There were barriers between God and man. **Verse 3** of our text says that "**the tabernacle of God is with men.**" This was not available under the Old Testament.

## Sin Had Separated God and Man

God had separated Himself from man because of sin. As soon as sin entered, man hid himself; sin broke fellowship. It ultimately led to man's expulsion from the Garden. So, God began to implement His plan. On Mount Sinai, He instituted the Law, which was designed to bring man understanding and prepare him for the institution of the new covenant and the plan of salvation. Romans 3:20 tells us, "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Galatians 3:24 says that "the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ." Galatians 4:4-5 says: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law [what for?], To redeem them . . . ." He brought redemption to mankind.

To redeem man, God had to address a weakness. Romans 8:3 states that the Law "was weak through the flesh." Galatians 3:21-22 says: "Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin . . . ." The Law could not give life. All were bound under the power of sin under the Old Testament dispensation.

Hebrews 10:1-4 tells us: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered [if those offerings had been satisfactory, they would have only needed one]? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." The Law was powerless; it was merely a schoolmaster. The sacrifices could not "take away sins," nor could they provide spiritual life. Thus, God dwelled within curtains, separated from man, because He cannot fellowship sin.

Thank God, in the fulness of time, Jesus Christ came forth! Romans 8:3 tells us, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." He had the power of God, and He could become a ransom for man's sin, because He was a perfect sacrifice. Hebrews 9:26 states, ". . . but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." First Peter 1:19 speaks of "the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." He was an acceptable sacrifice.

Ephesians 4:8 says Christ "led captivity captive." That which had held man bound, Christ now bound. Man could not break the power of it, but Jesus Christ broke the power of it. What did Christ say on Calvary's tree when He fulfilled His role as the Lamb of God and took upon Himself the sin of the world? John 19:30 says, ". . . he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." Then Matthew 27:51 tells us, "And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom." That veil which separated man from God was torn in two, and God could get out to the hearts of mankind. When Jesus paid the price, He made it possible for you and me to enjoy the presence of God. No wonder **verse 3** of our Scripture text says, "**Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men . . . .**"

**Verse 3** of our Scripture text continues, saying God "**will dwell with them.**" In the Old Testament He dwelt in a tabernacle. In 2 Samuel 7:6, the Hebrew word for "tabernacle" is the word *mishkan*, which means "a residence, habitation, or dwelling place." When we come to our text in the New Testament, the word for "**tabernacle**" is the word *skene*, which means "a habitation." To a Hebrew Christian (that is what John the Revelator was), there were two words closely associated: *skene* and *shechinah*, which was the glory cloud of God's appearance. The two words

went together, because where God's presence was (*shekinah*), the tent was (*skene*); and where the tent was, that is where God's presence was.

Through the work of Christ, God has now made His habitation with men. Now we possess the glory of God's presence! He does not dwell in literal tents, but He dwells with men. We must be careful of how we live because we have the presence of God. In Ezekiel's prophecy, when the people moved away from truth, the presence of God progressively moved away. Likewise, when we grieve the Holy Spirit of God, God's presence can begin to take His departure from our lives. That is why we need to give the more earnest heed to the things of God.

Concerning **verse 3** of our text, *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says that "He will tabernacle with them." In the Old Testament, when they prepared the room according to God's Word, the presence of God moved in. It is the same in the New Testament. When we get everything in accordance with His Word, the presence of God moves right in! The Amplified Bible says, "See! The abode of God is with men, and He will live (encamp, tent) among them; and they shall be His people, and God shall personally be with them and be their God." Another rendering says, "Now at last God has His dwelling place among men."

John 14:23 tells us, "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words [He was setting '**the tabernacle**' in order]: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode [or dwelling] with him." That is what Jesus promised. Jeremiah 31:33-34 says: "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put . . . and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me . . ." In the New Testament dispensation, it is a personal experience, a personal reality. It is not something handled only by a high priest far removed, but it is something every saint can enjoy.

### **Jesus Instituted the Everlasting Covenant**

Ezekiel 37:26-27 states: "Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Who instituted the "everlasting covenant"? Hebrews 13:20 tells us it was Jesus. It reads, "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant." It is a covenant that makes **"the tabernacle of God . . . with men."**

Second Corinthians 6:16 says, "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." The temple of God is the people whom God is in. He will "dwell in them, and walk in them." That is far greater than being "among them." I have been "among crowds" where the President of the United States was. However, I could get nowhere close enough to speak or even wave to him. He had no idea I was around. There is a big difference between "*among you*" and "*in you*."

Years ago, I remember some folks singing the old song, "Jesus and Me." Then Brother Wilson got up afterward and said: "You folks have it all wrong. This is a narrow way. You just sang about 'Jesus and Me,' but this road is only wide enough for Jesus; there is no room for you." People try to make too much room for themselves, but there is no room for anyone on this road but Jesus.

Ephesians 2:22 says, "In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through

the Spirit." God inhabits the church; He inhabits the saints. We have the privilege of having God dwell in us and walk in us. The "**tabernacle**" our Scripture text is talking about (**verse 3**) is the mortal portion of man. In 2 Corinthians 5:1 Paul said, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle . . ." It is not a tabernacle made by hands (like a tent), but it is our earthly house. Verse 4 reads, "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." The real you and me are "in this tabernacle," our body. We are looking out through our eyes, hearing through our ears, and talking through our mouths. Your soul is the real you. Though the outward man may perish (he is getting gray and losing his hair), the inward man is renewed day by day (2 Corinthians 4:16). Although, we need to do our part to keep him new.

In 2 Peter 1:13-15 Peter said: "Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance." Peter would die; he would leave his body.

What has made the indwelling presence possible? We found in Galatians 3:21, the law could not give life. Then Hebrews 7:19 tells us that "the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did." Thank God, Jesus brought in "a new and living way" (Hebrews 10:20). Jesus said in John 10:10, "I am come that they might have life." Man was under the sentence of sin and death, but Jesus brought life. Romans 8:2 says, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." In the Old Testament, they looked forward in faith believing in Him who was to come. If they died in faith, they were just men; so they went into Paradise. Part of Christ's redemptive work was to take "the spirits of just men" and make them "perfect" (Hebrews 12:23). However, I want you to see the distinction being drawn in our text between the two dispensations.

**Verse 6** of our text says, "**And he said unto me, It is done** [the same words, in essence, Jesus uttered on Calvary's tree; John 19:30]. **I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.**" When did that "**fountain**" open? When Jesus finished the redemptive work on Calvary's tree. Zechariah 13:1 tells us, "In that day [a prophetic expression of this Gospel Day] there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." In the song "The All-Cleansing Fountain," Joseph Fisher wrote about that "**fountain**" when he penned these words: "*When that fount was opened in the Savior's side, How the thief did rejoice in that day!*"

John 19:34 reads, "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water." When that "**fountain**" was opened, blood came out for the remission of sins (Hebrews 9:22), and water came out, representing the Spirit of God (John 7:37-39) to bring regeneration to the souls of mankind (Titus 3:5). In **verse 6** of our text, we know Jesus was speaking because He said, "**I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.**" In Revelation 1:11 He said, "I am Alpha and Omega . . ." In Revelation 22:13 He used the same expression, and He clarified who that is when He said, "I Jesus . . ." (verse 16).

### **Jesus Made the Living Water Available to All**

Let us examine what Jesus meant in **verse 6** of our text when He said, "**I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.**" John 4:10 tells us, "Jesus answered and said unto her [the woman at the well], If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith



to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." Verse 14 states, "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." There is the "**life**" the Law could not bring.

Of what is the "living water" a portrayal? Where does it come from? John 7:37-39 says: "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit . . ." The Spirit of God is the "living water," and He brings life to us. That is what Jesus made available when He paid ransom's cost on Calvary's tree. Jesus said, "If I depart, I will send him unto you" (John 16:7). Romans 8:10 says that "the Spirit is life." Second Corinthians 3:6 lets us know that "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." Then, when Jesus spoke to Nicodemus, He said in John 3:6, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." The Holy Spirit is the divine agency that brings spiritual life to man.

Our Scripture text is revealing the institution of the New Testament, the commencement of the Gospel Day, and the experience that became available. It portrays the benefit salvation brings to the heart of mankind. Sad to say, many people relegate these verses to Heaven, eternity, or some future point in time. However, they are depicting the covenant Jesus instituted, which has been operating since A.D. 33.

Let us consider the expressions in our text that cause people to misunderstand these verses. They are commonly read at funerals, and there are many songs about them. **Verse 4** says, "**And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.**" Remember, we are dealing in symbolism. Let us see where else we see this manner of expressions in the Bible. Isaiah 35:7 says that "the parched ground shall become a pool." That is talking about the dry soul which receives a real experience of salvation and takes in "the water of life freely." Their cup is full and running over.

Isaiah 35:8-10 reads: "And an highway shall be there, and a way [Jesus is the way; John 14:6], and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion [the church] with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." When did that happen? It did not happen when they died nor when they went to Heaven, but it happened when they got to Zion. That is when their sorrow and sighing fled away, when they received the truth.

Isaiah 51:11 tells us, "Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away." Again, that happened when they came to Zion. There is nothing in Babylon. It leaves you empty, disappointed, and sorrowful. It causes you to go about mourning, sighing, and grieving. Thank God, when you come to Zion, sorrow and mourning flee away! Your soul is fed at the Lord's table.

Isaiah 65:17-19 tells us: "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth [we studied that in our previous lesson]: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping

**In the New Jerusalem**

- TEARS
- DEATH
- SORROW
- CRYING
- PAIN

**Have all passed away**

shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying." This is in the new Jerusalem; it is not in eternity or in Heaven.

What about when our text says there will be no more "**pain**"? In Luke 10:19 Jesus said, "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you." If nothing hurts you, you will not be in any "**pain.**" **Verse 4** of our text says that "**there shall be no more death.**" In 2 Timothy 1:9-10 the Apostle Paul said: "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, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light [how?] through the gospel." "**Death**" has been abolished.

**Verse 4** of our text says that "**tears . . . death . . . sorrow . . . crying [and] pain**" have all "**passed away.**" That is all possible through the benefits of the new covenant, which enables us "to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). Through the new covenant, we can have the Spirit of God (John 16:7), God in us (John 14:23), that brings us life (Romans 8:10) and sets us free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2). We can be a part of the new Jerusalem. Thank God!

Look at **verses 4-5** of our Scripture text, which read: "**. . . the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.**" Again, these words were familiar to a Hebrew. Isaiah 43:18-21 states: "Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old [the Old Testament]. Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness [a way is what John the Baptist came to prepare], and rivers in the desert. The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen. This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise."

What is the "drink"? What are the "rivers"? We have already read them, but let us read them again. John 4:14 says, "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." The water is "springing up" in God's people, so everybody around them can get a drink if they want one. John 7:38-39 tells us: "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly [one rendering says 'from within him'] shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit . . ." That is the "drink" and the "rivers."

### A Vivid Contrast Between the Two Covenants

When **verse 4** of our text speaks about "**the former things,**" it is talking about the old Testament; and when **verse 5** speaks about "**all things new,**" it is talking about the New Testament. In 2 Corinthians 5:16-17 the Apostle penned: "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh [the old covenant was 'after the flesh']: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Here the Apostle was speaking concerning the distinction between the two covenants. The old was "after the flesh" (2 Corinthians

**"Former things" = Old Testament**  
**"All things new" = New Testament**

5:16). It is "passed away" because it was nailed "to his cross" (Colossians 2:14) and replaced with "a new and living way" (Hebrews 10:20), which was a spiritual covenant (Hebrews 8:10; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 2 Corinthians 3:3).

In **verses 7-8** of our Scripture text, we see a vivid contrast being drawn. We can view it both prophetically and practically (as many of the verses in this chapter can be viewed). The word "**overcometh**" in **verse 7** is the Greek word *nikao* from the root word *nike*, which is defined as "the means of success: victory." First Corinthians 15:57 states, "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory [how?] through our Lord Jesus Christ." Our means of success and victory is through Christ.

**Verse 7** of our text says, "**He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.**" When we partake of that "**water of life**," we become an overcomer; we become one of God's sons. Then Romans 8:17 lets us know, "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." When we are saved, our inheritance begins here and now. Colossians 1:12 says, "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers [in this present time] of the inheritance of the saints in light." When Paul was relating his call to Agrippa, Acts 26:18 says, "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." Too many people want to relegate all the benefits God has for us to some future point in time, but these Scriptures are setting forth things we are to enjoy now. Our text is portraying that these benefits were instituted in the morning-time of the Gospel Day.

**Verse 8** of our text reads, "**But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.**" In the practical application, those who are "**unbelieving**" seal their fate in a Christ-less eternity. Prophetically, the "**unbelieving**" is speaking of the Jewish nation that rejected Christ. Initially, that was whom He came unto. In Matthew 15:24 He said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." However, John 1:11 says, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not."

Romans 11:19-21 tells us: "Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee." The Jewish nation was cut off because of their unbelief. Next, they were "**abominable**," and they became "**murderers**," just as **verse 8** of our text says. Then, they took on the same spirits of "**whoremongers**" and "**sorcerers**" and "**idolaters**." When people fail to walk in light, they fall into terrible darkness.

The Israelite nation was cut off, and it has never recovered from it. Because of their sad spiritual state, Jesus said in Matthew 23:15, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte [or convert], and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves." He referred to the leaders of the Jewish nation as the children "of hell." The word "hell" there in the Greek is *Gehenna*. **Verse 8** of our text speaks of it as "**the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.**"

Jesus Christ ushered in a glorious day! Many in the realms of false religion await that which has been available to mankind since A.D. 33. Thank God for His truth! The first eight verses of Revelation, Chapter 21, portray the distinction between the dispensations. They are the opening of the seventh-and-final series that commences with A.D. 33. They introduce us to the institution

of the New Testament dispensation and its glories. It has no reference to something lying in a future realm, but it has everything to do with the New Testament experience Jesus Christ ordained for us to enjoy now and the church which He instituted to provide the saints with the benefits and provisions of that experience. I trust we have a clearer understanding of these precious truths.



## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE—PART THREE

### A Fresh Vision of the Bride, "The Lamb's Wife"—"That Great City"

*Revelation 21:9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.*

*10 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.*

#### God Wants the Ministry to Show the People a Vision of the Church

These verses make it obvious the scene in the vision John was receiving has changed. He was given a fresh vision of **"the bride, the Lamb's wife,"** designated as **"that great city"** in **verse 10**. The prophetic time setting has also changed. **"The seven angels which had the seven vials"** (**verse 9**) did not appear until the evening time of the Gospel Day, the period that commenced in A.D. 1880. Thus, we have advanced from the morning portion of the Gospel Day to the evening portion.

These **"seven angels"** were first introduced in Revelation, Chapter 15. Neither there nor in our text does the word **"angels"** refer to celestial beings. The word **"angels"** in the Greek is the word *aggelos*, which means "to bring tidings; a messenger." These **"angels"** represent a ministry. In Galatians 4:13-14 the Apostle Paul said: "Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God . . ." The word "angel" in that verse in the original Greek is the same word (*aggelos*) used in our text. We know the Apostle Paul was not a celestial being, but rather he was received as a messenger of God. God was using him to bring a message to mankind. Revelation 19:10 says, "And I fell at his feet to worship him [an 'angel'; Revelation 18:1]. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God." That "angel" was one of the "brethren," a picture of a ministry. This truth is reiterated in Revelation 22:8-9 where John said, ". . . I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren . . ."

These **"seven angels"** in our text all poured out their vials in the evening time. We studied them at length in Revelation, Chapters 15 and 16. Revelation 16:1-2 tells us: "And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image." The very first vial was poured out on those who had the "mark of the beast," or the indoctrination of sectarian teaching in their minds. This vial was poured out on "them which worshipped his image," or the religious system of Protestantism. This lets us know it had to be during an era subsequent to the Protestant Era, which is the evening time of this Gospel Day.

Again, the appearance of **"one of the seven angels which had the seven vials"** in our text advances the prophetic time placement to the evening time of the Gospel Day. This is unique because this is the only series that goes directly from the morning time to the evening time. Many of the other series take us sequentially through the Gospel Day, some a little more abbreviated

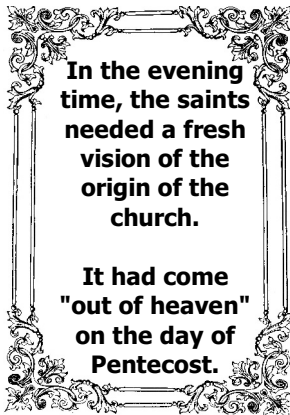
than others.

What is the significance of "**one of the seven angels**" appearing in **verse 9** of our Scripture text? The last time one of the vial angels appeared was in Revelation, Chapter 17. When "one of the seven angels" poured out judgment, "the seven vials," saying, "Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters" (verse 1), he revealed "MYSTERY BABYLON" (verse 5), or false religion. This lets us know the Lord uses the ministry to pour out the truth of His Word, so people can receive a true vision of both Babylon and the church. It takes the truth being poured out to get a vision of either. It is no happenstance one of the vial angels appeared to give John the vision of the church in our text.

If people ever get a clear vision of Babylon, a ministry will have to pour out the truth to uncover her and to show her for the corrupt system that she is! There is far too much sympathy with sectarian religion, and there is a spirit behind that too. In Proverbs 29:18 the wise man said, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." The primary responsibility of a ministry is to pour out the truth, so people can get knowledge and understanding and a clear vision. We need a clear vision today, because the enemy is doing everything he can to blur the lines of distinction between Babylon and the church. However, there is a vast difference between the two! Jeremiah 3:15 tells us, "And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." You do not have to be ignorant of Satan's devices (2 Corinthians 2:11). Hosea 4:6 states, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." Some may say, "What you don't know won't hurt you." However, what you do not know could be spiritually fatal to you.

Paul said in Acts 20:28, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves [first the ministry needs to take heed], and [then] to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God [their primary responsibility] . . . ." Then, 1 Peter 5:1-2 says: "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you . . . ." Feeding the flock of God takes more than just putting two or three Scriptures together. A minister needs to prepare a meal that will give people knowledge and understanding, so men and devils cannot move them.

God wants the ministry to show the people a vision of the church. **Verse 9** of our text lets us know that "**one of the seven angels,**" or the ministry, said to John, "**Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.**" It is the responsibility of the ministry to hold a vision of the church in front of the people. Hebrews 2:1 tells us, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." If there is a natural tendency to let things slip that we hear, how much more likely are they to slip if we do not hear them as often as we ought?



In **verse 9** of our Scripture text, the angel said, "**I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.**" Then in **verse 10**, he showed her "**descending out of heaven from God.**" However, the church did not descend "**out of heaven**" in the evening time (A.D. 1880). So, why did John see this? It was because when the evening time began, the saints needed a fresh vision of the origin and institution of the church.

Remember, the church went out of public view from A.D. 270 all the way to A.D. 1880. In the morning time, the church was in an exalted position, standing clear and radiant for all to see. However, as the morning-time apostasy moved in, conditions had become such that "the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and

threescore days" (Revelation 12:6). Prophetically, Numbers 14:34 tells us that "each day [stands] for a year." The period from A.D. 270 to A.D. 1530 is the 1,260 years the woman was in the wilderness. She was hid away in the catacombs and caves, while Roman Catholicism dominated the religious landscape. There was not a visible church until the evening time (A.D. 1880), when again "a Lamb stood on the mount Sion" (Revelation 14:1). Christ was back in His rightful position as Head of the church, and it came back into a visible view. Song of Solomon 8:5 says, "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?"

### **The Need of Being "Carried . . . Away in the Spirit"**

The church was obscured from A.D. 270 to A.D. 1880. There had been "a day of darkness" (Joel 2:2). It was a time when no trumpet sounded, and they chained Bibles to the pulpit. Following the Dark Ages, Joel 2:2 described that time as "a day of clouds and of thick darkness." That was the dark and cloudy day of Protestantism. Both systems (Catholicism and Protestantism) came out of the minds of men. When the evening time began, the first truth that the church was not like the organizations of men needed to be reestablished. The church did not descend in the evening time; it was not instituted in 1880. However, the vision of the origin of the church had been completely obscured and lost. The church is a divine organism instituted by God. It came "**out of heaven**" on the Day of Pentecost, and they needed a fresh vision of this spiritual truth as the evening time commenced.

Although the angel, or the ministry, desired to show John the church, John still had to allow himself to be "**carried . . . away in the spirit**" (**verse 10**). There is a lesson here. Unless the people yield to the Spirit, they will never receive a revelation of the truth. Two people can sit in the same church service, and the one could get nothing out of it while the other's cup could run over. You have to get in the Spirit to truly receive a revelation of what God has for you. Too many never really receive what God has for them because they are distracted or preoccupied. According to Ephesians 1:17-18, God wants our "understanding [to be] enlightened," and He uses the avenue of the Spirit to bring a "revelation in the knowledge of him." Thank God for an angel, or a ministry, that will herald forth the truth, but if we are ever to receive it and see it as God intends, we have to be "**carried . . . away in the spirit.**"

In Revelation 1:10 John said, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day . . ." One reason he was "in the Spirit on the Lord's day" was because he was in it the day before and the day before that. You cannot be caught up with worldly cares all week long and then flip a switch and be "in the Spirit" in a service. Revelation 1:10 lets us know John heard the "great voice" when he was "in the Spirit." How many times does God have something to say, but individuals are not in a spiritual position to hear it? Years ago, I used to run CB radios. The people using them had a saying if they wanted to call somebody. They would say, "Do you have your ears on?" The problem today is God is transmitting, but too many do not have "their ears on." Transmitting does no good without a receiver. We have to be "in the Spirit" to receive what God has for us.

Revelation 1:12 reads, "And I turned to see the voice . . . And . . . I saw . . ." He did not see until he was in the Spirit first; that is when we get a revelation of truth. Also, Revelation 4:2 says, "And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set . . ." Then **verse 10** of our text says, "**And he** [the angel, the minister] **carried me away in the spirit.**" The Revelation starts and finishes the same way—"in the spirit."

The message in **verse 9** of our text was "**Come hither.**" Many people may have to change positions before they can receive a vision of the church. One cannot receive it down in Babylon. It is only after people "**Come hither**" that they can see "**the bride, the Lamb's wife.**" It is need-



ful we understand who this is because the balance of Chapter 21 and the first portion of Chapter 22 are dealing with it. Revelation 19:7-8 lets us know **"the Lamb's wife"** is "arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: . . . [which is] the righteousness of saints." Isaiah 61:10 describes it as "the garments of salvation" and "the robe of righteousness." If the "fine linen, clean and white" represents "the righteousness of saints," then the **"wife"** in the wedding garb is the saints. The **"bride"** is the saints, people who have taken hold of truth and who are clothed with "the garments of salvation." They have an experience of salvation.

In 2 Corinthians 11:2 the Apostle Paul penned, "For I am jealous over *you* with godly jealousy: for I have espoused *you* to one husband, that I may present *you* as a chaste virgin to Christ." A bride should be a virgin, and this "virgin" is **"the bride."** Paul was writing to the saints. However, he was not just writing to the saints individually; he was writing to them as a collective body, the Church of God (2 Corinthians 1:1).



**Lampstand**

The cry in **verse 9** was, **"I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife,"** but then **verse 10** says he **"shewed me that great city."** The church is comprised of people, but as a collective unit it is a **"city."** Isaiah 26:1 says that "We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks." In Matthew 5:14-15 Jesus said: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle [the Greek says 'lamp'], and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick [the Greek says 'lampstand']." The "lamp" is salvation (Isaiah 62:1), and the "lampstand" represents the church (Revelation 1:20). So we are to take our individual experiences of salvation and bring them together in a collective unit, and that makes up the **"city."** The church works together cohesively; it works in harmony and unity as one collective unit. The enemy is so against unity, because there is power in unity. That is why he fosters division. One lamp does not shine too brightly, but hundreds of thousands of them together can illuminate in a dazzling and brilliant way.

### **"Harlots" Will Not Accept Christ as the "Husband"**

Let us compare and contrast our text with another passage in the Revelation. Revelation 17:3 says, "So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman . . ." Verse 5 states, "And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON . . ." "Babylon," or false religion, is referred to as "a woman" and also "the great city" (Revelation 16:19). The only reason the word "great" was employed was because of the magnitude and the size, not because of her quality. Both false religion and the church are comprised of individual people; yet they both operate as a collective unit, a **"city."** That is why they are so effective. However, there is a vast distinction in their character and in their natures. Revelation 17:5 describes the system of false religion as "HARLOTS." They are people who will not take vows. They will not accept Christ as the "husband." The church, on the other hand, is pictured as "a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:2). They have a willingness to take vows and a willingness to be submissive and obedient. They subjugate their will to the will of Christ, and they enter into relations only with Him.

A bride belongs to the bridegroom. John 3:29 tells us, "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom." A harlot will not accept that. False religion does not desire to belong to Christ. They merely want to engage in religion as either an act of physical pleasure or as a business. They are operating on a low level. Ephesians 1:22-23 states: "And hath put all things under his [Christ's] feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body . . ." He is the

Head of the church. In modern society, too many people have lost the true vision of the role of a wife. However, the church is an exemplary, sterling example of the role of a wife.

To get a vision of Babylon, John had to be carried "away in the spirit into the wilderness" (Revelation 17:3). However, to see the church, he was carried "**away in the spirit to a great and high mountain**" (Revelation 21:10). What a contrast! The church is in a high and exalted position above the weak and beggarly elements of this world. She does not live on the low level of this sinful world nor on the mingled hills of Babylon.

Why do the symbols change in our Scripture text? In **verse 9** the cry was "**Come hither, I will shew thee the bride.**" The church is spoken of in the female gender, as a person, a "**bride.**" Then, when John got there in **verse 10**, he saw "**that great city, the holy Jerusalem.**" The symbols of the church remain changed for the balance of the series. "**The bride, the Lamb's wife**" is not mentioned again. Let us analyze the symbols. "**The bride**" has a special signification, because the thought of a "**bride**" brings to mind purity. Next, she is "adorned" (Revelation 21:2) and "arrayed" (Revelation 19:8). That lets us know there was a personal effort spent in her preparation, which denotes the personal experience. The saints' personal experiences become a part of "**the bride.**" It also reflects the church's relationship with Christ, the Husband. Then, "**the bride**" in the singular shows unity or oneness.

### The "Great and High Mountain" Is the Church

**Verse 10** of our text reveals another vital aspect of the church. Let us analyze these symbols. **Verse 10** speaks of "**a great and high mountain.**" Isaiah 2:2-3 says: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills [the mingled hills of Babylon]; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem." When we get up in the top of the mountain, we are in Zion. That is where the Lord's house is!

If you study natural history, you find Jerusalem was the city, Mount Zion was in Jerusalem, and the house of God (David's tabernacle) was on Mount Zion. They were all used in a literal sense in the Old Testament, but they serve as a figure in the New Testament, letting us know where the presence of God is. Micah 4:1 tells us, "But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills." God's church is superior. It holds an exalted position, high and lifted up. It is above the organizations of men. It is up where "the air is pure, ethereal" (*Is Not This the Land of Beulah?* by William Hunter). It is in the top of the mountains, where the vision is good.

In the New Testament, the house of the Lord is not a building; it is not brick and mortar. First Timothy 3:15 tells us that "the house of God . . . is the church of the living God." That is what the mountain of the Lord's house is. Micah 4:2 tells us, "And many nations shall come [or they will come out of many denominations], and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD [that should still be our message], and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."

Do Mount Zion and Jerusalem represent the same thing? Yes, Hebrews 12:22 states, "But ye are come [present tense] unto mount Sion, and unto the city [the same city as in our text] of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." They both represent the "church" (verse 23). They are

different expressions denoting different aspects of the one-and-selfsame church. Daniel wrote of the **"great and high mountain"** in our text, when he gave Nebuchadnezzar the understanding of his dream. Nebuchadnezzar had a troubling dream, but he could not remember it. He called all of Babylon's wise men and asked them to give him the understanding. They could not tell him the message, and Babylon still does not have the message today. Finally, he called for Daniel.

Breaking in to the explanation of the dream, Daniel 2:35 says, "Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone [Christ] that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." Daniel 2:44 states, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom . . . ." The "great mountain" is the establishment of the kingdom, or the institution of the church since Pentecost. The kingdom and the church are the one-and-selfsame thing.

Let us consider "the stone" becoming "a great mountain." In Matthew 16:18-19 Jesus said: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter [the Greek word *petros*, which means 'a piece of rock'], and upon this rock [the Greek word is *petra*, which means 'a massive rock'] I will build my church . . . . And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom." That tells us the kingdom and the church are the same thing. The only distinction you can make is the kingdom shows more the individual reign of Christ in the heart and the church shows a collective unit.

In **verse 10** of our Scripture text, John was carried **"away in the spirit to a great and high mountain."** When he was elevated to that exalted spiritual position, what did he see on top of that **"mountain"**? He saw **"that great city, the holy Jerusalem."** The Hebrew imagery is obvious. Jerusalem held a very important place in Hebrew history. It was "the city of the king" (Ecclesiastes 1:1); it was where the presence of God was (2 Samuel 15:29); and it was the center of worship (1 Chronicles 6:10). Also, the word *Jerusalem* means "city of peace." Jesus said in John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." Isaiah 9:6 tells us Jesus is "The Prince of Peace," and He is the One who reigns in **"that great city."**

We must recognize when **verse 10** of our text speaks of **"that great city, the holy Jerusalem,"** it is the church. We are getting a vision of the church from a little different perspective. The rest of Revelation, Chapter 21, and the first portion of Chapter 22 describe the church by this symbol of **"that great city."** Why would the particular figurative expression of **"city"** be used for the church? A **"city"** is like the analogy of a body in one sense. First Corinthians 12:14 says, "For the body is not one member, but many." A **"city"** is a collective unit that comprises many. Ephesians 2:19 tells us, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints . . . ."

As we proceed through the balance of Chapter 21, we will see how we are laborers together with God and members one of another. Also, we will study the many various facets and elements the **"city"** is composed of. This chapter portrays the beauty and brilliance of the church. We will see its features and how it works collectively to reflect the image of God in a sin-darkened world. Zechariah 8:3 says, "I . . . will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain."

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE—PART FOUR

### The First Features of the Church

*Revelation 21:11 Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.*

#### "The Glory of God" Indicates God's Presence

As we view this verse, we see the Revelator was revealing the first features of the church he envisioned when he was "carried . . . away in the spirit" (Revelation 21:10). Notably, the first thing John mentioned was **"Having the glory of God."** A true vision of the church will so dazzle you, it will blind you to everything else. **"Having the glory of God"** is always evidence of the presence of God. Let us run it back through the Scriptures. Exodus 16:10-11 says: "And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. And the LORD spake . . ." Exodus 24:16 tells us, "And the glory of the LORD abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud." Numbers 14:10b-11 says: "And the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel. And the LORD said . . ." Wherever you see the glory of God, there is the presence of God.

In our text, the appearance of the **"glory of God"** indicates the presence of God. That presence is the most important presence in our worship services. *You* need to be there, *I* need to be there, but above all, *God* needs to be there. We need God in our midst. We can sing and testify, but if the presence of God is not there, it will be just "as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal" (1 Corinthians 13:1), just a dead form. When people come around the true church, they ought to see **"the glory of God"** in our midst. **"The glory of God"** appears when people have obeyed the Word, followed the pattern, and pleased God. That produces it.

God cautioned Moses in Exodus 25:40, "And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount." Do not deviate from the Word. We are living in a time when people are being moved. They deviate from the Word and think they can still have the presence of God. That is a deception!

Exodus 40:16 tells us, "Thus did Moses: according to all that the LORD commanded him, so did he." That is commendable, and it ought to be our testimony. Exodus 40:33b-35 says: "So Moses finished the work. Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle." The presence of God came when Moses followed the pattern.

When Solomon was dedicating the temple, 2 Chronicles 7:1-3 says: "Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house. And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD'S house. And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and wor-



**Temple Dedication**

shipped, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever." "The glory of the LORD" came when God was pleased, because the people did everything in accordance to His Word.

First Corinthians 1:29 says, "That no flesh should glory in his presence." Verse 31 says, "That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." We read in 1 Corinthians 10:31, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." When we see **"the glory of God"** in the midst of His church, the people are not glorying in the flesh, but they are glorying in God. God's glory no longer occupies a cloud or a tent, but it occupies "that great city" in Revelation 21:10, the New Testament church.

As we view the particular descriptions of the church in the balance of Revelation, Chapter 21, we need to realize we are viewing the realities of prophetic types in the prophetic time scheme. We are already up to the evening-time portion of the Gospel Day. We are pretty much past the prophetic applications. Now we must view the practical considerations. These verses give us great insight into the church's nature and her operation.

Why is **"the glory of God"** so plain in our text? What produces it? **Verse 11** says, **"Having the glory of God:** [Then there is a colon. That is the summation; then the balance of the verse explains what produced the glory.] **and her light was like unto a stone most precious . . . ."** Who is the **"stone most precious"**? First Peter 2:3-7 says: "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a living stone [that is 'the Lord'], disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as lively stones [in the plural], are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture [Isaiah 28:16], Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner."

The **"stone,"** Jesus Christ, is **"precious"**; and He is also a "corner stone." Ephesians 2:20 tells us, "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." Our text lets us know the church's **"light was like unto a stone most precious."** Her **"light"** is like His light (**"a stone"**). The church radiates the light of Christ.

Our text continues, **". . . like a jasper stone, clear as crystal."** *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says, "a crystalline jasper." The Greek word for **"jasper"** is *iaspis*, which is "a translucent rock crystal through which light would come with an almost unbearable scintillation." *Smith's Bible Dictionary* says, "There can be no doubt that the diamond would more adequately answer to the description in the Book of Revelation." John was describing the blinding flash of a diamond in the sun. The word **"jasper"** is first introduced in Revelation, Chapter 4. In verse 1 John was told to "Come up hither." Verses 2-3 tell us: "And immediately I was in the spirit . . . one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone."

When John received a vision of the throne scene, he saw a brilliant, flashing, dazzling light. He never saw God personified, because he subsequently wrote in 1 John 4:12, "No man hath seen God at any time." However, he saw a dazzling, brilliant light. First John 1:5 tells us, "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." He is such a light that 1 Timothy 6:16 says, "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto." That is because it is brilliant and blinding.

Psalms 104:1-2 reads: "Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty. Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment."

God is covered with light; He is light. Light emanated first from the throne. It is what God desired to get down to mankind, so He instituted a new covenant. Revelation 4:3 reads, ". . . and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald." The "rainbow" represents a covenant (Genesis 9:13). This is a new "bow," a new covenant, because it has a different hue. Man had never seen this covenant before.

### Putting on the Life of Christ

Let us follow the progression of light. Again 1 John 1:5 tells us that "God is light." Then Jesus came down to the earth. Speaking of Christ, John 1:4 says, "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." Verse 9 states, "That was the true Light." Jesus told us in John 9:5, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." He is not in the world now, so He is not the light of the world anymore. The saints are the light now. Jesus told His disciples in Matthew 5:14, "Ye are the light." Ephesians 5:8 states, "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord."

Jesus is the testator of the new covenant. Hebrews 9:14-17 tells us: "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth." Jesus sealed the covenant with His blood and ushered in "a new and living way" (Hebrews 10:20).

Light and glory that began with God was transmitted through Jesus Christ and has now come through an experience of salvation to mankind. Our Scripture text says, "**Having the glory of God** [the result of this explanation]: . . . **her** [the church's] **light was like unto a stone** [Christ] **most precious, even like a jasper stone.**" So, the "**jasper**" moved from the Father to the Son and then from the Son to the church. The "**light**" of the "**jasper stone**" is the light of Christ. Let us study what it is exactly. John 1:4 says, "In him [Christ] was life; and the life was the light of men." The light is the life. When the church puts on the life of Christ, it produces the glory of God. Psalm 36:9 states, "For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light."

Philippians 2:15-16 says: "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life." Both the psalmist and the Apostle Paul equated light with the life. The world sees the light when we take hold of the Word and put it on in our lives. That is why pastors are always telling people, "Please measure your life to the message, because that is the only way the world will see the light."

Notice the emphasis of what John wrote in 1 John 1:1-3, which says: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of *life*; (For the *life* was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal *life*, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) [What *life*?] That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you [he was declaring the life he saw], that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." The Greek word for "fellowship" is *koinonia*, which means "share in common." Life is what we share in common; that is what Christ came to bring. Verse 5 reads, "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light . . . ." John was talking about life all the way through those verses. The

light is life!

In John 10:10 Jesus told us His purpose: "I am come that they might have life." Romans 8:2 lets us know, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." The only thing that makes you free from death is life. Romans 6:4 says, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." That is what the New Testament ushered in. Hebrews 10:20 tells us, "By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh." Jesus' flesh was rent so the veil in the Old Testament temple could be rent, and God could get out and enter the hearts of men, bringing "newness of life."

With the institution of the new covenant, Christ ushered in life. Revelation 21:6 tells us: "And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." Jesus was saying the same thing He said on Calvary's tree when He said, "It is finished" (John 19:30). That is when the fountain was opened and the price was paid to make life an availability to mankind. Second Peter 1:3-4 says, "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness . . . Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature . . ." This life came to change man's nature. It enables us to be "partakers of the divine nature."

Hebrews 1:2-3 says: "[God] Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person . . ." One rendering says, ". . . a flawless expression of the nature of God." Jesus said in John 10:30, "I and my Father are one." In John 14:8 Philip asked Jesus to show them the Father. In verse 9, Jesus told him that "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father." When we get saved, Romans 8:29 says we are "conformed to the image of his Son," or *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says we are "to be copies." We become copies of the image of God's Son. Colossians 3:10 says, "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." First John 4:17 tells us that "as he is, so are we in this world." Thus, those who have seen us have seen Christ.

When our Scripture text says the church's light is "**like unto a stone**," it is telling us when our life reflects Christ's life, it produces "**the glory of God**." Christ shares the same image as God; and when we get saved, we share the same image as Christ. Our life is the life of Christ. Christ is in us (Colossians 1:27). John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Verse 4 reads, "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." Verse 9 states, "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Titus 2:11 tells us, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." When people embrace that Light, they receive the life.

John 1:14 says, "And the Word was made flesh . . ." There was an incarnation of God into a physical form. Too many cannot see Christ past the incarnation, but He is "from everlasting" (Micah 5:2). Psalm 90:2 tells us He is "from everlasting to everlasting." In Galatians 4:19 Paul wrote of the necessity that "Christ be formed in you." When we are saved, an incarnation takes place in us: Christ moves in. Just as Christ is the express image of God, we are conformed to the image of Christ. First John 4:17 says, ". . . as he is, so are we in this world." We should be able to say, "He that has seen us has seen Christ." We live in a time when the devil says, "There is nobody who can see the light." But Jesus said it "cannot be hid" (Matthew 5:14)! Just as a dazzling diamond, it will blind men with its brilliance. That is the reason the "**jasper stone**" was employed as a symbol.

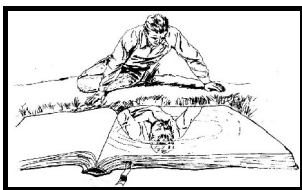
The church is clothed in light just as God. Revelation 12:1 tells us, "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun [Jesus Christ is 'the Sun of righteousness'; Malachi 4:2]." The church puts on the light of Christ; they put on the Word. You cannot separate Christ from His Word. The only way we know anything about Christ or life is through His Word. Romans 13:14 says, "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." Colossians 3:10 tells us, "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." Let us break this down. Who "created him"? Again, Ephesians 3:9 lets us know God "created all things by Jesus Christ." So the "new man" is in the image of Christ. Notice the clause, "which is renewed in knowledge." Second Corinthians 4:16 says that "the inward man is renewed day by day."

When we first put on the "new man," our nature is changed, and we become partakers of Christ's divine nature. However, we also have to recognize at that time our knowledge is imperfect. We are babes in Christ. Peter said in 1 Peter 2:2, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." This is a spiritual growth. Second Peter 3:18 tells us to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge." As we are "renewed day by day," we grow and our knowledge increases. As our knowledge increases, we must access the grace to take hold of that light, or understanding. Then we are more conformed to His image. When we come "unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4), if we are in sectarian religion or isolated, one of the first things we will do is get together with God's people. First Corinthians 12:18 tells us, "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him."

The "city" in Revelation, Chapter 21, is composed of people who have come to a knowledge of the truth, who have been brought together and set in a body, and whose lives are "**clear as crystal.**" You can look upon them and see a clear message. The beauty of our text is the portrayal of people who are not just individually saved but who progress and continue to walk in the light as a collective unit. They continue to have fellowship with God. They share in common this God life, and they are all working together as a collective unit with others who share in common this life.

People ought to look at our lives and see a clear message. They ought to know what comes over the pulpit by what they see in our lives. We are a representation of the message. Again, Philippians 2:15-16 says that "ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life." The only way we shine as lights is by taking the Word and putting it on in our life. That creates the brilliant light, the city that cannot be hid! That is why the enemy does everything in his power to hinder people from measuring to the Word, from keeping pace with light.

Our text talks about the church's "**light**" being like Christ's and being "**most precious.**" It is "**precious**" because it is rare. It is "**like a jasper stone,**" a translucent, clear stone that reflects and radiates the dazzling light of the sun. It is "**clear as crystal.**" The saints are walking in the understanding of God's Word that they have received. Ezekiel received a vision of the four living creatures (a picture of the redeemed of all ages). Ezekiel 1:22 tells us that "the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creature was as the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above." What does "terrible crystal . . . over their heads" mean?



**God's Word Is a Mirror**

One aspect is that when our minds become enlightened, when we grow in grace and in knowledge, we gain a greater understanding of precious truth. Then, we lay hold of the grace to put it on. Our minds are "**clear as crystal,**" because they reflect the Word. The Word will then shine forth "**clear as crystal,**" and others will see it through our lives.

Second Corinthians 3:18 states, "But we all, with open face be-



holding as in a glass [or the Greek says 'mirror'; the mirror of God's Word; James 1:22-24] the glory of the Lord, [then as we see the glory of God, we] are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." John 1:16 speaks of "grace for grace," and 2 Corinthians 3:18 talks about "from glory to glory." When we come into a worship service and the mirror of God's Word is held up, God shows us **"the glory of God,"** which is Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:2-3). God's Word holds up the image of Christ. As we see that image, we see our shortcomings, and then we gain knowledge and understanding. We may have been walking in all the grace and glory God had for us up to that time, but when we see more, we get "grace for grace." That causes us to move "from glory to glory," or to be more and more conformed to the image of Christ. In so doing, we can radiate this dazzling light out to the world.

The world can see when we put on truth, and that causes **"the glory of God."** Then, as others behold the church, they get a crystal-clear message of what truth is and what they need to do. Our Scripture text depicts a people working together as a collective unit, walking in the same **"light,"** measuring to the same truths, and thus revealing the image of Christ. Their witness is **"clear as crystal."** Matthew 5:14 says this city "cannot be hid." So, "he that doeth truth cometh to the light" (John 3:21).

### **Conforming to the Image of Christ Includes Wearing His Uniform**

As God's people, we need to be cautious. In the song "The Holy Remnant," published in *The Evening Light Hymnal*, Brother D. S. Warner wrote: "*Have you learned that all this remnant Must be dressed in uniform? Are you clothed in that white raiment, That will shine before the throne?*" We are to be in uniform. What confusion it would work in the military if they all wore different uniforms! However, everyone in the same army wears the same uniform. Likewise, God's people must wear the same uniform: "the righteousness of saints" (Revelation 19:8). We live in a time when a spirit of compromise causes many to not walk in the same light as the rest of the saints. However, we are all to be conformed to the image of Christ.

I cannot imagine Christ painting His face, wearing makeup. I cannot imagine Him coloring His hair. "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity" (Ecclesiastes 1:2). I cannot imagine Jesus decking Himself out with jewelry or being immodest. If we will show forth His light, then we must walk in the same light, measure to the same truths, and reveal the image of Christ. There are honest hearts in the world who are looking for the **"light."** The enemy of souls will make you feel there are not, but if that was true, the church would not have the message: "Come out of her, my people" (Revelation 18:4). God still has people in sectarian religions. When the last one is out and the last soul is saved, He will come. That He has not come lets us know there is work yet to be done. There are souls yet to be saved and people yet to be delivered from Babylon.

As saints, we have a tremendous responsibility upon us. Ephesians 5:15-17 says: "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." For the word "circumspectly," *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says "accurately." What does that mean? Hebrews 12:13 tells us, "And make straight paths for your feet [why?], lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed." There are those who are following, there are those who are watching, and there are those who have trouble walking straight. When they look at a supposed mature saint who is not walking straight, the enemy will tell them, "If they can't make it, there's no use in you trying." However, if they see saints with straight feet, it will inspire them to say to God, "If You can do it for them, You can do it for me." Rather than being "turned

out of the way," they can "be healed."

Hebrews 12:14 reads, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." That is not talking about the Second Advent; every eye will see Him then. Right now, the only way the world will see the Lord is through our holy lives, through our walking straight, circumspectly, and accurately. Our light must be as His light, our life as His life. The Apostle John wrote in 1 John 2:6, "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." The lesson John received in our Scripture text is that the true church walks as Christ walks, lives as He lives, and has the same life He had. Every time the saints (who make up the church) receive more understanding of His Word so they can live better lives, they measure right up to it. The church is "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:27). What a beautiful vision to behold!

In a religious world where people are conformed to "the image of the beast" (Revelation 13:15), thank God for a church conformed to the image of God's Son! False religion is in terrible confusion. They cannot see clearly because the smoke coming out of the pit (Revelation 9:2) has blinded their eyes. However, God is faithful! He has "a great city" on "a great and high mountain" (Revelation 21:10) to shine forth and radiate His precious truths. Thus, mankind can see the way out of darkness and confusion.

I am so glad I saw the church! The Lord is working through His people so others can see it. Let us walk in the light of it, so our "**light**" is just like Christ's, "**even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.**" Thus, men can see "**the glory of God,**" and those who are honest will come to the "**light.**" If we will do our part, God will see that His Word will perform its role. Thank God for this positive picture portrayed before us!



## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE—PART FIVE

### The Wall, Gates, and Angels of the City

*Revelation 21:12 And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:*

*13 On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.*

#### "A Wall Great and High"

In these verses, the Revelator progressed past the first features of the church and began to provide specific, descriptive details of it: the "**wall**," the "**gates**," and the "**angels**." As we examine these verses, we must be mindful of some truths. First, there is significance and divine design incorporated in every word that is within the sacred Scriptures; there are no superfluous words. Second, the language of our text is symbolic. Third, our text has no reference to God's Heaven whatsoever. In Revelation 21:9-10, "the bride, the Lamb's wife" and "that great city, the holy Jerusalem" are both symbolic descriptions of the church. Fourth, our text takes place in the evening time. In reality, it is a vision of the evening-time church.

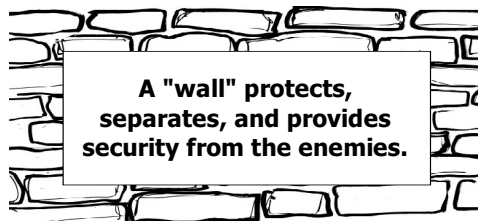
**Verse 12** of our text begins with the conjunction "**And**," uniting it with the prior verses when John first received a vision of this "great city." **Verse 12** tells us that it "**had a wall great and high**." Notice that the "**wall**" is singular. Throughout this chapter, that "**wall**" is always singular (verses 14-15 and 17-19). The word *walls*, in the plural, does not even appear in the Revelation. That will take on significance as we study.

Verse 17 tells us that the "**wall**" measured "an hundred and forty and four cubits." That equates to 266 feet high. **Verse 12** says this "**wall**" is not only "**high**," but it is also "**great**." To see how "**great**" it is, look at the dimensions of the city. Verse 16 says that it "lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs [1,500 miles]." This "**wall**" was 1,500 miles on each of the four sides; thus, its perimeter was 6,000 miles.

The famous Scottish expositor, Dr. William Barclay, wrote that "the total area of the city was 2,250,000 square miles. . . . hat area would stretch nearly from London to New York." This "**wall**" goes about the city 1,500 miles in each of the four directions to surround it, for a total of 6,000 miles. Literalism is certainly out of the picture. There has never been a literal city of those dimensions. We are dealing in symbolism. The Great Wall of China is 4,000 miles long, but this city has a wall that has a 6,000 mile perimeter. This is "**a wall great and high!**"

What does the "**wall**" in our text represent? Isaiah 26:1 says, "In that day [in the Gospel Day] shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city [the same city as in our text]; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks." *The Greek-English Septuagint* says "its wall." The "**wall**" is salvation. The city is strong because it has a good "**wall**" around it to protect it, to insulate it, and to separate it. It is important that this "**wall**" is singular because there is only *one* salvation! In Acts 4:12 Peter said, "Neither is there salvation in any other." He was speaking of "Jesus Christ of Nazareth" (verse 10). There is no salvation in Mohammed, Hari Krishna, Buddha, Confucius, or any other supposed deity or system of religion. Salvation comes exclusively through Jesus Christ. Acts 4:12 continues, ". . . for there is none other name under

heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am *the* way, *the* truth, and *the* life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."



Our text proclaims the **"wall"** is **"great and high."** Other Scriptures also talk about it being **"great."** Hebrews 2:3 asks, "How shall we escape, if we neglect *so great* salvation"? This **"great"** **"wall"** is "great salvation." What is the purpose of a **"wall"**? Ancient cities were almost always walled cities. Deuteronomy 3:3-4 talks about the conquering of "three-

score cities." Verse 5 says, "All these cities were fenced with high walls, gates, and bars." That was the common practice. They were walled for security and separation. A **"wall"** is to protect and separate from wild beasts and enemies, and salvation will protect and separate you from wild beasts. There are a lot of wild beasts out there, spiritually speaking. John "saw a beast rise up out of the sea" (Revelation 13:1). *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* calls it a "wild beast." That is the papal beast, which could not get enough of the blood of the saints. It was ferocious and vicious. During the Dark Ages, there were between fifty and sixty million martyrs! Revelation 13:11 speaks of the religious system of Protestantism, another wild beast. However, salvation in the evening time provides a separation from all the false religions. It will put you in a secure position, protecting you from those falsities.

A **"wall"** provides security against enemies. Second Samuel 11:24 says, "And the shooters shot from off the wall upon thy servants; and some of the king's servants be dead . . ." Salvation provides protection against the enemy of our souls. A **"wall"** also serves as a line of demarcation—a separation between who is *in* and who is *out*. In Isaiah 52:1 the prophet exclaimed, "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean." The **"wall"** (salvation) separates the clean and the unclean; it keeps sin out and saints in. When you start talking about the good things of God amongst your worldly friends or associates, notice how quickly they separate from you.

The **"wall"** has an important role. Ephesians 5:27 speaks of "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Revelation 21:27 tells us, "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." The only ones in the city are those who have been saved and have new life.

In prior study, we found the church's "light was like unto a stone most precious [Christ]" (Revelation 21:11). The church is in His image, and Christ is in the very image of God, portrayed as a "jasper." Let us bring that into our study concerning the **"wall."** Hebrews 7:26 states, "For such an high priest [Christ; Hebrews 3:1] became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners . . ." Real salvation will separate you from sinners. You will not shun and mistreat them, but your nature, your desires, and your associates will be different. Christ was separate from sinners, and so is the church.

In Ephesians 5:11 the Apostle Paul penned, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." Not only is the church separate from sinners, but it is also separate from Babylon. Second Corinthians 6:17 tells us, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord . . ." The holy Jerusalem is not Babylon; it is separate from Babylon. Remember, we are seeing a vision of the church as a collective unit. Psalm 122:2-3 says: "Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together." Ephesians also speaks of the church being "compact." Ephe-

sians 4:13 talks about "the unity of the faith." Then verse 16 says, "From whom the whole body [the analogy of a body is used instead of a city] fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth . . . ." For this collective unit to operate as God intended, every person who comprises it must also do the part God intended them to do.

Jesus said in John 17:15-16: "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Once you enter into this city, you are not of the world anymore. You are a citizen of another country and a fellow citizen with the saints. The church is separate from the world and worldliness. If worldliness comes in, the people who take hold of it go out. It is separate from sectism and secure from predators and enemies. Jesus said in Matthew 16:18 that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

### "Twelve Gates" and "Twelve Angels"

Psalm 87:3 says, "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God." This glorious city would be useless to man without a way provided to enter into it. **Verse 12** of our text says it **"had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel."** The number **"twelve"** and multiples of **"twelve"** are prominent throughout Revelation, Chapter 21. **"Twelve"** represents completeness and perfection.

**"Gates"** represent a mode of entrance. Isaiah 26:1-2 states: "We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates [in the **'wall'**], that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in." If the **"wall"** was merely to keep people out, there would not be **"gates."** However, God does not want to keep people *out*; He just wants them to come *in* the right way.

In our text, each of the **"gates"** had an attendant, or a guardian. The attendants were **"twelve angels,"** symbolic of ministers. Revelation 21:25 tells us, "And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there." The **"gates"** of this city are not shut, because God wants all to enter. Second Peter 3:9 says the Lord is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." However, everyone must come in by way of the **"angels,"** or through the message. In Romans 1:16 Paul said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation . . . ."

Remember, the **"wall"** is salvation. God wants people to get into this experience of salvation, but they have to come by the way of the **"angels."** Romans 10:13-14 tells us: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" You cannot separate the angel and the message, because the message gets out through the ministry.

Some people want to come in independent of the ministry or independent of the Word, but they are not getting in. You have to come by both the angel and the message. Isaiah 62:6 says, "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night." Verse 10 reads, "Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people." Verse 12 states, "And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken." It takes a ministry with the message for people to enter into the strong city. The ministry seeks them out with the message.

What is the message that seeks people out? **Verse 12** of our text speaks of "**names written**" on the "**gates,**" "**which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.**" To be a part of the literal twelve tribes of the children of Israel, you had to be born into one of the tribes. Also, each of the twelve sons of Israel were circumcised. Therefore, to enter this city, to be a part of the church, you must be born in (born again) and be spiritually circumcised. Psalm 87:5-6 tells us: "And of Zion [the church] it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her. The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there." To get in the "**city,**" Jesus taught in John 3:7, "Ye must be born again." You have to have a heavenly birth. Just as it took a literal birth to become a natural Israelite, it takes a spiritual birth to become a spiritual Israelite.

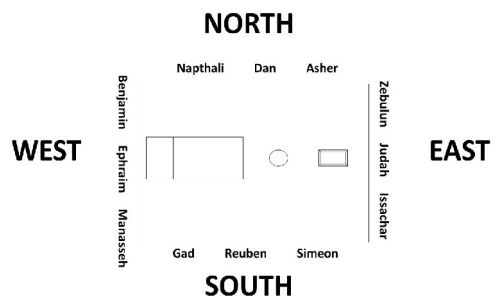
With the new covenant, circumcision has changed. Romans 2:28-29 states: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." Circumcision has gone from being a literal act to being a spiritual reality. Colossians 2:11-12 says: "In whom [Christ] also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." There is now a spiritual birth and a spiritual circumcision.

As we look at the "**twelve gates**" in our text, we need to recognize the only way we can get into the "**wall**" is to come by the angel, or by the message. We must have a new birth and the circumcision of Christ. Then we will be no longer uncircumcised and unclean. Instead we will become a part of the Israel of God. There was a transition with Christ. Genesis, Chapter 32, lets us know Jacob's name was changed from Jacob (which means "supplanter or trickster") to Israel (which means "prevailed with God or prince with God or power with God"). Who has the power with God in the New Testament? The New Testament "Israel of God" are those who "walk according to this rule" of "a new creature" (Galatians 6:15-16). They have been born again; so now they have power with God.

### Four Directions

**Verse 13** says, "**On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.**" Again, this is an allusion to Hebrew imagery. Ezekiel 48:31-35 tells us: "And the gates of the city shall be after the names of the tribes of Israel: three gates northward; one gate of Reuben, one gate of Judah, one gate of Levi. And at the east side four thousand and five hundred [talking about the measurement] and three gates; and one gate of Joseph, one gate of Benjamin, one gate of Dan. And at the south side four thousand and five hundred measures: and three gates; one gate of Simeon, one gate of Issachar, one gate of Zebulun. At the west side four thousand and five hundred, with their three gates; one gate of Gad, one gate of Asher, one gate of Naphtali [the twelve tribes]. It was round about eighteen thousand measures: and the name of the city from that day shall be, The LORD is there." What a description of this great city! The presence of God is there.

The four directions mentioned in Ezekiel and in our text are reminiscent of when old Israel camped



on all four sides of the presence of God. In Numbers, Chapter 2, the Lord told Moses and Aaron how they should pitch the camp while they were on their sojourn. The formation for the camp was three tribes for each of the four directions. Verse 17 says, "Then the tabernacle of the congregation shall set forward with the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camp." The twelve tribes were broken down into four major divisions with the tabernacle in the middle.

Under the old economy, only old Israel enjoyed the presence of God; He dwelt in their midst. In our lesson text, in the New Testament dispensation, only the true church enjoys the presence of God. You cannot find His presence everywhere. He is not in Babylon, but He is in Holy Jerusalem, where the Israelites are camping. Revelation 21:23 tells us, "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." The presence of God is right in the midst of that great city, the Church of the Living God.

In the Old Testament, "**the twelve tribes of the children of Israel**" comprised *all* of God's people. Likewise, in this New Testament the church will be comprised of *all* of God's people. However, there is a distinct difference between the two. In the Old Testament, the presence of God was covered and concealed in the second room of the Old Testament tabernacle. They could not really enjoy it in its fullness, but now Revelation 21:3 tells us that "the tabernacle of God is *with men*." It is not covered and concealed anymore! We can each possess His presence!

All of God's people are being gathered into this city. When time reels into eternity, every spiritual Israelite will be in Jerusalem, the Church of the Living God. Jeremiah 51:2 says, "And will send unto Babylon fanners, that shall fan her, and shall empty her land." God is going to empty Babylon through His "fanners," the angels that stand at the gate with the message, preaching God's eternal Word. Honest hearts will come leaping, shouting home to Zion. What you see with the naked eye seems to belie these truths, but two seconds before the Red Sea parted and Egypt's army was drowned, the facts would seem to belie the truth then too. Before Christ makes His Second Advent, the last true saint in sectism will come out and come home to this holy city.

"**Gates**" on all sides of the four directions in our text reveal the universal nature of the church. Saints will be gathered of all nations from all directions. God desires this city to be *inclusive* not *exclusive*. Revelation 7:9 says, "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." In Matthew 28:19 Jesus said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations [universally] . . . ." Mark 16:15 says, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." It is a universal message.

In Matthew 24:31 we read, "And he shall send his angels [His ministry] with a great sound of a trumpet [the sounding out of the Word of God], and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Also, Luke 13:28-29 says: "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God." It is universal, and it is all-inclusive.

### A Gathering Work

Let us look a little deeper at the "**twelve tribes**" spoken of in our text. Numbers, Chapter 2, mentions the original divisions; but when we compare it to Ezekiel's prophecy, we see an entirely new arrangement. Numbers 2:3-7 lets us know on "the east side," it was Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. However Ezekiel 48:32 says that "the east side" was Joseph, Benjamin, and Dan.



Not one side was the same as it originally was. There is a new arrangement for a new Jerusalem. Instead of being on the outside around a confined concealed presence, the new Israel is part of the **"wall"** and even serves as the **"gates"** to help provide access to others. It is a new Jerusalem, which is totally different than anything before.

In our text, the **"twelve tribes"** show us the continuity between the church in the morning time and the church in the evening time. Revelation, Chapter 7, describes the "hundred and forty and four thousand," which shows a complete transition from the old economy to the new in the morning time. Each tribe had twelve thousand sealed. Twelve (a Biblical number of perfection and completeness) multiplied by such a multiple makes it the apex of perfection! Then, in the evening time, Revelation 14:1 says, "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand." There was a complete restoration in the evening time. Although there was a dark age and a dark and cloudy day, Jesus is leading His people back to the light of the morning time.

The **"gates"** in our text portray attributes of the church. Each one of the names for the tribes in Ezekiel, Chapter 48, had a significance.

- Reuben means "see, a son." You will never get into this city if you do not get a vision of Christ.
- Judah means "praise." Levi means "adhesive," or "joined." We must be an adhesive; we must stick.
- Joseph means "fruitful." That is what every one of us should be.
- Benjamin means "son of the right hand."
- Dan means "judgment," or "he that judges."
- Simeon means "hearing with acceptance." We need to hear the Gospel with acceptance.
- Issachar means "reward."
- Zebulun means "wished for habitation."
- Gad means "a troop." Asher means "blessed, or blessedness."
- Naphtali means "my wrestling." We need to do some wrestling for the souls of mankind, and we need to realize we are a troop, not individuals.

When our lives manifest these attributes, it opens the city to others. The instruction in Isaiah 26:2 was, "Open ye the gates." Who is to open them? You and I are to open them. How do we open the **"gates"**? Isaiah 60:18 tells us, "Violence shall no more be heard in thy land [this is a peaceful city], wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise." As we put on the attributes of the church in our lives and live them out, it ought to produce praise. As we produce praise, it opens the **"gates."** It helps others to see the truth; it points men to Christ.

Jesus said in John 10:9, "I am the door." John 10:1 lets us know, "He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." False religion supposedly has many other ways, but the only way to get into this city, the church, is through "the door." People will desire to enter if they see the saints putting on these attributes, happily living them out, and praising God. Psalm 144:15 says, ". . . happy is that people, whose God is the LORD." The angel can proclaim the message faithfully, but nothing will cause honest hearts to want to come through the **"gates"** like seeing a satisfied people who are full of praise and joy. Their lives cry out: "Come and join us! It is the best thing you've ever seen! Come on in, get in! Praise God!"

Some people say their organization was founded in 1872 or 1830 or some other date. Some people are under the mistaken impression the Church of God started in 1880. However, that is not true. In Matthew 16:18 Jesus proclaimed, "I will build my church." The true church is a

divine property that Christ instituted. The Church of God was "purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). This occurred in A.D. 33, and on the Day of Pentecost in A.D. 33. The church was formally instituted when "the earth [was] made to bring forth in one day" and "a nation [was] born at once" (Isaiah 66:8). Anything before A.D. 33 is too early, and anything after A.D. 33 is too late! Ephesians 5:27 tells us that "he might present it to himself a glorious church." This glorious presentation occurred in A.D. 33, when the Church of God was established.

The "**twelve angels**" at the "**twelve gates**" in our text portray a gathering work. With a message they are bringing a people into the city. Zechariah 8:3 says, "Thus saith the LORD; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain." Verses 6-8 read: "Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvellous in mine eyes? saith the LORD of hosts. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country; And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness."

Coming "unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4) does not just occur. It will not occur if people are just sitting at home reading their Bibles, as a rule. First Corinthians 12:18 tells us that "now hath God set the members every one of them in the body." Because of the confusion in the religious realm, many members are cut off. They are like the dry bones in Ezekiel 37:11. "They have been scattered [in Babylon] in the cloudy and dark day" (Ezekiel 34:12), and they need "fanners" to get them out (Jeremiah 51:2).

Another analogy shows today's ministry as "hunters," because people are hid in false systems. Revelation 6:15-16 says: "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us . . . ." They are hiding themselves in "lies" and "falsehood" (Isaiah 28:15). What is going to get them out of falsehood? Isaiah 28:17 says, "Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail [solid truth] shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place." Who is going to hunt them out? Jeremiah 16:16 tells us, "Behold, I will send for many fishers [in the morning time], saith the LORD, and they shall fish them; and after [or in the evening time] will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks."

To come to the knowledge of the truth, someone has to present that knowledge. That is where the "**twelve angels**" come in. Jeremiah 3:15 states, "And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." Revelation 18:1-2 says: "And after these things I saw another angel [or a ministry] come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice [not weak-kneed and apologetic], saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird."

After people heard the "strong voice," Revelation 18:4 lets us know, "And I heard another voice [the voice of the Holy Spirit] from heaven, saying, Come out . . . ." They did not hear the voice of the Spirit saying "Come out" until they heard a ministry with a message decrying the conditions. Men must hear before they can be moved. On the Day of Pentecost, there were a lot of things going on, but nobody was saved until Peter preached. Acts 2:37 tells us, "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" They were not "pricked" until they "heard." Men still have to hear the message to gain an understanding.

The **"angels"** and the **"gates"** in our text portray the message and the work being done in this evening time to bring a people to salvation and truth. They show it takes both a ministry heralding the message and the people putting on the message. Then when the people offer praise to God, it opens the **"gates."** While the **"gates"** are not shut, they are shut in many people's minds and lives because of disillusionment with religion and disappointment with people. Those who are in that condition need to see a people who have the attributes exhibited in the names of those twelve tribes, a people who are praising God.

Those who are part of new Israel, those who are in the **"wall"** and serve as the **"gates,"** are in a very responsible position. Isaiah 26:2 says to "Open ye the gates," and Isaiah 60:18 tells us the gates are "Praise." We must offer God the praise, so people can see as we live the message, we are satisfied in the message. Then those who are in sin or sectism and who are honest-hearted can come and find satisfaction is in this great city, the New Jerusalem, "the church of the living God" (1 Timothy 3:15)!

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE—PART SIX

### The Foundations and Measurement of the City

*Revelation 21:14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*

*15 And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.*

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

*17 And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.*

#### Twelve Foundation Stones

In this portion of the Revelator's apocalyptic vision, the Apostle John continued to describe specific details of "that great city, the holy Jerusalem" (Revelation 21:10). He described the "**foundations**" and the measurement (dimensions) of "**the city.**" **Verse 14** says, "**And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.**" Verse 11 referred to Christ as "a stone most precious." He is "a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation" (Isaiah 28:16). So, why does our text say this "**city had twelve foundations,**" when 1 Corinthians 3:11 says, "For other foundation can no many lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ"? Why does verse 12 tell us there are "twelve gates [plural]," yet Jesus said in John 10:9, "I am the door [singular]." Are these contradictions? No, they are symbols using another form of analogy. The Word of God is not *contradictory* but *complementary*. The symbols complement and enhance each other, showing different aspects of the same truths.

The Amplified Bible makes **verse 14** a little clearer, saying there are "twelve foundation stones." Ephesians 2:20-21 reads: "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together . . . ." The "foundation stones" are all "fitly framed together" to "the chief corner stone," Jesus Christ.

In Revelation 12:1 John received a vision of the morning-time church in her pristine glory, wearing "a crown of twelve stars." Stars are God's luminary agents; a star led the wise men to Christ. Likewise, the ministry are God's luminary agents. The "crown of twelve stars" represents "**the twelve apostles**" (or the initial ministry of the morning-time church; Revelation 1:16, 20), showing us that "stars" represent the ministry. When we see the evening-time church in our text, we see "**the twelve apostles.**" That teaches us we are getting back to the light of the morning, back to the apostles' doctrine that had been lost sight of during the morning-time apostasy, the Dark Ages, and the dark and cloudy day. Thank God, in this evening time it is light (Zechariah 14:7)!

We need to recognize the symbolism used in our text. Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone, but a building with only a cornerstone is not much of a building. There are also "**twelve**" foundation stones, which are the apostles' doctrine. Acts 2:42 says, "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine . . . ." The apostles laid foundational truths, and when the vision of the church was restored and revealed in the evening time, those truths were still right there in place.

The Apostle Paul wrote Timothy to "charge some that they teach no other doctrine" (1 Timothy 1:3). The Apostles wanted the foundation stones laid straight, and they wanted everything built on them to line up with them. They were vitally interested in doctrine. First Timothy 1:9-11 states: "Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust." "Sound doctrine" is "the glorious gospel of the blessed God." It was committed to Paul's trust.

The apostles repeatedly laid down the foundation stones. In Titus 2:1 Paul wrote, "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine." Titus 2:10 reads, "Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn [wear it, exhibit it, display it] the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." Today people decry doctrine as "unimportant." You hear them make statements such as, "Don't preach doctrine; just preach Jesus." However, you cannot separate them. Second Timothy 3:16 tells us, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine . . . ." John 1:1 tells us that "the Word was with God, and the Word was God," and John 1:14 says that "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." You cannot separate Jesus Christ from doctrine. Doctrine is Scripture, and Scripture is doctrine; and it is all Jesus, because He is the Word.

Look how strong John was about doctrine. He said in 2 John 9-11: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." It was important to him, and he was one of the "**twelve Apostles**" whose name was in the "**foundations.**"

Look at some charges Jesus brought to the congregations in Asia Minor. He said, "So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate" (Revelation 2:15). Jesus considered doctrine vital and false doctrine repulsive. Some false doctrines can take you right to "the depths of Satan" (Revelation 2:24). **Revelation 21:14** says, "**And the wall [the salvation; Isaiah 26:1] of the city [the church; Revelation 21:9-10] had twelve foundations [or foundation stones], and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb [who laid down the sound doctrine upon which our experience and the church are built].**" Paul used the analogy of a building, very similar to the building of a city. He said in 1 Corinthians 3:9-10: "For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation [teaching the truth of Jesus Christ as it was divinely revealed to him], and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed *how* he buildeth thereupon." Each of us is building on that foundation. We need to make certain it is plumbed and lined, not only to the Chief Corner Stone but also to the apostles' doctrine.

### **The Ministry Has the Measuring Rod**

In **verse 15** of our text, who "**talked with**" John? Verse 9 says it was "one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues." We already established it was one of the evening-time ministers (Revelation 15:1 and 16:2). This angel, according to **verse 15**, "**had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.**" The ministry

measures **"the city"** (the church), **"the gates"** (the message and attributes by which the New Israel enters), and **"the wall"** (their experience of salvation) to the foundation stones, particularly to the Chief Corner Stone.

Isaiah 28:16-17 tells us: "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion [the church; Hebrews 12:22-23] for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone [Jesus Christ; Ephesians 2:20], a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet." A "line" and a "plummet" keep the building square. It has to be plumbed and lined to the foundation. God gave us Jesus Christ and the apostles' doctrine so we know His Word and His will. Thus, we know what to line up to.

Remember, saints are the ones in **"the wall."** After the time of Babylonian captivity, the Medio-Persians came to the throne (Cyrus and Darius). This was a type of "the kings of the east" (Revelation 16:12), or the Word and the Spirit, that allowed God's people to go back and rebuild. Nehemiah 4:6 tells us, "So built we the wall" (a type of the evening time). God's people have come back to "the city" (Jerusalem), and now they are building **"the wall."** Ephesians 2:19 tells us all of God's children are "fellowcitizens with the saints," and they "are builded together" (verse 22) "upon the foundation of the apostles" (verse 20).

The glorious picture in our text shows the evening-time church. God's people are not bound by the teachings, doctrines, dogmas, and dictates of men. Instead, they take "judgment" that is laid "to the line" and "righteousness" that is laid "to the plummet" (Isaiah 28:17). They will square up, build straight, and live straight. Going back to "that which was from the beginning" (1 John 1:1), they will take the apostles' doctrine and plumb to Jesus Christ. They will be cautious how they build their experience, how they build their lives, because they want the building (the church) to be square.

First Corinthians 3:10-13 tells us: ". . . But let every man *take heed* how *he* buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver,

**CROWN OF TWELVE STARS = the Twelve Apostles**  
**THE TWELVE APOSTLES = the initial morning-time ministry**  
**CHIEF CORNERSTONE = Christ**  
**TWELVE FOUNDATION STONES = the Apostles' doctrine**  
**THE WALL = salvation**  
**THE CITY = the church**

precious stones [durable and precious things that will last or], wood, hay, stubble [things of little value and that will not survive the refiner's fire]; Every man's work shall be made manifest." The saints (the ones in **"the wall"**) have an experience of salvation, but they need to "take heed." Thank God for the **"angel"** (ministry) who has a measuring **"reed"** to make sure the city stays square!

First Peter 2:1-5 tells us: "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, [When building Solomon's temple, there could not be a sound of a tool; all the stones had to be hewn out and fitted to size back in the quarry (1 Kings 6:7). That is the way it is with salvation; we lay aside all these evil things before we become part of the wall.] As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a living stone [the 'chief corner stone'; verse 6] . . . Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house . . ." We are "lively stones"; we are a part of the **"wall."** We are building on the Chief Cornerstone and the foundational truths the Apostles laid down.

The measuring **"reed"** (verse 15) is spoken of throughout prophecy. Zechariah 2:1-5 says: "I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand.

Then said I, Whither goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem [the church], to see what is the breadth thereof, and what is the length thereof. And, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him, And said unto him, Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein: For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her." Measuring to the "**reed**" is what produces the glory. The light shines so brilliantly in the Church of God because it is a church where the people "**measure**" to the message.

Ezekiel 40:2-3 states: "In the visions of God brought he me into the land of Israel, and set me upon a very high mountain [Revelation 21:10], by which was as the frame of a city on the south. And he brought me thither, and, behold, there was a man, whose appearance was like the appearance of brass [Christ; Revelation 1:15], with a line of flax in his hand, and a measuring reed; and he stood in the gate." Nobody will get through the gate unless they measure to the "**reed**." Remember, each of the twelve "**gates**" had an angel (Revelation 21:12). You cannot get through the "**gates**" unless you come by the message.

The Book of Ezekiel shows Christ has "a measuring reed." Therefore, when **verse 15** of our text says, "**And he that talked with me had a golden reed,**" that "**he**" was "one of the seven angels" (verse 9). Thus, when the "**angel**" measures us, it is truly Christ who is measuring us. The "**reed**" started out in the hand of Christ, but it was given to the ministry when it was portrayed as being handed to John in the morning time (Revelation 11:1). When John returned from the isle of Patmos, he wrote First, Second, and Third John (chronologically the last books of the Bible). Those books are straight. If you can measure to them, you can measure to everything else in God's Word.

Revelation 11:1 says the "reed" is "like unto a rod." Micah 6:9 tells us, "The LORD'S voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod . . ." "The LORD'S voice" (the Word of God) is the "reed like unto a rod." God measures His church by His Word, through His ministry. Micah 7:14 states, "Feed thy people with thy rod . . ." Who is supposed to do that? In Acts 20:28 Paul told the ministry, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God . . ." The ministry is to feed the church the Word of God (2 Timothy 4:2).

In order for "**the city**," "**the gates**," and "**the wall**" to stay straight, there has to be a faithful ministry with a "**golden reed**." Hebrews 2:1 tells us, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." If there is a natural inclination for things to slip when we hear them, how much more quickly will they slip away if we do not hear them?

The "**reed**" is a "**golden reed**." "**Golden**" denotes purity and preciousness. It also refers to being tried and refined. The ministry measures the church, the New Israel that comprises it, and their experiences. To remain the perfect people God wants them to be, they need a faithful ministry with a "**golden reed**." The measuring reed measures out sin. There is no sin in the church. Isaiah 52:1 says, "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean." It measures out worldliness: worldly dress and worldly activities. It will also measure out compromise, apostasy, and deception.

Jesus said in Matthew 7:13, "Enter ye in at the strait gate." The word "strait" does not mean *straight*. In the Greek, it is *stenos*, which means, "narrow, counter to natural inclinations." So the gate is narrow, not broad. Verse 13 continues, ". . . for wide is the gate, and broad is the way,

that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat." There is a broad way that will let people take sin with them, but the narrow way will not. It is not broad enough for sin, worldliness, compromise, apostasy, and deception. When those things work on an individual, either they go out or that individual goes out. Matthew 13:41 tells us the Lord desires to "gather out of his kingdom all things that offend." But if people will not turn loose of the "things" and measure up, He will remove "them." Matthew 7:14 says, "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." This verse is not saying that few find the gate or the way because "the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11). It is saying that "few" find the "life," because they want to keep all the broad things.

The enemy is working to keep the "**angel**" from measuring and the people from measuring up. We live in a very deceptive age when people walk in direct contradiction to the sound teachings of God's eternal Word and still feel they are clear candidates for Heaven. Yet, all the time, they are ready to split hell wide open. When the minister lays down the "reed like unto a rod," they dislike it. They will not accept it. However, everyone in this "great city," the Church of God, is measured *by* the message and measured *to* the message. That is why it is such a glorious city.

People who are truly in the church are measured to the apostles' doctrine: "That which was from the beginning" (1 John 1:1). They have gotten back to the original, back to the foundation stones. Someone may say, "I know people who are not measured up." If so, they are not in "**the city**." It is just that simple. The church is only made up of a people who live the message. The Scriptures make provision for growth and the gaining of understanding, but every saint walks in the light he or she has received (1 John 1:7).

### The Dimensions of "the City"

Consider the dimensions in **verses 16-17**. "**Twelve thousand furlongs**" equates to fifteen hundred miles. That is just *one* side of this "**city**." "**The length is as large as the breadth**." Therefore, the total area of "**the city**" is 2,250,000 square miles. The famous Scottish expositor, Dr. William Barclay, wrote, "A city with that area would stretch nearly from London to New York." These dimensions are so large, they are almost unimaginable. There has never been a "**city**" so large or so high. It is fifteen hundred miles high on top of a "great and high mountain" (verse 10). We can immediately dismiss literalism. This symbolism is designed to convey God's church is large enough to accommodate *all*. There is room for all!



**Babylon Was Built in a Perfect Square**

The dimensions of "**the city**" reveal several truths. First, this far exceeds anything man can make. I have heard people make this statement: "Well, it is almost like the Church of God." However, they have seen nothing "almost like" this city; it is a great city. Brother F. G. Smith in *The Revelation Explained* wrote on page 432, "The ancient city of Babylon with its beautiful hanging gardens, the very triumph of human skill, and the city itself lying in a foursquare, being fifteen miles on each side was unsurpassed in human loveliness." Babylon had fifteen mile sides, but the church has fifteen hundred mile sides. That is an hundred times greater! Babylon does not even compare to the church. Not only does this "**city**," the church, far exceed anything man can build in dimensions, beauty, or wealth, but it is also a perfect cube. The latter portion of **verse 16** says, "**The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal**." In the ancient world, the cube was the symbol of perfection.

It was common in Old Testament times for cities to be built in the form of a square. Babylon and Nineveh were both foursquare. Plato and Aristotle, the great philosophers, refer to the fact



that in Greece a good man was called "foursquare." To the Greek and also to the Jew, the perfect cube was the perfect shape. The brasen altar (Exodus 27:1), the golden altar (Exodus 30:2), and the high priest's breastplate (Exodus 28:15-16) were all foursquare. When Solomon built his temple, the holy of holies was a perfect cube. First Kings 6:20 says, "And the oracle in the forefront was twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in the height thereof: and he overlaid it with pure gold."

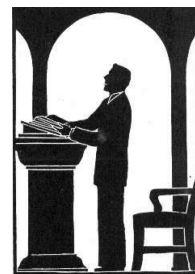
In Ezekiel's prophecies, he repeatedly spoke of the dimensions of a square and a cube. Historians have said, "There has never been anything built like Ezekiel describes." That is because Ezekiel was receiving visions symbolic of New Testament realities. Ezekiel 41:21 states, "The posts of the temple were squared, and the face of the sanctuary; the appearance of the one as the appearance of the other." Also, Ezekiel 43:16 says, "And the altar shall be twelve cubits long, twelve broad, square in the four squares thereof."

In our text, the whole "**city**" is a perfect cube. Deuteronomy 32:4 tells us, "He is the Rock, his work is perfect." The Rock is Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4), and His work is perfect. Ephesians 2:10 tells us that "we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus." In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said, "I will build my church." The perfect work of Christ is the Church of the Living God. **Verse 16** of our Scripture text tells us that "**he measured the city . . . twelve thousand furlongs.**" "**Twelve**" is the Biblical number of perfection. "**Twelve thousand**" is twelve times one thousand, which is perfection at its apex. Then **verse 17** says that "**he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits.**" One hundred forty-four is twelve times twelve, denoting the zenith of perfection.

Again the "**golden reed to measure**" is a ministry with a message, the Word of God. This "**city**" is measured to perfect proportions. There is nothing in it but perfection. The psalmist admonished in Psalm 48:12, "Walk about Zion, and go round about her." Why did he say that? Psalm 50:2 tells us, "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined." When you walk about God's church, you will see Him shine through the beauty of people who are living perfect lives.

We live in a time when people say, "Oh, nobody is perfect." However, you better be, or you will not be in this "**city.**" Jesus told us in Matthew 5:48, "Be ye therefore perfect." Some may say, "That's too high of a standard," but that is the Bible standard. Anything else is too low. Then Jesus talked about praying in Matthew, Chapter 6. It takes some praying to be perfect. God does not gauge perfection as man gauges perfection. If people see a human flaw, a human fault, a failure in memory, or something misspoken, they want to attribute it to a failure in the soul. However, God gauges perfection according to 1 John 1:7. If we keep pace with the understanding we have and progress in our experience, then our fellowship continues. Our perfection is based on our obedience to our understanding.

This "**city . . . foursquare**" is portraying perfection. Everyone who is part of it is measured to perfect proportions. It is "the perfection of beauty" (Psalm 50:2). Psalm 149:4 says God "will beautify the meek with salvation." As the saints measure to the message, the brilliant light of perfection will shine out through their lives. This "**city,**" the Church of God, is a perfect cube. It is of unsurpassed size, beauty, and wealth. There is nothing like it! She is "the only one of her mother" (Song of Solomon 6:9), the apple of God's eye (Zechariah 2:7-8). Think of the wealth in a city of pure gold with a diamond wall six thousand miles around. That is wealth beyond compare! It is no wonder Paul spoke of "the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Ephesians 3:8). How can you put a price on something of that magnitude? It is beyond anything we could ever amass or



**Golden Reed to Measure Is a Ministry With a Message**

imagine. Yet, some trade it off for the cheap things of this world.

Hebrews 10:14 says, "For by one offering [the offering of the body of Jesus Christ; verse 10] he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." This "**city**" is a perfect cube, and God's people are a perfect people. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2:6, "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are *perfect*." In Colossians 1:28 he said, "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man *perfect* in Christ Jesus." The Bible teaches Christian perfection, the only thing in this "**city**." How sad that the false teachings of religion have blinded men's minds! Many do not feel that perfection is possible, but that is the very thing Jesus came to bring to mankind. Jesus enables mankind to have sinless perfection and holiness. Now we can be a part of a holy people and be gathered together into this "**city**" of God, where an "**angel**" with a "**reed**" can lay down the truth, enabling us to maintain a consistent life of sinless perfection.

We find the thought of perfection and holiness in prophecy. Isaiah 4:3 states, "And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living." If you have been born again and you have new life, you are living a holy life. Verse 4 tells us, "When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning." Judgment, or the laying down of that "**golden reed**," is what clears out everything and makes the people a holy people.

Notice the phrase in Isaiah 4:3 that says, "he that remaineth in Jerusalem." Not everybody will *remain* in that city. God will shake out everything that is made or man-made. He will have a kingdom that cannot be moved (Hebrews 12:26-28). If people will turn loose of those things, they can stay in and the *things* will get shaken out. But if they do not turn loose of them, He will shake *them* and the *things* out. God is doing a separating work, right while He is doing a gathering work in this evening time (Matthew 13:41).

Let us look at more prophecy. Isaiah 62:12 says, "And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken." Joel 3:17 tells us, "So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more." There is not a single stranger, or sinner, in the Church of God. No other organization in the world can say that but the Church of God. That is because the Church of God is not an organization; it is an organism, the body of Christ. Obadiah 17 also says, "But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions." This portrays a people who have left sin and filthy Babylon and have come to God's church. That is where they hear a message which enables them to live holy and perfect.

### **God Keeps His Church Perfect Through the Message of the Ministry**

The great "**city**" in our text is far beyond anything men could ever make or build. It is divine. Notice the latter portion of **verse 17**, which says, ". . . **according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.**" That is the way God keeps His church perfect. Many people fail to realize that although we have been delivered from man-rule, God still rules through a man. Some do not take a pastor's word any differently than they would the word of someone else. They feel like they can take it or leave it, because it does not really matter. They think it is just his idea or his opinion. They say things like: "He has his thought; I have my thought. If I want to do it, I will; if I don't, I won't. God doesn't care one way or another," but God cares! They think they can come and go as they please, not be accountable, reliable, or dependable. If everyone was like that, what kind

of church would it be? There are independent spirits behind all of that, and they are damnable spirits.

James 1:22 admonishes, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." As **verse 17** of our Scripture text says, God still rules "**according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel** [the messenger, or the ministry]." Hebrews 13:7 states, "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoke unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end . . ." If you say, "I will not be ruled by any man," you will not make it to Heaven. God ordained that "**a man**," a minister, "rule over you."

Many do not consider the end. Moses lamented in Deuteronomy 32:29, "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" It is one thing to raise up and do what you want when you are not staring eternity in the face, but when the end starts looming in sight, what will you do? Jeremiah 5:31 asks, ". . . and what will ye do in the end thereof?"

Hebrews 13:17 tells us, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves [why?]: for they watch for your souls . . ." A true man of God is interested in what is best for your soul. He is not trying to be hard or harsh; he is concerned about your eternal welfare. Only God knows all the times the pastor rolls, tosses, and prays through the night for those whom he is concerned about. Hebrews 13:17 continues, ". . . for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account [a pastor is held responsible; Colossians 4:17], that they may do it with joy [a pastor is so thrilled with people who are coming along and taking hold], and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."

Our perfection is not based on what we think or feel. We are not measured by someone's idea; we are measured by the measurement Christ gave the "**angel**." A pastor is God's messenger, and God has a perfect church, right here in this world. It is shining forth the beauty of Christian perfection. That is the beautiful portrait being drawn in our Scripture text. God's church is a perfect cube, a perfect church. God is shining out of it through a people who measure to the message and build their lives according to the apostles' doctrine. May God help us make certain we ever stay measured to the message so the beauty and perfection of the church will shine out to a sin-benighted world.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE—PART SEVEN

### The Wall of Jasper and the City of Gold

*Revelation 21:18 And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.*

*19 And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;*

*20 The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.*

#### A Priceless, Visible Salvation

As we advance further into this chapter, we see more explicit detail of "**the wall**" and "**the city**." We are given a dazzling, blinding description of them. While beholding the beauties of this breathtaking scene, we must be ever mindful that the nature of the language of the text is symbolic and not allow our minds to run off with literalism, as many do, looking for a city to come down over in old Palestine. The Revelator was receiving a "vision" (Revelation 9:17) of the Gospel Day, which one prophet denoted as "the vision of all [or the entirety of this Christian dispensation]" (Isaiah 29:11). This particular portion is a vision of the church, described in Revelation 21:9-10 as "the bride, the Lamb's wife" and "that great city, the holy Jerusalem [the church; Hebrews 12:22-23]." The prophetic time setting is in the evening time of the Gospel Day.

First, let us get the overall picture. This "**city**" is a perfect cube which is six thousand miles around and fifteen hundred miles high. It is all "**pure gold**," so pure it is "**like unto clear glass**" (**verse 18**). It is surrounded with a nearly three hundred foot high "**wall of . . . jasper**," or dazzling diamond, with "**the foundations of the wall . . . garnished with all manner of precious stones**" (**verse 19**). This is a picture of ultimate perfection.

Immediately, we recognize two truths. First, "**the city**" is so radiant and dazzling there is no way it could be hid. Jesus said in Matthew 5:14: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill [the Greek word is *oros*, or mountain; speaking of Mount Zion] cannot be hid." The enemy of souls tells you people cannot see it, but Jesus said you cannot hide it. Second, the beauty and wealth of this city is so opulent, it is far beyond anything man could ever hope to produce. All the gold and diamonds man has ever mined could not compare with the dimensions and wealth of this "**city**." Ephesians 3:8 well speaks of "the unsearchable riches of Christ." It is inconceivable, and the value is inestimable.

Isaiah 26:1 states, "We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls [or *The Septuagint* says, 'its wall'] . . ." The dazzling, brilliant diamond "**wall**" in our text is a portrait of our salvation. It is priceless, beyond being able to establish a value for it, and past finding out. It is an utter beauty only God can give. Psalm 149:4 tells us, "For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation." That makes it such a beautiful "**wall**." It is salvation with which God beautifies His people. The most precious things man could relate to is what God used to illustrate the value of salvation. It enables us to have holiness, to live in a pure manner before God and man. Speaking of the Gospel Day, Psalm 110:3 says, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness . . . ."

Notice, there is nothing cheap about the construction of "**the wall**" or "**the city**" in our text. It is the best and the finest, and God's church has the best and the finest. Zechariah 2:8 lets us know the church is "the apple of his [God's] eye." The church is singular in her beauty, wealth, and construction. Sometimes people say, "It is *almost* like the Church of God." Is it really like this "**city**" in our text? Does it have this "**wall**"? Nothing is even remotely close! Song of Solomon 6:9 says, "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 church is unique. She is singular. Her beauty is unsurpassed and unmatched. Verse 10 says, "Who is she [singular] that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?" The church is singular in her construction. This construction cannot be imitated.

The great "**city**," the church, is divinely sustained. It needs nothing from the outside, from the world, or from Babylon. God does not want His people going to the world to get help. Isaiah 30:1-2 tells us, "Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin: That walk to go down into Egypt [which represents bondage], and have not asked at my mouth." Isaiah 31:1 states, "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help." Also, the church certainly does not need anything brought in from Babylon. Speaking of Babylon, Jeremiah 51:26 says, "And they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations." We do not need a Babel stone to help build up the church. Brother D. S. Warner penned these words in the song "The Holy Remnant": "*Then I rose and fled the ruin [speaking of Babylon], taking not a Babel stone.*" Speaking of the church, Psalm 87:7 tells us, "As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there: all my springs are in thee." Everything needed for the welfare of the church is already in the church.

**Verse 18** of our text says that "**the city was . . . like unto clear glass.**" During the Dark Ages and the dark and cloudy day, there was a time when the light concerning the truth about the church was not clear. Zechariah 14:6, speaking of the Protestant era, tells us, "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark." Thank the Lord, the next verse reveals a different condition in this evening time. It says, "But it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light." Now, in the evening time, the light concerning the church is clear.

### The Wall of Jasper

Let us view the descriptions in our text specifically. **Verse 18** says "**the wall of it was of jasper.**" The word "**jasper**" in the Greek is the word *iaspis*, which means "a translucent rock crystal through which light would come with almost an unbearable scintillation." The picture being drawn here is like the blinding flash of a diamond in the sun. If you have ever had something reflect the sunlight and the brilliance of it almost blinded your eyes, that is a small token of what this wall of diamond (shining with the light and reflecting the light) is portrayed as doing.

We found in a prior study this "**jasper**" is more like what we would consider a diamond. It was first used in Revelation, Chapter 4, to represent the nature of God. God is a God of order, and He has a plan for keeping order in the church. In Revelation 21:11 we find Christ is "even like a jasper stone." That is because Christ is "the express image of his [God's] person" (Hebrews 1:3). One rendering says He is the "flawless expression of the nature of God." In Revelation 4:3, when we were initially introduced to the throne scene, we saw a portrayal of "he that sat" on "the throne" as being represented by "jasper," depicting the nature of God. Christ is the "stone most precious, even like a jasper stone" (Revelation 21:11). Jesus said in John 10:30, "I and my Father

are one."

Next, we see in our text **"the wall"** is **"of jasper."** Through salvation, we become "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). Romans 8:29 tells us we are "to be conformed [or *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says 'to be copies'] to the image of his Son." Notice, our text says **"the building of the wall . . . was of jasper."** People who are born again are "lively stones" (1 Peter 2:5), and they "are built up" (1 Peter 2:5). They are built into the wall of salvation, and they are also building their experiences in the wall of salvation (1 Corinthians 3:10). The clear, dazzling, brilliant light shining through this diamond wall comes from the One within the city. Revelation 21:23 tells us that "the Lamb is the light thereof." The light of Christ is shining out with dazzling splendor through the experiences of the saints. Colossians 1:27 says, "Christ in you." We are to be reflecting out the dazzling light of Christ, which is within us.



Lampstand

**"The city,"** or the church, is one of the things shining through **"the wall."** Verse 18 of our text says, ". . . and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass." This expression depicts several truths. Purity is one thing being portrayed—this **"city"** is pure. Ephesians 5:27 states, "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." Even the type of the Old Testament tabernacle denoted purity. Exodus 25:31 says, "And thou shalt make a candlestick [or the Hebrew says 'lampstand'] of pure gold." It was to be pure because it represented the church (Revelation 1:20).

Also, pure gold is precious and valuable, because it is so rare, and truth is a rare commodity; hence very precious. In relating the vision of the lampstand, the Prophet Zechariah said there were "two olive trees by it [the candlestick, or lampstand], one upon the right side . . . and the other upon the left side" (Zechariah 4:3). Verses 12-14 read: "And I answered again, and said unto him, What be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves? And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. Then said he, These are the two anointed ones . . ." The "two anointed ones" feed the golden lampstand, or the church, the golden oil through the golden pipes. Verse 3 calls them "the two olive trees." Revelation 11:3-4 says they are the "two witnesses." Matthew 24:14 tells us one witness is the Gospel, or the Word, and the other witness is the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 10:15). The Word and the Spirit, or "the word of truth" (Psalm 119:43) and "the Spirit of truth" (John 16:13), pump golden oil (or anointed truth) into the lampstand which keeps the lamps (or experiences of salvation; Isaiah 62:1) burning. The **"gold"** in our text also represents precious truth. The church itself is called the "city of truth" (Zechariah 8:3). It is precious, priceless, and exceedingly rare. That is why such a high value is attached to it.

What makes the **"gold, like unto clear glass"**? What makes truth so **"clear"** men and women can see it radiating through **"the wall,"** or through our salvation? Read what Christ has done in this Gospel Day. Malachi 3:2-3 says, "But who may abide the day of his coming [talking about Christ's First Advent]? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness." Refinement makes **"gold"** pure. Our text denotes a highly refined **"gold."**

Malachi 3:3 says Christ "shall purify the sons of Levi." Under the old economy, who were the sons of Levi? Exodus 6:16 tells us, "And these are the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations." Verse 20 reads, "And Amram [a man of Levi; Exodus 2:1] took him Jochebed [a woman of Levi; Exodus 2:1] his father's sister to wife; and she bare him Aaron and

Moses." What did Aaron and his sons become? Exodus 28:1 states, "And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons." Aaron became the high priest, and his sons became the priests. Thus, Christ purifies "the sons of Levi," or the priesthood. In the New Testament, we are the priesthood (1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6). The purifying process makes the truth so "clear" men and women can see it radiating through "**the wall**," or our salvation.

**THREE PARTS IN  
ZECHARIAH 13:8-9**

- 1. Dark Ages (Papalism)**
- 2. Dark and Cloudy Day (Protestantism)**
- 3. Evening Time**

Zechariah 13:8-9 says: "And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God." The "two parts" that were cut off are papalism and Protestantism, but the third part (God's people in this evening time) is going to

be brought "through the fire." The two parts are in the Dark Ages and in the dark and cloudy day, and the third part is in the evening time.

Concerning our day, the seventh-seal period of time, Jesus said in Revelation 3:18, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich." "**The city**" portrayed in our text is a "rich" city. The "**gold**" has been tried. In the evening time, God has a tried-and-true people. People who stand through the trials are shining, showing the world the light of Christ. (If the saints go through trials and act like the world acts, there is no light shining. People will say, "They have nothing more than I have." If that happens, people who profess an experience of salvation ought to be ashamed of themselves.) The light of Christ is reflected when it hits the luster of that "**pure gold**," people who stand true in the midst of trials. By standing true to the message, they continue to shine forth the light of Christ. The "**gold**" is so "**pure**," it is "**like unto clear glass**."

In the depth of his trial, Job said in Job 23:8, "Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him." It seemed to Job like he could not find God. I read something I thought well bespoke this. It said in essence: "We wonder why in our tests and trials, it seems like God is silent. Have you ever noticed whenever you are taking a test, the teacher is always quiet? It would not be a test if the teacher gave you the answers." Job 23:10 says, "But he knoweth the way that I take [Job was saying, in essence, 'I don't know where He is, but He knows right where I am']: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." That occurs after the trial; the trial purifies the "**gold**."

Proverbs 17:3 says, "The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts." The "furnace for gold" is how we are refined. A goldsmith puts the gold into the furnace, so all the impurities and dross can come to the surface. It takes the fire (and likewise the heated trial) to do that. Concerning the trial, someone may say, "I don't like it." However, if you are unable to go through it right, you will find yourself on the outside of "**the city**" looking in, instead of on the inside looking out.

**God Will Have a Tried People**

Let us look at a type of the church. Exodus 25:31 states, "And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work shall the candlestick be made." They beat gold to fashion it into the

candlestick or lampstand. B. E. Warren wrote in verse 4 of the song "Fiery Darts": "*In the heated furnace, Father, let me stay, Precious gold refining, purge the dross away, Till Thy glorious image is reflected there, Till the costly jewels of Thy grace I wear.*" We read in 1 Peter 1:7, "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire." For **"gold"** to truly be precious and **"pure,"** it has to be tried with fire.

Many times we say we want to be more like Jesus; however, He was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3). First Peter 4:12-14 says: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you." Christ's glory is revealed when "the spirit of glory" rests on us in the middle of the "fiery trial." That is when the light, the image of Christ, shines out through **"the wall of . . . jasper"** (our experience of salvation).

When things are heated, and everyone else around you is acting improperly and carrying on but you are just manifesting "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7), people will see "the spirit of glory" resting upon you. You can still have a smile and a testimony. You can still say, "God worketh all things well; I am not going to be disturbed; I am in God's hands, and nothing will happen to me except what God says."

God did not save the three Hebrew boys *from* the furnace; He saved them *in* the furnace. Likewise, He will not save us *from* the furnace, but He will save us *in* the furnace. In Daniel 3:17-18 the Hebrew boys said: "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace . . . But if not [they still were not bowing] . . ." They had it settled. Nebuchadnezzar had them thrown into the furnace. Daniel 3:24-25 states: "Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose [the only thing the fire will do is loose your bonds if it is working the way God intended], walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." The image of Christ appears when we are in the fiery trial.

God wants to be seen. He will allow a circumstance to come that puts the heat on us so His Spirit of glory can rest upon us, and those about us will see Christ shine. We must be careful. We could mar the whole thing, and people will see nothing. The picture in our text is of a people who are **"pure gold."** They can take the fire, rejoice in the fire, and reveal the presence of Christ. Remember, Nebuchadnezzar saw Christ when the three Hebrew boys were *in* the fire. When we live the precious truths revealed to us by the Word and the Spirit, the truth will shine clear as **"pure gold"** to others.

The world has seen too much fool's gold. When I was a boy, you could go to the five and ten-cent store and buy a little gold trinket. Then, a little later, my hand was green. It was not gold at all but just a cheap imitation. There are a lot of cheap imitations in religion. Therefore, God is working to get **"the city"** in our text on display in such a manner so that every honest heart can see it.

In Job 13:15 Job said, "Though he [God] slay me, yet will I trust in him." He had implicit trust in God, and that is what the world needs to see. The brethren tried to stop the Apostle Paul from going to Jerusalem, because bonds and afflictions were awaiting him there. However, he said in Acts 20:24, "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." Paul was saying, "I have been preaching to you



about the grace of God, and if I have to show some of it, then it will just testify for Jesus."

As we proceed past the portrait of a tried people in our text, **verse 19** says these "**precious stones**" are in "**the foundations of the wall.**" We previously found the "**foundations**" had "the names of the twelve apostles" (Revelation 21:14). When the fiery trials refine us, if we hold on to "the apostles' doctrine" (Acts 2:42), the preciousness appears. We do not see the "**precious stones**" described until *after* we see a tried people portrayed as "**pure gold.**" This reveals that a rich, precious experience is one refined in the depths of trials. Do you know why some people can throw away their experience so easily? It is because they have a cheap experience. They never became "**precious stones**" because they would not endure the heat. Thus, it is so easy to discard their experience. If you have something precious, you do not easily toss it out. When the battery goes out in your \$19.99 watch, it is easy to just toss it away. However, if you have a five-thousand-dollar Rolex and it quits running, you will not be throwing it away.

To have the "**precious stones,**" we have to get past the surface, past a superficial experience, because these jewels are in "**the foundations.**" We must have the specifics of "the apostles' doctrine" working in our lives. God will let circumstances help to do that, but God's school is not like man's school. At man's school, you can flunk the tests and still make it to the next grade. However, if you fail God's test, He will not move you on. Instead, He will bring you right back around to the same test. If you want to advance, you must pass the test, or you will keep going around in a circle. God will not move you on until you pass.

First Corinthians 3:13 tells us, "Every man's work shall be made manifest." What you are building will show. You can put on a big front, but in time everybody will see what you have. How? The rest of that verse says "it shall be revealed by fire." The *fire*, or the Word (Jeremiah 23:29), will expose it. We are all building, but if we truly want to be in "**the wall**" of dazzling diamond and in "**the city**" of "**pure gold,**" we must let God do some refining. When our lives show the image of Christ right amid trials, and "**precious stones**" start appearing, then those who have only the weak and beggarly elements of this world will want the unsearchable riches of Christ. Let us allow God to polish us up, or we will end up on the outside, because God has a "**city**" of "**pure gold.**"

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE—PART EIGHT

### The Precious Stones

*Revelation 21:18 And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.*

*19 And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;*

*20 The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.*

#### "Stones" Represent Divine Characteristics

A whole host of truths are revealed in these **"precious stones"** (verse 19). There are a number of allusions to prophecies and to other Hebrew imagery. Isaiah 54:11-14 says: "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee."

This prophetic utterance finds its fulfillment in this New Testament dispensation. Its truth correlates with our text. We know this to be true because verse 14 says, "In righteousness shalt thou be established." To bring "righteousness" was the purpose of the First Advent of Christ. Second Corinthians 5:21 tells us, "For he [God] hath made him [Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Isaiah 54:14 says, "Thou shalt be far from oppression." Jesus let us know in John 8:32 that "the truth shall make you free." Isaiah 54:14 also says that "thou shalt not fear." Jesus said to fear God, not man who only has power over the body (Matthew 10:28). If we fear God, we do not have to fear anything else.

In Isaiah 54:11-14, the "stones with fair colours" are equated with the divine characteristics we incorporate in our lives. Fanny Crosby penned these words in the song, "The Unsearchable Riches of Christ": "*Jewels whose luster our lives may adorn, Pearls that the poorest may wear.*" These stones also tie in with our trials. Many precious truths can only be learned through trials. In Psalm 119:71 David said, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted [why?]; that I might learn thy statutes." Some things can only be learned through affliction, trial, and difficulty.

In Isaiah, Chapter 54, the stones represent "peace" (verse 13) and "righteousness" (verse 14). Many times, these divine attributes only shine when we have come through a trial successfully. Divine peace is manifested when it operates in tribulation. Jesus said in John 16:33: "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." This is a peace that you have in tribulation.

In John 14:27 Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth . . ." The only peace the world knows anything about is a peace that is the *absence* of trouble, but Jesus' peace, "my peace," is a peace that works *right in* trouble. It is a peace "which passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7). That is why it allows the glory of God, the image

of Christ, to shine through. It is something this world cannot give; it is something divine!

Each of the "**stones**" in our text represents divine attributes, or divine characteristics, incorporated into the lives of the saints. Remember, "**the wall**" is "salvation" (Isaiah 26:1). The ones in the "**foundation of the wall**" have some depth to their experience. They have come through trial and tribulation; yet they shine forth right in the midst of it all. Ezekiel gave insight to the "**precious stones**" in our text. Ezekiel 28:13 says, "Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created."

Ezekiel likened "every precious stone" to "Eden the garden of God." In the song "Waves of Devotion," Brother Barney E. Warren penned these words: "*I drink of that fountain, oh, glory, I'm whole! My eden on earth has begun.*" All that was lost through sin has been restored by Jesus Christ. "Eden the garden of God," has been restored, and we enjoy it through the church in this evening time of the Gospel Day. We can enjoy it just as man did at the dawn of Creation.

The listing of the stones in Ezekiel is very similar to the listing in our text. What do they represent? Ezekiel 28:3-4 states, "Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee: With thy wisdom and with thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures." Verse 4 speaks of "wisdom" and "understanding" that has "gotten thee riches." So these "**precious stones**" are the works of our lives as we put on truth and divine attributes.

Ezekiel 28:12 says, "Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty." Wisdom and beauty are God-given characteristics. When they are put on and put to work, we can amass spiritual riches. They serve as a garnish. What is a garnish? If you go to a restaurant and order a big steak and baked potato, the little sprig of something green on your plate is the garnish. It is there to make the food look attractive. God's people are to make salvation look attractive to the world. **Verse 19a** of our text says, "**And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones.**" In an experience deepened by trial, our lives garnish the church, making it look attractive and appealing to others.

When the church does not appear attractive to some people, often the reason is instead of a "shine," they hear a "whine." People do not want to hear someone whine, saying, "Woe is me, what a hard time I have had; it's so rough." It is the way of the transgressor that is hard (Proverbs 13:15). Jesus said His yoke is easy; His burden is light (Matthew 11:30). If you are finding it heavy, you are in the wrong position. You need to get yourself in the right position. No matter what you are going through, there is a sufficiency of grace (2 Corinthians 12:9) to make you "*more than conquerors through him that loved us*" (Romans 8:37).

Malachi 3:16-17 says: "Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels." God's jewels are "they that feared the LORD." Exodus 19:5 tells us, "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people." The Hebrew word for "peculiar treasure" is translated as "jewels" in Malachi 3:17. It is the Hebrew word *cegullah*. The same Hebrew word is employed in Psalm 135:4, which says, "For the LORD hath chosen Jacob [his name was changed to Israel; Genesis 32:28] unto himself, and Israel [not speaking of the individual, but of the people] for his peculiar treasure." The treasure, the jewels, is a people, or the Israel of God.

There was a transition in the New Testament. The Israel of God is made up of new creatures. Galatians 6:15-16 reads: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision [there has been a transition from literal to spiritual], but a new creature [a spiritual measurement]. And as many as walk according to this rule [a new creature], peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." Those who are new creatures are the New Testament Israel of God and are the **"precious stones"** in our text.

## The Twelve Tribes

There is another Hebrew analogy in the **"precious stones."** It enumerates twelve different precious stones. Revelation 21:12 speaks of "the twelve tribes of the children of Israel." Under the old economy the high priest wore a breastplate with twelve precious stones; each stone represented one of the twelve tribes. However, a transition has occurred, and the "twelve tribes" now represent the church. In James 1:1, when James wrote "to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad," he was not writing to the old, literal Jewish tribes. To whom was he writing? Acts 8:1 tells us: "And Saul was consenting unto his [Stephen's] death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad . . . ." It was the church who was "scattered abroad." James was writing to the church. "The twelve tribes" in the New Testament does not refer to the old, literal tribes but to the church.



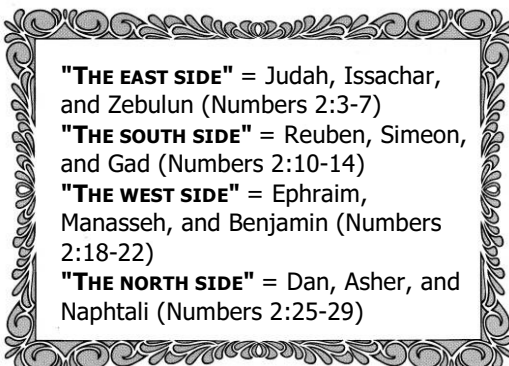
**High Priest**

Let us view the twelve tribes and twelve stones in the Old Testament. Exodus 28:15-21 says: "And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment with cunning work; after the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; of gold, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine twined linen, shalt thou make it. Foursquare it shall be being doubled; a span shall be the length thereof, and a span shall be the breadth thereof. And thou shalt set in it settings of stones, even four rows of stones: the first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: this shall be the first row. And the second row shall be an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. And the third row a figure, an agate, and an amethyst. And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper: they shall be set in gold in their inclosings. And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet; every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes."

Let us try to obtain the visual picture. The breastplate the high priest wore was foursquare. Within it were four distinct rows of three stones, representing the twelve tribes (all of Israel, or all of God's people under the Old Testament dispensation). He wore the breastplate right over his heart. What a beautiful type, showing the church is close to Jesus' heart, the "High Priest of our

profession" (Hebrews 3:1). Notice, the breastplate was "foursquare," just as "the city" (Revelation 21:16), denoting perfection. Also, while there were many stones, there was only one breastplate, a portrayal that there are many members, but just one body, just one church. Romans 12:5 says, "So we, being many, are one body in Christ . . . ."

Each stone correlates with one of the twelve tribes (Exodus 28:21). The order of the stones was the order of the tribes as they were arranged when fully camped. Numbers, Chapter 2, lets us know



**"THE EAST SIDE"** = Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun (Numbers 2:3-7)

**"THE SOUTH SIDE"** = Reuben, Simeon, and Gad (Numbers 2:10-14)

**"THE WEST SIDE"** = Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin (Numbers 2:18-22)

**"THE NORTH SIDE"** = Dan, Asher, and Naphtali (Numbers 2:25-29)

there were very specific directions given where each tribe was to be located. The tabernacle in the wilderness was "in the midst of the camp" (Numbers 2:17), and the twelve tribes were broken down into four major divisions, which camped on the four sides. The order of the stones and the tribe's encampment arrangement were divinely given. Bear in mind, the stones in the high priest's breastplate and the arrangement of the tribes were from right to left, because that is the manner in which the Hebrew language was written. (We write from left to right.)

JUDAH: We see additional characteristics of the New Testament church in the names of the tribes and the stones associated with them. The first tribe mentioned in the encampment arrangement was Judah. That tribe equates to the "sardius" stone, a blood-red stone. *Judah*, as with all Hebrew names, had a significance. It means "praise." The reason the saints have praise is because of the work wrought by the blood of Jesus Christ. Ephesians 1:6-7 tells us: "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood . . ." Not only did Jesus' blood work a work of redemption, but it also purchased the church (Acts 20:28).

ISSACHAR: *Issachar* means "reward," and it correlates with the "topaz" stone. The word *topaz* means "to seek," and the stone is a brilliant yellow. Psalm 58:11 declares, ". . . Verily there is a reward for the righteous." However, that reward is not automatic. We must seek it. Matthew 16:27 tells us, "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works." Our reward is contingent according to our works. It must be sought by our works, by seeking to put truth to work in our lives.

A study could be had on each one of the stones and tribes, but I want you to see the attributes portrayed in our text. When people get beyond the surface and into a deep experience with God, these characteristics will shine out to the world. They were shining and dazzling brilliantly when Paul and Silas were singing and praising God, after they had been beaten and put in the stocks (Acts 16:23-26). The shine of the "**precious stones**" was radiating out through their lives in the midst of trial. That caused the jailor to cry out in Acts 16:30, "What must I do to be saved?" Who said anything about being saved? However, that was what he saw; that was what shined out to him.

ZEBULUN: The third tribe was Zebulun. The word *Zebulun* literally means, "wished-for habitation." It correlates with the "carbuncle," a glittering gem of an unknown color. This serves as a type of what lies ahead in the eternal realm. We know very little about Heaven; it is an unknown reality. It reminds us we must ever be aware we are "strangers and pilgrims" here (1 Peter 2:11). We have not reached our "long home" (Ecclesiastes 12:5), or as *The Septuagint* offers it, "eternal home." We need to be constantly striving for and looking for that wished-for habitation.

REUBEN: The fourth tribe, the beginning of "the south side," was Reuben. It corresponds with the "emerald." The name *Reuben* literally means "see, a son." We previously studied the "emerald" in Revelation, Chapter 4. Revelation 4:3 speaks of a rainbow with a totally different hue. It was "in sight like unto an emerald." It represents a "new" covenant. The soft, tender green color represents mercy. When you receive a vision of Christ, God's Son, you will see His desire to administer "the sure mercies of David" (Isaiah 55:3). He ushered in a new covenant rich in mercy. (See *The Book of Revelation Explained, Volume 2, Chapter 4*, for a more in-depth treatment of Revelation, Chapter 4). Under the old covenant, they died without mercy. Hebrews 2:17 tells us Christ is "a merciful and faithful high priest." As the world looks at you and me, they should see us holding forth the light of the new covenant by extending mercy to them.

SIMEON: Next, we see Simeon represented by a "sapphire." The word *Simeon* means "hearing with acceptance." Not everybody accepts what they hear. Bear in mind, these attributes are to be

in our lives. This one is absolutely essential after we have gained an experience of salvation. In each one of the seven letters in the Revelation, Jesus said to "hear what the Spirit saith." We must hear with acceptance to stay pure and clean. The ancient sapphire did not resemble the sapphires of modern times. It was sky blue, flecked with gold. It represents heavenly purity. Exodus 24:9-10 tells us: "Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness." The word "clearness" shows how people only receive a clear vision of God when they see our purity, our holiness. Hebrews 12:14 says, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

**GAD:** The sixth tribe was Gad. The word *Gad* literally means "a troop." It correlates with what the King James Version calls "a diamond." The Hebrew word is *yahalom*. This stone is known for its hardness. When we look at these two attributes, they remind us we are in a battle. However, we are not alone—we are part of a troop. Each one of us is a soldier. Second Timothy 2:3 states, "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

The church is militant. It is not only defensive, but it is also offensive. The only offensive weapon is "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17), but that is the only one we need. God also gave the church a Captain who has never lost a battle. Joshua 5:13-15 says: "And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? And the captain of the LORD'S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so." Christ said to Joshua, in so many words, "You have it wrong; you are working for Me; I am the Captain; fall in line, son." He gave him the plan, and down came the walls of Jericho with no one using a battering ram.

What Joshua saw was what theologians call a "Christophany" (a pre-Christian era appearance of Christ). Hebrews 2:10 says, "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation [Christ] perfect through sufferings." We have a Captain of our salvation, and because of Him, we are assured victory.

**EPHRAIM:** The seventh tribe began the encampment arrangement "on the west side." It was the tribe of *Ephraim*, which means "very fruitful." The stone that correlates with that tribe is called a "ligure" (Exodus 28:19), or one rendering calls it a "jacinth." This is a cinnamon-colored stone, teaching us fruitfulness is sweet. It is sweet when you see people get saved. When the Lord gave Moses the ingredients necessary to compound the holy ointment, one of them was "sweet cinnamon" (Exodus 30:23).

Christ desires we be fruitful. In John 15:1-5 He said: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it [or *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says 'prunes it'], that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." Notice the progression. Verse 2 says "beareth fruit." Next it says "more fruit." Then, verse 5 says "much fruit." Our experience is to be progressive. As we are pruned, as we go through trials, and as we are refined and purified, we become more and more fruitful.

Second Peter 1:4-8 tells us: "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful . . . ." These attributes will make you fruitful. They are divine attributes, characteristics of the divine nature, "**precious stones**," if you please.

MANNASEH: The next tribe was Mannaseh. It correlates with the "agate," which is an unusual stone; it changes its appearance. Connect that with the name *Mannaseh*, which means "forgetting." This teaches us there are some things we need to forget, things which would hinder us, and we need to change as light and understanding come. It portrays the progressive and changing nature of our experience.

The Apostle Paul said in Philippians 3:13, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind . . ." There are some things you need to forget. You need to forget the old life in sin. Jesus said in Luke 9:62, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." Why? When you look back, you will turn the plough. You will not be going straight. You also need to forget your past failures.

Some people begin their testimony by saying, "Now, I know I have failed the Lord." That is no way to glorify God. It may be true; but when you are speaking in a public assembly, you need to speak things that edify (1 Corinthians 14:26), build up, and lift up. Tell what God can do and what He has done. Do not tell what the devil has done or all of the foibles you have had. A testimony is to glorify God. Some foam out their shame and say, "Well, I know I have not been what I should be, and I know I have struggled, and I know I have had failures." Does that make anyone in the audience want to jump and shout and say, "I wish I had that"? Things the enemy uses to hinder us need to be forgotten, and we must be willing to change.

The agate changes its appearance. Second Corinthians 3:18 says, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass [the Greek intra-linear reference says 'mirror,' and James 1:23 tells us that is the Word] the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." When the Word of God is held before us and we see greater light and understanding, we need to let the Spirit of God help us put it on, live it out, and be changed.

BENJAMIN: The ninth tribe is Benjamin. Its correlating stone is the "amethyst," and the amethyst is a brilliant, purple stone, a royal color. *Benjamin* means "son of the right hand." Who is the "son of the right hand"? Colossians 3:1 states, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." Christ is the son of the right hand, and through Him, we become sons of God (1 John 3:1-2). As sons of God, we have been raised to a position of royal honor (1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6). We are now in a position to reign over everything Christ reigned over here on this earth (Romans 5:17; Revelation 5:10).

DAN: The tenth of the tribes is Dan, the first one enumerated "on the north side." The word *Dan* means "judgment," or "he that judges." The stone that represented the tribe of Dan is a "beryl," which is a brilliant yellow. This reveals judgment produces a brilliant light that shines forth in a sin-benighted world. Today, little is said about judgment, and few tolerate it, but judgment does a work.

First Corinthians 2:15 says, "He that is spiritual judgeth all things." A spiritual brother who is reflecting the image of Christ has a radiance that will bring conviction upon those in sin. If he walks into a room where someone has been telling a dirty story, suddenly there is silence. Why?

He did not say anything. Or someone may have a cigarette, and when he sees him coming, he tries to extinguish it or hide it. What causes that? Judgment does. His life is putting judgment on them; his spirituality is judging them without him even saying a word. First Corinthians 6:2 says, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" We bring judgment on people by our very lives and conduct and manner of behavior. They might turn us off, but they cannot turn the light off. Light comes whether or not they want to see it.

Isaiah 1:27 tells us, "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment . . ." Judgment enables the saints to shine. Isaiah 4:4 says, "When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of

TRIBE	STONE	MEANING
Judah	Sardius	Praise
Issachar	Topaz	Reward
Zebulun	Carbuncle	Wished-for Habitation
Reuben	Emerald	See, a Son
Simeon	Sapphire	Hearing With Acceptance
Gad	Diamond	A Troop
Ephraim	Ligure, or Jacinth	Very Fruitful
Mannaseh	Agate	Forgetting
Benjamin	Amethyst	Son of the Right Hand
Dan	Beryl	He That Judges
Asher	Onyx	Blessed and Blessedness
Naphtali	Jasper	My Wrestling

judgment, and by the spirit of burning." Judgment plays a very vital role. It is what does a purging work and a purifying work. Matthew 13:42-43 states: "And shall cast them into a furnace of fire [the judgment preaching in the church; Isaiah 31:9]: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth . . ." Again, judgment causes the saints to shine. Then others will see Christ's light radiating out through our lives (Psalm 36:9).

ASHER: The eleventh tribe was Asher, and its stone is "onyx," or "sardonyx" (Revelation 21:20). The name *Asher* means "blessed and blessedness," and the onyx is a stone of a fire-like color, very brilliant and precious. The fire-like quality represents the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:3-4). This shows us that those enjoying the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives are on fire, radiating a brilliant light, and are a blessed people. As we come into our worship services and feel the Spirit of God, we are so blessed.

NAPHTALI: The twelfth and final tribe was Naphtali. The stone for Naphtali is the "jasper," and the word *Naphtali* means "my wrestling." This depicts our wrestling for the

souls of men to be blessed and converted as Jacob was. Jacob, whose name means "supplanter," or "trickster," certainly lived up to his name. He tricked Esau out of his birthright, and he tricked Isaac into giving him a blessing, but there came a time when he realized he needed help. Genesis 32:24 says, "And Jacob was left alone." The matter of every man's soul is a personal matter; no one else can do it for you. Verse 24 continues, ". . . and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day." Verse 30 tells us who that was. Jacob said, "I have seen God face to face." Who is God the Man? The Man was Christ; Jacob was wrestling with Christ, a picture of old-time conviction. If you wrestle long enough under conviction, a new day will dawn; a change will come!

Verse 25 says, "And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him." This



wrestling became extremely painful. Sometimes people under conviction become much worse before they get better. So, buckle your seatbelt tightly when you are praying for people to get saved. Realize it is going to get worse, but that is a good sign. People are not stirred by what is not bothering them.

Verses 26-28 read: "And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said unto him, What is thy name [the Lord drew him out to confession, because there is no salvation without confession]? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel [there is the conversion, the change; he became a new man with a new name, a type of salvation]: for as a prince hast thou power with God." This is how Israel began, because of this conviction, confession, and conversion. We need to wrestle for the souls of men to become converted and become New Testament Israel, to become like the jasper stone. We studied the jasper stone earlier in Revelation, Chapter 21. The church's light is "even like a jasper stone [Christ]" (verse 11). We are wrestling so others can become "conformed to the image of his [God's] Son" (Romans 8:29).

These "**precious stones**" depict the character and work of a tried people. They show forth the most precious thing in this time world: "**the wall**," or salvation. What a glorious portrayal we have before us! John was not just envisioning something imaginary or ethereal; but he saw that "**city**." He was seeing the Church of the Living God, comprised of a people who are God's peculiar treasure. They are His jewels, and they show the preciousness of Christ and the richness of an experience that can be had in Him. They realize they are not to be isolated or independent, but they are members one of another. They are brought together in a cohesive manner to form a "**city**" that can do a work collectively that none of us could do individually. Together they shine forth as the precious light of this world.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE—PART NINE

### The Gates of Pearls and the Street of the City

*Revelation 21:21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.*

#### "The City" Is Perfect and Complete

In this text, we have representations that have been misunderstood, misapplied, mis-taught, and misconstrued. Many people's supposed understanding of Heaven focalizes right around this verse; but this verse, as well as all of the prior verses we have studied, has no reference to Heaven whatsoever. By the help of God, we want to continue our study of "that great city, the holy Jerusalem" (Revelation 21:10). In particular, we want to study concerning the **"gates"** of **"pearls"** and **"the street of the city."**

In our text, John provided further detail concerning the **"twelve gates."** He said they **"were twelve pearls."** We were introduced to these **"twelve gates"** in verse 12, and in our consideration of that verse, we found **"twelve"** is a predominant number in this chapter, representing "completeness" and "perfection." We are seeing the *perfect "city,"* or the *perfect church.* All of God's work is perfect. Deuteronomy 32:4 says, "He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment [one of the vial angels showed John this vision, because judgment has to be poured out on some things before people can truly see the church]: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right[eous] is he."

The Rock is Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4), and Ephesians 2:10 tells us that "we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus." Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, "I will build my church." The word *church* in the Greek is *ekklesia.* *Ek* means "out of," and *klesis* means "a calling," so the whole word means "the called out." The saints are the "called out" whom Christ has built into His church, and His work is perfect. Jesus has a perfect church. If people are not perfect, then they are not in the church. I am not talking about human perfection but spiritual perfection.

"The names of the twelve tribes" (Revelation 21:12) are written on the **"twelve gates,"** showing us a complete restoration in the evening time. Again, **"twelve"** represents "completeness" and "perfection." Also, in Revelation 21:13, the **"gates"** are in all four directions, revealing the all-inclusive nature of the church and portraying the universality of the church's message. Jesus said in Matthew 24:31, "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

Our text mentions another feature of **"the twelve gates."** It says, **"And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl."** Ever hold in your mind we are dealing in symbolic expressions. I heard a song about *"the gates of pearl, and the streets of gold."* False religion has built quite a teaching around that, but these **"gates"** have nothing at all to do with Heaven. Let us study and find out what these **"pearls"** represent.

First, let us consider the astronomical wealth these **"pearls"** imply. The wall was six thousand miles around and 266 feet high. Think of the size of these **"twelve gates"**! Also, think of the enormous value of these **"twelve pearls."** Each **"gate"** was **"one pearl"** in itself. Each **"pearl"** has to be at least 266 feet high, and they are spread out to where there are three on each of the four sides of this six thousand mile wall. Think how incomparably enormous each of these **"pearls"** are! Certainly, we are not dealing in literalism.

Each **"gate"** of **"one pearl"** represents several truths to us. First, we see the unique quality of the church. We found in a previous study that nothing else compares to it, or even comes close. There is nothing almost like the Church of God. Second, it portrays the inestimable value of the church. Try establishing a value on something that mammoth. Third, it portrays the truth concerning the mode of entry into the church. These **"gates"** alone provide access to this great **"city."**

In the Scriptures, what do **"pearls"** represent? In Matthew 7:6 Jesus instructed, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine . . ." Jesus employed a teaching style familiar to Hebrews—parallelism, where truth is spoken in one context and then repeated to bring greater clarity. Thus, the **"pearls"** represent "that which is holy," or precious truths. Jesus let us know there are some people you cannot present truth to, because they do not have a heart for it. They will just turn and use it against you. **"Pearls"** represent precious truths. Revelation 17:4 tells us that the religious system of Babylon was "decked with gold and precious stones and pearls." She has decked herself with some truths to disguise her true nature. However, decking oneself with a few truths externally does not purify within. She was merely attempting to disguise her nature so she could be more deceitful and deceptive.

In our text, notice each **"gate was of one pearl."** So, there is one particular truth that enables men to have access to this city. What is that truth? Let us look at the sixth of the seven prophetic parables in Matthew, Chapter 13. It corresponds with the sixth-seal period of this Gospel Day. Matthew 13:45-46 says: "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."

Let us consider the parable of the pearl in an overview. Notice that the merchantman was seeking. This is converse to the parable of the treasure in verse 44. That treasure was not being sought; it was just accidentally found. That fifth parable represents the Wesleyan era, or the second segment of the Protestant day. John and Charles Wesley were missionaries to Georgia, having come from England. They were very content with the Church of England until they ran into some Moravians on the journey from England to Georgia and saw the piety, the holiness, and the peace they had. They found something they had not known prior, and God began to enlighten the eyes of their understanding. Then they came out with a message on holiness (sinless perfection). However, the sixth-seal period of time commenced because of a dissatisfied, seeking people.

Revelation 6:9-10 says: "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them [or people who were in subjection to Christ] 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?" The second beast, Protestantism, came "up out of the earth" (Revelation 13:11). They wanted judgment put on the system that built walls and barriers between brethren, because true holiness yearns for unity. Do not fall for the line "I have greater understanding and greater truth" when it brings division. True unity is a product of holiness, and holiness yearns for unity. Certainly, everyone will not accept truth. We are not only in a gathering time, but we are also in a separating time. While the saints are being gathered, the chaff is being separated out.

Revelation 6:11-12 continues: "And white robes were given unto every one of them . . . And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal . . ." (For a more full treatment of Revelation, Chapter 6, see Volume 2, Chapter 6.) These were holiness people in the Wesleyan era who died out to sin. They were desiring unity. They were dissatisfied; they were seeking. As soon as God got a people in position, the sixth seal was opened. We found in Matthew 13:45 the merchant

man was "seeking goodly pearls." He had already dealt in pearls, because he was a merchantman. He already possessed some precious truths. *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines a *merchant* as "a person whose business is buying and selling goods for profit."

Do the Scriptures speak in such terms as "merchant" and "buying" and "selling" concerning the truth? They certainly do. Proverbs 23:23 says, "Buy the truth, and sell it not." First Timothy 4:15 states, "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all." Thus, there should be some "profiting" in your walk with Christ. Truth is referred to as merchandise. Proverbs 3:13-14 tells us: "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold."

### The "One Pearl of Great Price"

In Matthew 13:45 the merchant man already had "goodly pearls." He had the goodly pearls of the Lutheran era. He knew "The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17). That is a precious pearl of truth. Salvation is not by sacraments, ceremonies, rites, and rituals as it was taught during the Dark Ages of papalism. He also had the pearl of the Wesleyan era concerning sinless perfection, holiness. That is a good pearl to understand. We need to live perfect, and we can live perfect. Much of the religious world does not even have that pearl today. However, he found another pearl; he found "one pearl of great price" (verse 46). What was that pearl? It was the message on the one church. He could come out from the systems of men and lay down man-made teachings and sectarian spirits, and he could come leaping, shouting home to Zion where he could have truth fed to him to sustain his experience. Oh, what a great pearl! It is so great, because it is so rare. It is a "pearl of great price." (For a more complete treatment of the Parable of the Pearl, see my book on *The Seven Prophetic Parables of Christ*.)

Someone may say the "**one pearl**" is Jesus, but the merchant already had Jesus. He already had the message on salvation and the message on holiness. This "one pearl" is the same "**one pearl**" in our Scripture text the "**gates**" are made of. It is the truth of the message concerning the church. Matthew 13:46 says that "he had found one pearl of great price." What was the great price? Jesus said in John 15:13, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life . . ." That sounds like a "great price" to me. What did this "great price" do? Acts 20:28 speaks of "the church of God, which he [Christ] hath purchased with his own blood." The "great price" was "his own blood," and the pearl is "the church of God."

The "**one pearl**" Matthew 13:46 and **Revelation 21:21** speak of is the truth concerning the message of the church. You must get a vision of that and come through that "**gate**" to enjoy the benefits of "**the city**." You will never walk down "**the street**," walk in light and stand in truth, unless you get a vision of the glorious church. No matter from which direction you come to this city, you have to come through the "**one pearl**," the same truth.

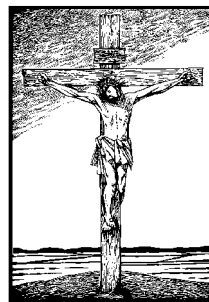
Let us consider some facts about a "**pearl**." A pearl is an organic product; it is not a mineral or a gem. Minerals and gems come from the earth, but a pearl is produced by a living creature. A pearl is formed by an irritating object, such as a grain of sand, finding its way into the oyster shell. As the oyster finds supreme discomfort within its shell, it secretes a nacreous fluid. The fluid gathers and forms a pearl in response to the constant irritation. Then an oyster must be removed from its habitat and be placed in the hands of men for the pearl to be extracted. Also, they must get inside the oyster to get the pearl out.



Let us consider what the symbol of the "**pearl**" reveals. The church is an organism. It is not

an organization; it is a body. Colossians 1:18 says, "And he is the head of the body, the church." A gem or a jewel comes from the earth. They represent you and me and the attributes of God that we put on. Though we came from the earth, God took us up out of a horrible pit and out of the miry clay (Psalm 40:2). Then He cleaned us and polished us. However, the message of the church came not from the earth but "down from God out of heaven" (Revelation 21:2).

Again, a **"pearl"** is produced by the supreme discomfort of the oyster. Then it is finally yielded up when the oyster leaves its habitat and loses its life at the hands of men. What a picture of the work of Christ! His supreme discomfort produced the church. Hebrews 10:10 tells us that "we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ." Hebrews 9:26 says Christ "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." He not only offered His body, but He also "poured out his soul unto death" (Isaiah 53:12). He was in supreme discomfort. That is why He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46). He felt the pangs of hell (Psalm 116:3), and He died the death of the damned. That produced the **"pearl,"** the church.



Christ left His habitat just as the oyster has to leave its habitat to yield up the pearl. Galatians 4:4 says, "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law." If God "sent forth his Son," where did He send Him from? John 8:42 tells us Jesus "proceeded forth and came from God."

Christ forfeited His life at the hands of men. In Luke 9:44 Jesus said, "Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men." The hands of men must get inside the oyster to get out the pearl. Likewise, they had to get inside Christ to get out the pearl. John 19:34 tells us, "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water." The blood is for the remission of sins, and the water represents the Holy Spirit (John 7:38-39) that brings regeneration. That produced the church.

The church was produced by Christ providing the fluid of the Holy Spirit similar to the way the secretion of a nacreous fluid produces a pearl. Jesus said in John 16:7, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter [the Holy Spirit] will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." The church, the **"pearl,"** was instituted on the Day of Pentecost. That is when "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:4).

As I made mention earlier, a pearl is an organic product. Likewise, the church is an organism, not an organization. In men's organizations, they vote; the majority rules (yet, the majority is usually wrong). They have boards and committees. However, Christ passed His life on to the church. In John 10:10 Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." He came to make His life possible to the saints.

You can join every sectarian organization, have your name on every roll book across the country, and still not have any life. However, Jesus Christ came to give us life! Romans 6:5 says, "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." Verse 4 speaks of walking "in newness of life." Romans 8:2 says, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." In Christ, we are under the law of the Spirit of life. We are enjoying life. The church is alive, so it must be handled delicately and taken care of properly. Life, including spiritual life, is a fragile thing.

**"Pearls"** are not cut or polished by men as gems are. In other words, the church is untouched by man. Zechariah 2:8 says, ". . . he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye." The church is divine. It does not need men to cut it up, to separate it, to polish it up, or to fix it in a manner

to try to make it attractive to the world. It has a natural beauty, a God-given beauty, unequaled by anything man can do.

Men tried to fix up the church in the Anderson Movement. They had such a big following, and then they wanted to be like the other people, just as old Israel did. They decided to have an educated clergy, which caused them to have schools. To have their schools accredited, they had to bring in sectarian teachers with degrees. Therefore, the men who were once a come-out people were being taught like sectism. This all happened because people tried to polish up the church. However, a **"pearl"** does not need polishing; it gets its beauty from being worn.

Psalms 50:2 says, "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined." The church need not be polished to shine, it just needs to be put on and worn to shine. A **"pearl"** must be worn to keep its luster. If you have a set of pearls, and you put them in the drawer, they will lose all of their luster. (I am not advocating wearing literal pearls, but I am advocating wearing the spiritual **"pearl."**) Its luster comes from the body oils of the one it is making contact with. That is how we display the church, by putting the truth on in our lives. That makes it shine. Glory be to God!

Philippians 2:12-13 tells us: "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you . . ." He works it in, and we are to work it out. He puts it in, and we are to put it on. Let us put on the truth about the preciousness of the church. Then it will shine! When the people of God put on the truth about the church and make it a part of their lives, then the natural luster will just shine forth. That is why a pastor works so hard to get people to live up to the message. Second Timothy 2:19 says to "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." When people name the name of Christ and then act in ways that are unseemly, it just dulls the luster.

A **"pearl"** is circular, which denotes completeness. Remember, we are seeing a picture of the church of the evening time in our text. When the evening time came and the message on the church was restored, it brought a completeness. It brought a full circle of that which had been lost in the morning time: justification, holiness, and unity, the full chord.

### The Message on the One Church

Let us tie what we have learned about **"pearls"** in with our text. Revelation 21:12 tells us this city "had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels," or messengers, depicting a ministry. They are the guardians of the **"gates,"** even though some people dislike guardians. So, what is their message? **Verse 21** says that **"every several gate was of one pearl."** That is the message each one of these angels had. Therefore, no matter which direction you come at the church, you will hear the same message: **"one pearl,"** one body, one church! Ephesians 4:4 states that "There is one body." There is just one! Song of Solomon 6:9 says, "My dove, my undefiled is but *one* . . ." Song of Solomon 4:7-8 lets us know: "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee. Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse . . ." The spouse is the bride, the Lamb's wife. Ephesians 5:27 says, "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." This "undefiled" one is the church. Song of Solomon 6:9 continues, "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 message these twelve angels have in this evening time is: **"one pearl,"** one body, one church.

The message of the one, true church was lost sight of in the morning-time apostasy. It stayed obscured through the Dark Ages and the dark and cloudy day, but in the evening time, the truth

concerning the church has been restored. God's people were scattered, and many are scattered yet today. However, Ezekiel 34:11-13 says: "For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them . . . ." God is gathering His people back together.

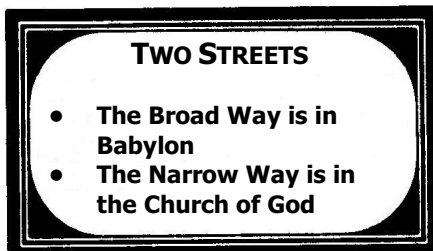
Ezekiel 11:17 tells us, "Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel." The message of this day says, "Come out of her, my people" (Revelation 18:4). God still has a people down in Babylon, and He wants to bring them up. The angels with the message on the "**pearl**," showing them where the "**gate**" is, and how they can get out of Babylon and into the city of the Living God is what is going to bring them up.

In John 10:16 Jesus said, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; [How are they going to hear His voice? His voice is the Word of God. As they hear the message, they hear His voice.] and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." There are still people in Babylon who are as saved as those in the Church of God. They do not have the understanding, but they are as righteous as they know how to be. They are truly born again; they are God's people who are scattered, and He wants to bring them in.

Isaiah 26:2 says, "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in." There are those who are keeping all the truth they know. These "**gates**" need to be opened so they can enter. God desires to "set the members every one of them in the body" (1 Corinthians 12:18). However, they have to come by one of the angels, and by the "**one pearl**." They must gain understanding of the message of the one church, the Church of the Living God.

Why is it crucial that they come through the "**gates**"? Isaiah 62:10 says, "Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people." That is where the highway is. The highway is on the inside of the "**gates**." What is this highway? Isaiah 35:8 lets us know, "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness." The highway is holiness. If God's people stay down in Babylon, they will become partakers of her sins and lose out with God.

Revelation 18:4 says, "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people [why?], that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." If they stay under Babylon's spirit, they will eventually imbibe that spirit and lose out. That is why it is crucial they go through the "**gates**." They need to get into "**the city**," the Church of God, where the highway is. That is where they will be taught how to live holy, to live in a manner pleasing to God. When I was in sectism, I worshiped with people who smoked, drank, and cussed. They came every Sunday. Some of them even passed the offering plate. In Babylon, there is no instruction in righteousness and no encouragement for holiness.



Our text not only tells about the "**twelve gates**," but it also says that "**the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass**." Notice, "**the street**" is singular. False religion speaks of "streets of gold," but the word "streets" in the plural does not even appear in the Revelation. The word "**street**" in the singular, appears three times in the Revelation, and it has reference to two different streets. One of these two streets runs right down

through spiritual Babylon (Revelation 11:8). The other is in the church (Revelation 21:21 and Revelation 22:2).

What are the two streets in the Revelation? Let us let Jesus tell us. Matthew 7:13-14 states: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." One street is the "broad" way, and the other is the "narrow" way. The one that runs down through Babylon is the broad way. It kills the effectiveness of the Word and the Spirit, but there is room for everything else. The one that runs through the church is the narrow way. It is the one that leads unto spiritual life. It is the way of holiness.

Are we certain the two streets are the two ways? Let us look at Matthew 7:13 more closely. It says, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: [The word *strait* in the Greek is *stenos*, which means 'groan, narrow, counter to natural inclinations.' To enter that gate will take some effort.] for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction . . ." The broad way is the street that runs through Babylon, and it leads to "destruction."

Let us look at a description of Babylon. Revelation 9:11 says, "And they [the ones that came up out of the bottomless pit] had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon [which means 'destruction,' the way the broad way leads], but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon [which means 'destroyer']." That reveals what the street through Babylon is like. It is the broad way, the way that leads to destruction, and their king is Apollyon, or Abaddon.

Our Scripture text says that "**The street of the city** [the church] **was pure gold.**" This "**pure**" street is the narrow way Jesus described in Matthew 7:14. Isaiah 35:8 calls it "The way of holiness." Again, Isaiah 62:10 says, "Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people." Verse 12 says, "And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken." This highway is right in the middle of "**the city,**" where "**the street**" is in our text.

In a prior study, we learned "**pure gold**" denotes "tried gold." So "**the street of the city**" in this evening time is "tried and tested truth." It has stood the test of time and endured. It stood through the apostasy, through the Dark Ages, and through the cloudy day. When the church came out "leaning upon her beloved" (Song of Solomon 8:5) in the evening time, it was "**pure gold.**" The message of the one church is not something untried; it has been tried and tested and proven true. If honest hearts truly want to live a holy life, live pleasing to God, and maintain their experience, they need to hear and heed the message of the one true church. Only as they "go through the gates" (Isaiah 62:10) can they walk on "**the street of the city**" (**Revelation 21:21**).

First John 1:7 says to "walk in the light." However, you can only walk in the light if you come where "**the street**" is lit, and "**the street**" in our text is lit. Our text says that "**the street**" was "**pure gold, as it were transparent glass.**" All cloudiness is gone; the dark and cloudy day is forever passed. The message is clear. It produces and maintains a victorious people. Revelation 15:2 says, "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast [papalism], and over his image [Protestantism], and over his mark [indoc-trination], and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God." You do not have to wait until you get to Heaven to have a harp. You can have a harp now, and you can rejoice and sing and praise God right while you are standing on the Word of God with the victory you have. "**The street of the city was pure gold.**" In this passage, we have a clear message in this evening time that produces and maintains the victory. The people who have embraced it shine forth as the light of the world. However, to enjoy it, we must come by way of the "**one pearl.**"



Last of all, "**pearls**" are very soft and can be injured by acid or heat; they are fragile and must be lovingly cared for. There are places over the land that did not lovingly care for the message of the one church. There were a lot of heated conversations, a lot of acid, which destroyed the pearl. Therefore, we must prize it, protect it, proclaim it, and project it. We must recognize it is a rare pearl, a pearl of great price. It cost Heaven's best. We have a tremendous responsibility as the people of God. The "**one pearl**" is beautiful but fragile. Prize it and protect it! It is a most precious, priceless truth!

- **"The City" = the church**
- **"Twelve" = completeness, perfection**
- **"Pearls" = precious truths**
- **"Gates" = provide access to the city**
- **"One Pearl" = message on the one church**
- **"Pure Gold" = a clear message that produces and maintains victory**

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE—PART TEN

### The "Temple" and "Light" of the City

*Revelation 21:22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.*

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

#### Christ Is "the Light" of the City

In these verses, we have come to the crux of the entire description of what Revelation 21:10 calls "that great city." This text brings us to the heart of the city, because without **"the light thereof"** (verse 23), the precious stones (verses 19-20) would not sparkle or glitter. Without it, the "pure gold, like unto clear glass" (verse 18) would not have any brilliance. Rather, it would be a dull darkness. Without it, the wall of jasper (or diamond) could not dazzle with its radiance. Without this precious **"light,"** this "great city" would be like the kingdom of the beast: "full of darkness" (Revelation 16:10). The distinction between the "great city" and the kingdom of the beast is the precious **"light";** it is **"the glory of God . . . and the Lamb."**

In reality, "the wall" (verses 12-14), or salvation, is not possible without **"the light."** In fact, the entire **"city"** (the church) is not possible without this **"light."** The "pure gold" (verse 18), or victory in trial, and the "precious stones" (the depth of an experience in spiritual characteristics), are not possible without **"the light."** It all revolves around the presence of **"the light"** of Christ. That makes everything else in this **"city"** possible.

Colossians 1:13 says, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." Verse 19 reads, "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." All the fulness dwells in Christ. Verse 27 says, "To whom [his saints'; verse 26] God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you." This "mystery" is the saints who have been able to dwell "in light" (Colossians 1:12) and have been "delivered . . . from the power of darkness, and . . . translated" (verse 13). A part of that translation is "Christ in you" (verse 27).

Colossians, Chapter 2, lets us know Christ is all in all. Colossians 2:6-7 says: "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." Verses 9-10 tell us: "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power." We are complete in Jesus Christ. These verses will take on more significance as we study, because the realms of false religion believe people need many things in addition to Christ. Of course, those things they think are necessary are on the natural level, but the Church of God only needs *Him*. Everything we need is found in Jesus Christ. Ephesians 1:22-23 says: "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."

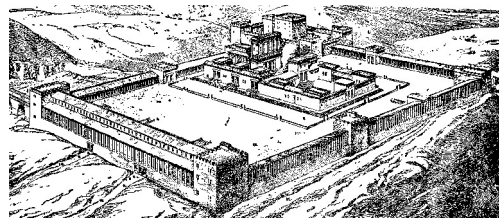
Speaking to His disciples, Jesus said in Matthew 5:14, "Ye are the light of the world." We are "the light of the world" today as His disciples, but Christ is **"the light"** of **"the city,"** the light of the church. Many erroneously think, even songwriters have penned, that Christ is still the light of the world, but He no longer occupies that position. He let us know in John 9:5, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." He is no longer in the world, so He left us in

His stead, as His ambassadors. Christ is **"the light"** of **"the city."** Verse 23 of our text says that **"the Lamb is the light thereof."**

The fundamental difference between "the holy Jerusalem" (Revelation 21:10) and Babylon is **"light."** Jerusalem is a city of light; Babylon is a city of darkness. That is one great contrast. Jerusalem is comprised of a people who "walk in the light" (1 John 1:7). The word *walk* denotes advancement, progress, continuation, and mobility. God's people are not stagnant. They have not stopped their progress, but they continue to move as light, or understanding, is revealed.

God's Divine presence is in "the holy Jerusalem," because of a people who walk in His **"light."** That produces His presence and His glory. Babylon neither enjoys His presence nor His power because they refuse to walk in His **"light."** In John 12:35 Jesus said: "Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth." That light is progressive. It is like a spotlight on a stage. It is continually moving. If we move with it, we stay in the light; but if we let it out-strip us, the light goes on and we are left in darkness. Spiritual Babylon was produced because people failed to continue to progress; they failed to continue to walk in light.

Verse 22 of our text begins with what initially would seem to be a startling and strange statement: **"And I saw no temple therein."** To a Hebrew (and John was a Hebrew), that was strange. One of the most important and precious things to a Hebrew was the **"temple."** The disciples were so awed by Herod's temple that they tried to show the magnificence of it to Christ. Matthew 24:1 says, "And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple." It was a magnificent structure. John 2:20 lets us know it took forty-six years to complete it. However, John **"saw no temple"** in "the holy Jerusalem." Under the old economy, the **"temple"** was vital. It was where the presence of God was. It was a place set apart where man could be near to the presence of God. Even prior to the days of the **"temple,"** the Hebrews had the tabernacle in the wilderness.



**Herod's Temple**

God gave Moses specific instructions for that tabernacle. Exodus 25:21-22 states: "And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony . . . ." God reserved a particular place in the second room to meet with man. However, only one man, one time a year, could enter that room and enjoy God's presence. Hebrews 9:7 tells us, "But into the second went the high priest alone once every year . . . ."

The tabernacle and the temple were very important affairs in Old Testament times. When



**The Tabernacle**

Israel camped, God explicitly instructed how He wanted them to camp in four major divisions on the four sides of the tabernacle, which was in the midst (Numbers, Chapter 2). God desired to be in their presence, but because of the conditions of that era, He still had to be confined. He could not fellowship personally with the individuals. Even after the tabernacle was stationary with the building of Solomon's temple, God's presence was still confined. In 2 Chronicles 7:16 God said, "For now have I chosen and sanctified this house,

that my name may be there for ever: and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually." The presence of God was overshadowing the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies.

When Solomon constructed the temple, the Holy of Holies was foursquare. First Kings 6:19-20 says: "And the oracle [the Holy of Holies] he prepared in the house within, to set there the ark of the covenant of the LORD. And the oracle in the forepart was twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in the height thereof [foursquare]: and he overlaid it with pure gold; and so covered the altar which was of cedar." Revelation 21:16 tells us that "the city [the church] lieth foursquare." In the New Testament Dispensation, the church is the Holy of Holies (Hebrews 10:19). Everyone in **"the city"** is privileged to enjoy the presence of God.

We can *all* (not just a few) enjoy the presence of God *every day* (not just at certain times or on select occasions). Psalm 140:13 says, "Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name: the upright shall dwell in thy presence." What a privilege we have afforded to us, saints! The high priest could only go in one day a year and visit, but we can "dwell" in God's presence. **Verse 22** of our text tells us, **"And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."** That is exactly what Jesus promised in John 14:23, saying, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode [or *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says 'dwelling'] with him." The **"city"** is comprised of the people of God, and God makes His dwelling in this **"city,"** or in His people. That is why God and Jesus **"are the temple of it."** They are dwelling in us, and we are the **"temple"** of God (2 Corinthians 6:16).

**Verse 23** of our text says that **"the Lamb is the light."** According to Psalm 119:105, the "light" is His Word. Again, Jesus said in John 14:23, "If a man love me, he will keep my words." We need to remember when we speak of the church, we are speaking of us working together as part of a cohesive body of Christ. We are members one of another, and we comprise the church. It is not made of brick or mortar, nor is it a literal city. However, the Lord dwells in it. Joel 3:17 says, "So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion [the church], my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more." **"The glory of God"** is there, because there is no one there who is unsaved; there are "no strangers." Jerusalem is holy! Joel 3: 21 reads, "For I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed: for the LORD dwelleth in Zion."

Zephaniah 3:14-18 tells us: "Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. [If we truly measured to that, we would not have Quaker services. The preacher might have a hard time getting in the pulpit, because of the saints shouting.] The LORD hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the king of Israel, even the LORD, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more. In that day [a prophetic expression of the Gospel Day] it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing. I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly . . ." The Lord is "in the midst" of His people. He will "save" them and "gather" them out of Babylon. Honest hearts desire His presence, and His presence is in Zion, the Church of the Living God (Hebrews 12:22-23).

Thank God, He is not confined to a room where only one select person can see Him! Instead, the whole **"city"** (every saint) can enjoy and rejoice in His presence! The whole **"city"** is the Holy of Holies. Everyone in the **"city"** is holy. His presence and His glory are there, and every saint can enjoy it and rejoice in it. Zechariah 2:10-11 state: "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD. And many nations [denominations] shall be joined to the LORD [people coming out of sectism] in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee." God does not just visit, but He dwells in the midst of Zion.

## "The Glory of God"

The expression "**the Lord God Almighty**" (verse 22) is the most-used title for God in the Book of Revelation. When the psalmist recounted the Exodus in Psalm 78:41, he said that "they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel." They "limited" God, but in our text, the saints allow Him to be "**Lord God Almighty**." They do not limit Him. They know that "with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26). That is why verse 23 says that "**the glory of God did lighten it**."

There are conditions that must be met to produce the "**glory of God**." It does not just occur. Verse 23 begins, "**And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it**." This particular expression is drawn from the prophecy in Isaiah 60:14, which says, "The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel." Verses 19-21 tell us: "The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. Thy people also shall be all righteous." Also, in Isaiah 24:23 the penman declared, "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously."

What is the portrayal being drawn in these prophetic texts? Isaiah 24:23 says it will happen "when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion," and Isaiah 60:19-20 contrasts the sun and the moon with the "everlasting light." In this context, and in our text, the sun and moon stand as symbols of the natural realm. We know that because Isaiah 60:19 depicts the sun as "thy light by day," speaking of the natural object created to provide light by day. Also, verse 20 says that "neither shall thy moon withdraw itself." The prophet was contrasting *natural* elements with the *supernatural*.

Some may question the symbols, because in the Revelation the "**sun**" and the "**moon**" represent the New Testament and the Old Testament. However, **Revelation 21:23** speaks of "**the Lamb**" with a capital letter, speaking of Christ; and Christ is the Word personified. Therefore, the Word is already portrayed in this verse through the person of Christ, which negates the need of having a symbol to represent the Word. Thus, the "**sun**" and the "**moon**" in our text stand as symbols of the natural realm. Our text tells us that the church does not operate on the natural level but on the supernatural level. False religion is dominated by things on the natural level, but the church knows Christ is all-sufficient. The church does not need the weak and beggarly elements of this world because it has divine things. It has "**the Lamb**" as "**the light thereof**." It has the "everlasting light" (Isaiah 60:19).

Again, verse 23 of our text says, "**And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it** [that is the summary statement; after the colon an explanation or detail is given]: **for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof**." That is why the church does not operate on the natural level. Consider this. A building has many lights. However, if you flip off the main switch, it plunges the whole building into darkness. "**The light**" in our text is the main; everything else shines because the main is on. If the main is not on, the whole city loses its power.

Our text refers to Christ as "**the Lamb**," the sacrifice for sin. First Peter 1:18-20 says: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold

[there has been a transition from the old economy to the new economy; we are no longer dealing with natural elements but supernatural elements], from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." He was "a lamb" because He was a sacrifice; a lamb was a sacrificial animal.

Hebrews 9:26 states, "For then must he [Christ] often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." He was the sacrifice for sin, "**the Lamb**" as our text denotes Him. According to John 1:29, He came as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

In our Scripture text, Jesus, referred to as "**the Lamb**," tells us this "great city" is comprised of a people who have appropriately dealt with sin. That is how they got into this "**city**." They have become new creatures. Galatians 6:15 says, "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avail-eth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." We have made a transition from the natural to the spiritual realm. Verse 16 says, "And as many as walk according to this rule [a new creature], peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."

When we appropriately deal with sin, we take faith in Jesus' blood "for the remission of sins that are past" (Romans 3:25). Our sins are put in the sea of God's forgetfulness, as far as the east is from the west, never to be remembered against us again. Then we are in a position where we can become a new creature. Romans 12:2 tells us, "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed . . ." When we have been transformed, become new creatures, we are part of "the Israel of God."

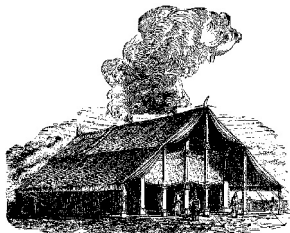
First Corinthians 2:12 says, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God [when we became a new creature, it was the Spirit that birthed us]; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." Verse 14 tells us, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." When we have become new creatures in Christ Jesus, when the Father and Christ, through the personality of the Holy Spirit, have taken up their abode in us, we are no longer natural men.

Galatians 4:9 states, "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" "Weak and beggarly elements" hold people in bondage, hold people on a natural level. Colossians 2:16-17 say: "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." The Old Testament was full of natural things: meat, drink, days, moons, etc. However, all that was just a shadow. When the reality came, we moved from the natural over to the supernatural. We do not need those "weak and beggarly elements" anymore. When **verse 23** of our text says that "**the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it,**" it is telling us we no longer rest in the weak and beggarly elements. Instead, we accept "**the light thereof.**" When we receive that "**light,**" it leads us to spiritual life; so we do not need those natural things.

### Putting on the Word Produces "the Glory of God"

John 1:4 says, "In him [Christ] was life; and the life was the light of men." The word "**light**" in our text is an encompassing word. Our text says that "**the Lamb is the light thereof,**" but "**the Lamb,**" Christ, is also the Word (John 1:1; Revelation 19:12-13). Our text is describing

"a city" (the church) made up of a people where each one has had his sins covered by the blood of the Lamb, where each one has accepted His light, or His Word, and where each one has received life. Philippians 2:15-16 says, "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life." The sons of God are "blameless and harmless," because this "city" is full of nothing but that which is holy. They are "holding forth the word of life," or putting on the Word, and that produces **"the glory of God."**



**A Cloud Over the Tabernacle**

Moses was told to be certain he did everything according to the pattern shown to him in the mount. Exodus 40:16 lets us know, "Thus did Moses: according to all that the LORD commanded him, so did he." Then verses 33-34 state: ". . . So Moses finished the work. Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle." When Moses did everything according to the Word, it produced the glory. Likewise, **"the glory"** is produced today by a people who collectively put on the truth and live it out.

Romans 9:23 says, "And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory." The "riches of His glory" are shown forth on "the vessels of mercy," the people of God. Second Corinthians 1:20 tells us, "For all the promises of God [from the counsel of His Word] in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." **"The glory of God"** is produced by us taking faith in God's promises, God's Word. Then 2 Corinthians 3:17-18 says: "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass [or mirror, God's Word; James 1:23] the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." We are changed as we gain enlightenment concerning God's Word. When we see the image of Christ, we take hold of it by the Spirit of God. He helps us to conform to the Word, to walk in the light, and to be changed "from glory to glory."

**"The city"** in our text is a supernatural city because it does not operate on the natural level. When it needs funds, it does not have "bake sales," "spaghetti dinners," "ice cream socials," or "rummage sales." That is the way Babylon operates—on the natural level. They require their ministry to go through college and obtain certain degrees. They become indoctrinated with that religious system's teachings. That is all on the natural level. In a natural city, or church, everybody might get to vote on their leaders. However, the true church is a theocracy; nobody votes on its leaders. God sets the members in the body as it pleases *Him*, not as it pleases *them* (1 Corinthians 12:18).

The supernatural **"city"** in our text does not possess any natural man (1 Corinthians 2:14). Isaiah 52:1 tells us that "there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean." All within this **"city"** have had the "circumcision of Christ," which puts "off the body of the sins of the flesh" (Colossians 2:11). Every member of the church, every citizen in this **"city,"** has become "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4), because they are children of light.

Ephesians 5:8 tells us, "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light." The people in this city have been begotten by **"the light,"** or by the Word. First Peter 1:23 says, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." They have become a member of the church by virtue of this new birth. If they are out in the realms of sectarian religion, they may be a member, but they are "cut off for our parts" (Ezekiel 37:11). God has to set that member in the body by bringing them to a knowledge of truth.

Those who are placed in the body of Christ, the city of the Living God, are pure gold. They have held true to **"the light,"** even amid trials. That produces **"the glory of God."** First Peter 4:12-14 tells us: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you." Christ's **"glory"** is revealed when it rests on you.

**"The city"** in Revelation, Chapter 21, is a **"city"** of **"light"**; everything about it is **"light."** First John 1:5 says that "God is light," our text in **verse 23** says that **"the Lamb is the light,"** and Matthew 5:14 says that "ye are the light." Philippians 2:15 says that we "shine as lights in the world." We do that by taking hold of the truth of God's Word and putting it on and living it out.

Philippians 2:12-13 says: ". . . work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you . . ." The word "*worketh*" is in the present and continual tense. The Greek word is *energeo*, the word from which our English word *energy* comes. According to *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, it means "to be active, operative." God wants to be continually active and operative in our lives. He works it in, and we are to work it out. He puts it in, and we are to put it on.

Philippians 2:15 says that "ye shine as lights" right "in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation." We are living in a time when people want to isolate their children; they pull them out of the school systems. However, Jesus prayed in John 17:15, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." We are to be *in* the world but not *of* the world (John 17:14). Philippians 2:16 says, "Holding forth the word of life." We hold it forth by the life we live. As we put it on, it shines out and is put out on public display.

In our text, John **"saw no temple,"** because the whole city is the Holy of Holies; **"for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."** Thank God, they dwell in you and in me! We have no need for the natural level because we are dwelling on a supernatural level. When a people stay true to the divine message, the illumination, radiance, and brilliance of these precious truths shine out to a sin-benighted world and a religiously and spiritually confused community. God's glory only radiates out when a people walk in **"the light."** He is only in this **"city"** because it is a **"city"** of a people who please God.





## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE—PART ELEVEN

### The Effectiveness of the Evening-Time Church

*Revelation 21:24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.*

*25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.*

*26 And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.*

*27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

#### The "Saved . . . Walk in the Light" of the City

This closing portion of Chapter 21 portrays in symbolic language the effectiveness of the evening-time church. **Verse 24** tells us that **"the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it."** **Verse 26** is much the same when it declares that **"they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it."** It is needful we identify the pronoun **"it."** This word takes on a predominant role in the balance of Chapter 21 and on into Chapter 22.

- **"And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it"** (verse 24).
- **"And the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it"** (verse 24).
- **"And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day"** (verse 25).
- **"And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it"** (verse 26).
- **"And there shall in no wise enter into it"** (verse 27).
- "In the midst of the street of *it*" (Revelation 22:2).
- "And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in *it*" (Revelation 22:3).

It is crucial we identify the antecedent of this pronoun. Wherever there is a pronoun, there must of necessity be a corresponding noun. *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines a pronoun as "the thing previously mentioned or under discussion." To see what has been previously mentioned throughout the preceding verses, read Revelation 21:10, which says, "And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem . . ." Throughout the remainder of the chapter, we see "that great city" is mentioned as "the city" again and again (verses 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, and 23). Thus, the antecedent of the pronoun **"it"** is "the city," or the church (Hebrews 12:22-23).

According to **verse 24**, **"them which are saved"** will **"walk in the light of"** the city. Verse 23 reveals that "the Lamb is the light" of the city. Revelation 5:1 tells us John saw a book "sealed with seven seals," and verse 4 says, "And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book . . ." However verses 6-7 tell us: "And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne." Christ is the Lamb (John 1:29).

The "seven Spirits of God" represent the work of the one Spirit (Ephesians 4:4) throughout

the seven periods of the Gospel Day. The "seven horns" on the Lamb represent the power of salvation Jesus Christ would have throughout the seven periods of the Gospel Day. Speaking of Christ, Zacharias prophesied in Luke 1:69, God "hath raised up an horn of salvation."

After John wept, Revelation 5:5 says, "And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." Jesus is the "Root of David" (Revelation 22:16), He is the "Lamb," and He is the One who "prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." Revelation 6:1 says, "And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals . . . ." When Christ "opened" these seals, He was allowing the Holy Spirit to bring understanding to men. The "seal" is the Spirit (Ephesians 1:13; Ephesians 4:30). Luke 24:45 says, "Then opened he [Christ] their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures." The "book" with the "seals" (Revelation 5:5) is the Word of God. According to Ephesians 1:17-18, the Spirit is the One who Jesus looses to open our understanding of the Word of God.

The light concerning the church was loosed in the sixth seal, and it continues to shine in the seventh seal. **Verse 24** of our text tells us, "**And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it.**" Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 2:13, "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." When a people will take the message as it is, as the Word of God and not the words of men, it will do an effectual work. It did in the sixth seal, and it will still produce now in the seventh seal.

Who are the people who "**walk in the light**" in our text? The Revelator proclaimed they were "**the nations of them which are saved.**" What does the term "*nations*" indicate? Acts 10:34-35 records, "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." First Timothy 2:4 tells us, "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." The most obvious, literal truth is that the word "*nations*" denotes the universality of the Gospel, but let us look deeper.

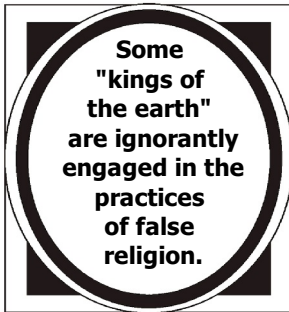
Remember, we are viewing symbolic truths. Our text tells us these people are "**saved,**" but what does "**the nations of them which are saved**" convey? *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines a *nation* as "A historically developed community of people with a territory, distinctive culture, and language in common; the people of a territory united under a single government." Denominationalism also has a community of people, a defined territory (man-made boundaries), a distinctive culture, a language in common (their own dogmas and doctrines), and a man-made government. It qualifies for the definition concerning "*nations.*"

Who are the "**saved**"? Revelation 18:4 tells us the call of the evening time is, "Come out of her, my people." God's people, the "**saved,**" are coming out of the denominations and walking "**in the light**" of the city. They are embracing the message of the church and coming out of their denominational structures. Our text encourages us that not only are there "**saved**" people in Babylon, but there are those who will come to "**the light.**" (Of course, those down in Babylon who just have a form of religion, those who are chaff, will not come.) When those who are "**saved**" come in contact with the message, they "**shall walk in the light of it.**" They are hungering, seeking, and searching. When they hear the voice from Heaven saying, "Come out," they will come leaping and shouting home to Zion. Jesus said in John 3:21, "But he that doeth truth cometh to the light . . . ."

The "**kings of the earth**" (**verse 24**) were introduced earlier in the Revelation. "**The earth**"

represents the man-made religious system of Protestantism that came up out of the minds of earthen men (Revelation 13:11). The **"kings of the earth"** are the leaders of the various denominational and sectarian organizations. Revelation 18:3 tells us that "the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her [Babylon]." They were responsible for conditions that developed in the system of Protestantism.

Our text reveals some leaders in sectarian religion are as Paul was: honest and worshipping ignorantly. When they come in contact with truth, they will **"bring their glory and honour into it [the church]."** The Apostle Paul honestly thought he was doing God's service. (Read Galatians 1:13-14.) Saul, or Paul, was "consenting" unto Stephen's death (Acts 8:1). As a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin, Paul was acting in his capacity as a judge. Acts 8:3 reads, "As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison."



You cannot always judge a person by their actions. Paul honestly thought he was right. There are people in false religion today, even leaders, who are doing wrong, but they think they are doing right. Look what Paul said about himself in 1 Timothy 1:13, stating, "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." Our text is teaching us there are **"kings of the earth,"** or leaders, who are engaged in the practices of false religion in ignorance. They think they are doing God's service, but they really are not. However, God will be faithful to them, and they will come to **"the light."** When they come

in contact with truth, they will accept it, just as the Apostle Paul did.

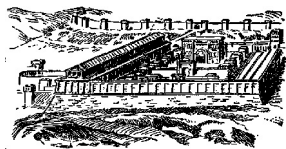
I know of Wesleyan Holiness district superintendents, Baptist ministers, and Nazarene workers who were saved when they were in those false religious systems. However, when they heard the message and saw **"the light,"** they came out. In this evening time, the Lord is going to bring all His people out of Babylon (Jeremiah 51:2). When He comes again, not one saint will be left in Babylon.

The Bible lets us know we are not to get help from Egypt (Isaiah 31:1), and we are not to carry a Babel stone into Zion (Jeremiah 51:26). The **"kings of the earth"** in our text were just bringing everything that was truth with them. When the children of Israel were ready to leave Egyptian bondage, Exodus 12:35-36 says: "And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians." The children of Israel could take all the jewels that they could garner. Likewise, the saints who come out of Babylon bring all the truths with them to Zion. Babylon once was "a golden cup in the LORD'S hand" (Jeremiah 51:7). They are not bringing Babel stones, but they are bringing the **"glory and honour"** that once made Babylon "a golden cup" used of God.

### **"There Shall Be No Night There"**

I was raised in sectarian religion. Much of what they taught was false, but some was truth. Thank God, when I left, I brought that **"glory and honour"** with me. That is what our text portrays. **Verse 25** says, **"And the gates of it [the city] shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there."** This harks back to prophecy. Isaiah 60:11 reads, "Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the

forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought." That confirms what we studied in the previous verse of our Scripture text. Isaiah 60:14-15 states: "The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations."



**A Walled City**

We must understand the natural to see the allusion being made here. In ancient days, most all cities were walled for protection. It was a measure of security to keep the enemies and predators out. Thieves or invaders would attempt entrance under the cover of darkness, because there was less vigilance and little danger of being seen. Thus, the gates of those ancient cities were closed at night.

During the Dark Ages and the dark and cloudy day, there were many thieves and robbers who operated under cover of darkness. Jesus said in John 10:1, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." He was talking about false religious leaders. Isaiah 60:11 and our text let us know in the evening time there is **"no night."** The Dark Ages and the dark and cloudy day are forever behind us. In the evening time, there is **"light"** (Zechariah 14:7). Therefore, the thieves and the robbers cannot work under the cloak of darkness anymore. The day will reveal their works.

During the Dark Ages and the dark and cloudy day, there were many thieves and robbers who climbed up some other way. They tried to climb up through sacraments and through penance and through many other religious rituals, rites, dogmas, doctrines, teachings, and good works. The darkness and the twilight allowed many things to occur in the realms of religion that **"light"** would never permit. However, now **"the gates"** are open because we are in a day of **"light."** The **"night"** and darkness have been banished by the **"light!"** According to Isaiah 30:26, the light of our day is shining "as the light of seven days." It is exceedingly bright. It is a brilliant, radiant, and dazzling light. That is why the wall is jasper, and the city is pure gold. There is no darkness in this city of **"light."**

Isaiah 60:20 tells us, "Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended." We do not have to mourn and hunger and thirst in the systems of sectism, wanting something greater. Instead, we can be fed at the marriage supper of the Lamb and enjoy the true sayings of God. God is our "everlasting light," and that light is just going to get brighter and brighter. The power of **"night"** did rule throughout a great portion of this Gospel Day. Proverbs 7:9-10 tells us: "In the twilight [light and darkness, the Protestant era], in the evening, in the black and dark night [the Dark Ages]: And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart." The "harlot" (Babylon, systems of religious confusion) could freely seduce in the dark, but those days are forever passed. **Verse 25** of our text says that **"there shall be no night there."** Proverbs 4:18 says, "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." We are in "the perfect day."

The closing verse of our Scripture text says, **"And there shall in no wise enter into it [the city, the church] any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."** This truth runs counter to the thinking of men. It reveals that you do not have to sacrifice quality for quantity. We are seeing the effectiveness of the evening-time church.

Jesus said in Matthew 7:14 that "few" would find the life that is in the "narrow" way, but He was comparing that to the "many" in verse 13 who are on the "broad" way. Revelation 7:9 tells

us that "a great multitude, which no man could number" comprise the evening-time church. There are those who will be honest and accept the truth. Revelation 5:11 says that "the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands [or the Greek says 'myriads of myriads' an innumerable throng]." Do not allow the enemy to blind your mind or discourage your heart. The Church of God is not just a "drop in the bucket;" instead, it is the "bucket."

Again, **verse 27** of our text reveals quality does not have to be sacrificed for quantity. This city is pure. Those who "**worketh abomination, or maketh a lie**" will not be there. *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* renders it as "practices abomination and falsehood." Those are the ones who cannot enter into it. This city is a city of "**light**"; it makes no allowance for darkness or compromises with darkness. Isaiah 35:8 describes it as "The way of holiness" and says "the unclean shall not pass over it."

Zechariah 13:1 tells us when you come to Christ, all your uncleanness is cleaned up. Zechariah 13:2, talking about uncleanness, speaks of "the unclean spirit." This is the spirit that makes people do what they do. But thanks be to God, that fountain was opened in the Savior's side (John 19:34)! The blood will take away the deed, or the sin (Romans 3:25), and God's Spirit, the stronger than the strong man, will expel the unclean spirit, enabling people to get on the highway and get into the city and enjoy walking in the "**light**" of it.

This city is a city of "**light**," because it makes no allowance for compromise with darkness. Isaiah 52:1 says, "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean." People are not going to come into the city uncircumcised or unclean because they put on the beautiful "garments of salvation" (Isaiah 61:10).

Joel 3:17 says, "So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy [it was never truly holy in the Old Testament], and there shall no strangers pass through her any more." All within its gates are pure. Verse 18 states, "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine [the Holy Spirit; Ephesians 5:18], and the hills shall flow with milk ['the sincere milk of the word'; 1 Peter 2:2] . . . and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD . . ." That fountain is "for sin and for uncleanness" (Zechariah 13:1), and it was opened in the Savior's side (John 19:34). It will clean us, so we can enjoy the good things of God.

In a world where it seems like the devil has the upper hand, our Scripture text reminds us "the Lord God omnipotent reigneth" (Revelation 19:6), and that truth is triumphant. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 13:8, "For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." "**Light**" triumphs over darkness, and the power of life is stronger than the bonds of death. Revelation, Chapter 21, concludes by defining the inhabitants of this "great city" (verse 10) as "**they which are written in the Lamb's book of life**" (**verse 27**). This city is comprised of those who have "**life**"; there is not one dead member in it. Those saints who have gone on are not dead either. Second Timothy 1:10 tells us Jesus Christ "hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

It is precious that we are able to understand the truths concerning this city. Can anyone conceive the grandeur God accords to His church? It is "pure gold"; it has a "wall of jasper" (diamonds); and its foundations are "garnished with all manner of precious stones." This is the splendor God accords to a people who "**are saved**" and "**walk in the light**" (**verse 24**). He makes their price inestimable! It is beyond comprehension or calculation. It is truly "the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Ephesians 3:8). They not only endure for time but also for the ceaseless ages of eternity. This is how precious God considers the saints, the precious truths they walk in, and the precious church that they comprise—the Church of God.

May God help us to "shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life" (Philippians 2:15-16). We have a tremendous treasure, but we also have a responsibility to "shine as lights." We are God's epistles, known and read of all men (2 Corinthians 3:2-3).

## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO—PART ONE

### The Internal Beauties of the City

*Revelation 22:1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.*

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

#### Three Basic and Important Truths

As we view this Scripture passage, it is obvious that Revelation, Chapter 22, is a continuation of the previous chapter. Revelation 21:10 tells us John was receiving a vision of "that great city, the holy Jerusalem." When **verse 2** of our text says, "**In the midst of the street of it,**" the pronoun "**it**" reverts back to the corresponding noun in Chapter 21—"that great city." In Revelation, Chapter 22, the tenor of the description of the "city" has changed. Chapter 21 predominantly deals with describing the exterior, but Chapter 22 begins by describing the interior beauties of the city. As we examine this text, we must be mindful of several truths.

There are religious advocates who try to teach Chapters 21 and 22 as taking place beyond the realms of time, a city out in eternity. Some say these descriptive expressions are speaking of Heaven. However, to be consistent in our study, we must recognize the nature of the Revelation is symbolic. (The word "signified" in Revelation 1:1 means "revealed by signs." *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines a *sign* as "a symbol.") God is using expressions as word vehicles to bring an image to mind conveying a greater truth.

The second truth concerns the prophetic time setting for this portion of the apocalyptic vision. If you read Revelation 21:9, when this portion of the vision commenced, you will find the instrument employed to bring the inspiration to John was "one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues." This is a portrayal of an evening-time ministry. Revelation, Chapter 16, tells us every one of these vial angels poured out their vials (or emptied the truth out) in this evening time. The very first one in Revelation 16:2 "poured out his vial upon the earth" (the religious system of Protestantism). Therefore, if judgment was put on Protestantism and those who worshiped in that system, the prophetic time setting has to be a period of time subsequent to the Protestant era, bringing us to the evening-time portion of the Gospel Day.

The third truth we need to recognize is this vision is of the church, not of Heaven. Revelation 21:9 says, "I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife," and in verse 10 John wrote, "And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem [the Church of God; Hebrews 12:22-23; Acts 20:28]." Let us look at some comparisons and contrasts of the two predominant cities portrayed in Revelation: "that great city, the holy Jerusalem" (Revelation 21:10) and Babylon (Revelation 17:5). Both are mentioned as cities, and both are mentioned as great (Revelation 14:8). There are different connotations to the word *great*. Both cities have a street (Revelation 11:8; Revelation 21:21), both cities have a river (Revelation 16:12; Revelation 22:2), and both cities are likened unto women (Rev-

**#1 – Revelation language is symbolic**  
**#2 – Prophetic time setting is the evening time**  
**#3 – This is a vision of the church, not of Heaven**



elation 17:1; Revelation 21:9).

The descriptions of the city, the church, especially in our text, reveal what is working during time, not eternity. **Revelation 22:1** says, "**And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.**" Christ is only a "**Lamb**" while He is still taking "away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). He is only "**the Lamb**" while He is mankind's sacrifice for sin (Hebrews 9:26). When He comes again, it will be "the second time without sin unto salvation" (Hebrews 9:28). His sacrifice for sin will no longer avail for mankind because in His next advent, He will come as a judge. Second Timothy 4:1 tells us, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick [or alive] and the dead at his appearing . . ." That Christ appears as "**the Lamb**" in our text reveals that it is a reality enjoyed while time is yet standing.

**Verse 2** of our text says that "**the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.**" It also says that "**the tree of life . . . yielded her fruit every month.**" If this were in eternity, there would be no "**months**," there would be no need for "**healing**," and there would not still be "**nations**." When time reels into eternity, there will no longer be the opportunity of coming to "the water of life" (Revelation 22:17). If this indicates something beyond time, then there must be another opportunity beyond time. However, the Bible teaches there is not. Second Corinthians 6:2 tells us that "now is the day of salvation," now in this Gospel Day. Also, Ecclesiastes 11:3 states, "If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth: and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be." There is no alteration of man's state once his eyes close in the finality of death or once time reels into eternity. There are only two positions: "the south" or "the north." There are just two conditions man can be in: lost or saved.

### The "Pure River of Water of Life"

In our text, the Revelator received a beautiful contrast to Babylon. Babylon denotes all manner of religious impurities (Revelation 14:8). Revelation 16:12 tells us when "the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates . . . the water thereof was dried up." If a minister with a message can dry up your water, it is not what it ought to be. Once that water dried up, verse 13 says that "I saw three unclean spirits." Verse 14 describes them as "the spirits of devils." However, **verse 1** of our text proclaims, "**And he shewed me a pure river of water of life . . .**" As much of the imagery in the Revelation, the "**river**" in our text is drawn from Hebrew imagery. Psalm 46:4-5 states: "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of her." *The Septuagint* says, "The flowings of the river gladden the city of God." So, the "**river**" flows right through "the city of God."

The prophets spoke of the "**river**." Zechariah 14:8 reads, "And it shall be in that day [a prophetic expression of the Gospel Day], that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem [the church]; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be." Zechariah said that "half" of the "living waters" went "toward the former sea." The word "former" in the Hebrew is *qadmoniy*, which means "they that went before." When this "**river**" started from the Savior's side on Calvary, the first thing it did was go back to those brethren who died in the faith but had not received the promise. Hebrews 9:15 tells us, ". . . that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." It went back

to "they that went before," or the Old Testament brethren. Then, Zechariah said that "half of them [went] toward the hinder sea." The word "hinder" in the Hebrew is *acharon*, which means "to come, following, after, or latter." That is a picture of the New Testament brethren. The "living water" has brought us all together by Jesus Christ. Ephesians 1:10 substantiates this truth. It informs us, "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth."

Ezekiel spoke of "living waters" in considerable detail. Ezekiel 47:1-9 tells us: "Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar. Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side. And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins. Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.

"And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river. Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other. Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh."

What a beautiful picture! Here Ezekiel elaborated on the **"pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb"** (verse 1). This plan originated in the mind of God from **"the throne of God"** and was instituted by **"the Lamb"** of God. Ezekiel was in the midst of receiving a vision, just as John was. Ezekiel 40:2 says, "In the visions of God brought he me into the land of Israel, and set me upon a very high mountain . . . ." God did not take him anywhere literally or physically. Ezekiel 1:1 says, ". . . as I [Ezekiel] was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God." He did not see God personified, but his visions were of divine origin. He was receiving a revelation of truth.

The nature of visions is figurative expressions. Ezekiel received much the same vision that John did. John received the vision of all (Isaiah 29:11), but the prophets received portions. Their particular portions had expanded detail. That is why we have to go "here a little, and there a little" and lay "line upon line" and "precept on precept" (Isaiah 28:13) and let the Spirit of God "mate" the Scriptures up (Isaiah 34:16).

Ezekiel 47:1 says that "he brought me again unto the door [it all starts with the door; John 10:9 tells us Jesus is this door] of the house [Hebrews 3:6 explains that we are the house; the house is the church]." Ephesians 2:19-20 says: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." In 1 Timothy 3:15, the Apostle Paul penned, "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God . . . ."

Ezekiel 47:1 continues, ". . . and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward [east is the source of light]: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side . . ." These "waters" started on "the right side." John 19:34 reads, "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water." The "waters" started right in the Savior's side. Notice the water became a "river" in Ezekiel 47:5. Verse 9 states, "And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live." It is the "**water of life**," just as in our text.

Ezekiel, Chapter 47, shows the progression of the "**water of life**." It commenced, in verse 1, from the "right side," the very riven side of Jesus Christ. Then we can see the progression through the Gospel Day. In Ezekiel 47:3, "the man that had the line in his hand" is a picture of Christ in prophetic language. He "measured a thousand cubits," and "the waters were to the ankles," representing the morning time. "Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees [that brings us to the Dark Ages]. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins [the Protestant era]" (verse 4). Finally, verse 5 talks about "a river," which pictures the evening time, just as our text. It is a water that brings forth life.

Ezekiel 47:8 tells us that the waters "go down into the desert." So the "**pure river of water of life**" comes to the desert places, just as Isaiah prophesied. Isaiah 35:1 states, "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them [for the Words of God; Isaiah 34:16]; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose." Jesus Christ Himself is the "rose of Sharon" (Song of Solomon 2:1). When this "**water of life**" touches a barren soul, it comes alive. That desert land blossoms, and it is conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29).

Isaiah 35:6-7 reads: "Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes." When those who are lame, those who cannot make straight paths for their feet, that cannot live a holy life, come in contact with this "**pure river of water of life**," it will enable them to leap as an hart, to walk with straight feet, to live holy (Hebrews 12:13-14). The scales will fall off blind eyes, just as they did from Paul's eyes (Acts 9:17-18), and they will see the truth (Ephesians 1:17-18). The ears of the deaf will be able to hear what the Spirit saith. The parched ground, that dry life with no living, will become a pool. Their cup will run over, and they will have more water than they know what to do with. They will not know whether to cry, shout, or run the aisles! This all happens right in the habitation of dragons, in the presence of people who are bound up with heathenism, paganism, or false teachings. The saved will have grass, reeds, rushes, fruitfulness because the water has touched them.

What does this "**pure river of water of life**" in our text really represent? John 7:37-39 lets us know: "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly [or his inward parts] shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit [this is describing the '**pure river of living water**'], which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)" Glory be to God, He is glorified now! Everyone who takes hold in real faith, believing, will receive the Holy Ghost, and He brings them "**life**." That is when the heart and life that was like a desert rejoices and blossoms like the rose, Jesus Christ.

These Scriptures substantiate that the teaching that advocates the Holy Spirit does not come

into an individual until you have had a second work of grace is faulty. If the Holy Spirit is not there, there is no **"life."** Romans 8:10 says, "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life . . . ." The Spirit produces the **"life."** Jesus said in John 3:6, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." No one was ever born of the flesh who did not have flesh. Likewise, nobody is born of the Spirit who does not have the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is what births the believer; He is what brings the **"life."** Second Corinthians 3:6 tells us that "the spirit giveth life." Notice the contrast between the **"pure river"** in our text and "the great river Euphrates" in Revelation 16:12 that houses "unclean spirits" (verse 13). What a contrast between the **"pure"** Holy Spirit and the "unclean spirits"! This reveals that the "holy Jerusalem" is motivated by the Holy Spirit, and Babylon is motivated by "unclean spirits."

### **The Message Is "Clear," Holy, and Fruitful**

In the evening time, our Scripture text tells us that the flow of the Holy Spirit is **"clear as crystal."** We are not in the dark and cloudy day, the age of murky water clouded by sectarian teachings and spirits anymore. We have a message with the Spirit behind it that is **"clear as crystal."** The enemy is doing everything he can to obscure it, but it is still **"a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal."** Isaiah 30:19 tells us, "For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more." We studied that in Revelation 21:4. God's people do not have to weep over the spiritual conditions in Babylon anymore, because they have come home to Zion. They were weeping when they were in Babylon. Psalm 137:1-2 tells us: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof." Glory be to God, we are no longer stuck in Babylon! When the Revelator pictured the saints coming home to Zion, he said that he "heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps" (Revelation 14:2).

Isaiah 30:19-21 states: "For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry [or prayer]; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee. And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left." The Holy Spirit is the Teacher, and He is **"clear as crystal."** When we start to turn off the path, the voice of the Spirit will say, "This is the way, walk ye in it." If we will have ears to hear, it will be **"clear."** We are blessed to have the Holy Ghost give us direction in this day.

**Verse 2** of our text reads, **"In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river . . . ."** Many have attempted to make this portion of the Scriptures confusing. Some say that **"the street"** was not in the midst of the river, but the *Englishman's Greek New Testament* says, "In the midst of its street and of the river . . . ." *The Nestle Greek* text says, "In the midst of the street of it and of the river . . . ." These substantiate the truth that **"the street"** runs in the midst of the river. Let us get a picture. We have a city (the church) with "the street" (the narrow way) made of "pure gold [precious, priceless, and rare], as it were transparent glass [very clear]" (Revelation 21:21). That gold represents the precious truth that we are to walk in. This street runs right down through the midst of the city, and it is in the midst of the river. This is teaching us that the only way you can walk in these precious truths is through the power of the Holy Spirit.

We have found in a prior study that the street of the city is the "narrow way." Matthew 7:13-14 states: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth

to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way [or road], which leadeth unto life . . . ." This "way" is the way of holiness. Isaiah 35:8 tells us, "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean [those who possess unclean spirits] shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." Why will they not err? They will not err because it is not through our intellect or power, but it is through the power of the Holy Spirit that enables us to live a holy life (Zechariah 4:6). The only way we can live and walk in the holy way is through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 1:4 says, "And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness . . . ." Only through the Spirit of holiness, the Holy Spirit, can we live holy. People today in religious realms have such a hard time understanding holiness. They say, "No one can live holy," but if you have the Holy Spirit, you have "the spirit of holiness." The Bible talks much about spirits. The reason some people lie when the truth would serve them better is because they have a *lying* spirit (1 Kings 22:21-23; 2 Chronicles 18:20-22). Some people are worldly, because they have a *worldly* spirit (1 Corinthians 2:12). The reason God's people are holy is that they have the *Holy* Spirit. We do what we do and live in the manner in which we live because of the spirit we possess.

The portrait drawn by the Revelator is that he is portraying paradise restored. The "**river**" and "**the tree of life**" in **verses 1-2** of our text are reminiscent of the Garden of Eden. Genesis 2:9-10 says: "And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden." That which was lost to man through the first Adam has been more than amply restored through the last Adam (Christ). First Corinthians 15:45 says, "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." All the first Adam could do was procreate physical life, but the second Adam has the power of spiritual life. He can quicken, He can make alive, not just physically but spiritually.

When Jesus spoke to the Ephesian age (A.D. 33 to A.D. 270), He told them that the paradise of God was a present reality. He said in Revelation 2:7, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh [not him that is dead, but those still living] will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." One songwriter penned, "My Eden on earth has begun." Paradise is a present reality to "him that overcometh."

The Apostle Paul enjoyed paradise in the morning time. In 2 Corinthians 12:1-4 he said: "It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise . . . ." Paradise (verse 4) in this text is the "third heaven" (verse 2) and the "third heaven" is a place where you "come to visions and revelations of the Lord" (verse 1), a spiritual position. It is the position the church occupies. Ephesians 2:6 tells us, "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places [or the Greek says 'the heavens'] in Christ Jesus." The paradise that was literally lost in the Garden of Eden has been restored spiritually in the Church of the Living God.

In **verse 2** of our Scripture text, we see fruitfulness. This stands in clear contradistinction to the fruitlessness of Babylon. Speaking of Babylon, Revelation 18:14 says, "And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee . . . ." Babylon is in a fruitless condition. **Verse 2**

says that "**on either side of the river, was there the tree of life.**" Think with me, one "**tree**" could not be "**on [both] side.**" To clarify this, we must put "line upon line; here a little, and there a little" (Isaiah 28:13). The Book of Ezekiel gives insight. Ezekiel 47:7 tells us, "Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other." Ezekiel saw "very many trees."

### Who Is "the Tree of Life"?

What is the lesson? What does "**the tree of life**" "**on either side of the river**" symbolize? There are two aspects to this symbol. First, Proverbs 3:13 and 18 refer to *wisdom* as the "tree of life." Who is wisdom personified? First Corinthians 1:24 tells us that "Christ [is] the power of God, and the wisdom of God." Christ is wisdom; hence, Christ is "**the tree of life.**" Every saint is conformed to His image (Romans 8:29), or the Greek says made "copies" of Christ. First John 4:17 teaches us, ". . . as he is, so are we in this world." Christ had a spiritual birth; we have had a spiritual birth. He was the Son of God; we are a son of God (1 John 3:2). When Phillip asked in John 14:8, "Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us," Jesus answered in verse 9, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father." We can say the same thing, because we are conformed to His image. Those that have seen us have seen Christ.

First Corinthians 12:12 says, "For as the body [the church] is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ." When we are one body, we are in unity; we are also one with Christ. Jesus prayed in John 17:21, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." Therefore, our text says "**the tree of life.**" Ezekiel saw "very many trees" on both sides of the river, because every saint is a copy of Jesus; he is conformed to the image of Christ. When you see a saint, you see Jesus. You can see Jesus wherever you see a saint; there are "very many trees." It must start with Christ; He is "**the tree of life,**" and so is every saint.

Now we are brought to the second aspect of the symbol of "**the tree of life on either side of the river.**" Proverbs 11:30 tells us, "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise." Here we see a Hebrew parallelism employed. The fruit is winning souls. One aspect of the fruit of a tree is producing another tree (Genesis 1:11). Saints can influence other souls, they can produce them as their fruit (Psalm 92:12-14), and then they become a "**tree of life**" just like them.

Jesus used another analogy, but it holds the same principle. John 15:1-2 says: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that *beareth fruit*, he purgeth [or prunes] it, that it may bring forth *more* fruit." Verse 5 says, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth *much* fruit." Verse 8 reads, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear *much* fruit." Then, verse 16 says, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain." He went from "fruit" to "more fruit" to "much fruit" to "that your fruit should remain."

How does the saint's fruit "remain"? When Christ was on His way to Calvary, His fruit all forsook Him (Mark 14:50). Why did they? They did not have the reality of the Holy Ghost in them at that time. However, Christ gave them "the promise of the Father" that they should "be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts 1:4-5). Verse 8 says, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Their

fruit was produced through the power of the Holy Spirit. When Peter finished preaching, Acts 2:41 says, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." That fruit remained, because it was a work of the Spirit.

Ezekiel 47:12 tells us, "And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat . . ." What are these trees for; what is our purpose? The "trees [are] for meat." When the disciples asked Jesus to eat, John 4:32 says, "But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of." What was His meat? Verse 34 explains, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me." What was God's will? Verse 35 states, "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest." Paul made it clearer in 1 Timothy 2:4 when he said, "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." The trees are for meat; saints need to "do the will" of God, so others can be saved.

When the saints are in the city (the church) and when they are under the direction of the Holy Spirit, walking in the way that He guides, they will "**bear twelve manner of fruits**" (**Revelation 22:2**) or "bring forth new fruit" (Ezekiel 47:12). That is the picture we are seeing in our text. The evening-time church is a fruitful people, contrary to what some people think. Saints, through the power of the Spirit, are a "**tree of life**"; they are in the image of Christ. The trees are for meat, to help people be able to understand the will of the Father and to help them become a "**tree of life**" themselves.

Ezekiel 47:12 says, "And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine." We are to bring forth new fruit; that ought to inspire you and encourage you. The original paradise only had one tree of life (a type of Jesus Christ), but the evening-time church has "very many trees" (Ezekiel 47:7). Each saint is a "**tree of life**," and each soul won is a new "**tree of life**." In fact, everyone in this city is a "**tree of life**"! There are no dead ones in this city; they are all alive.

Notice that **verse 2** of our text says, ". . . **on either side of the river.**" This reminds us that the New Testament church is all-inclusive. Hebrews 12:23 lets us know that it is "the general assembly." Our general assemblies in the state house have two chambers, the House and the Senate. Likewise, the church has two chambers, the Old Testament brethren and the New Testament brethren. They are all brought together by the work wrought by Jesus Christ, by the "**river**" that first came out of His side and now flows right down through the middle of the city and produces trees of life. The Old Testament brethren did not have the life until this "**river**" flowed by. Thank God, we are in it, and they are brought in, as well.

The Biblical number "**twelve**" represents perfection or completeness. "**Twelve manner of fruits**" (**verse 2**) is speaking of a complete and perfect work. We are in the fulness of time, the time when "the mystery of God should be finished [or completed]" (Revelation 10:7). We are in a day of completion, completeness. Things that have been "kept secret since the world began" are now being "made manifest" (Romans 16:25-26). How are they being "made manifest"? Titus 1:3 says, "But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching . . ."

We are living in the fulness of time. Proverbs 4:18 tells us, "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." We are in that perfect day. **Verse 1** of our text says it is "**clear as crystal.**" Zechariah 14:7 tells us that "at evening time it shall

be light." The seals have all been loosed. It is a day of brilliance and radiance, a time when God is working in every manner possible to make men and women trees of life. It is the time of a complete and perfect work.

**Verse 2** of our text continues, ". . . and yielded her fruit every month." This again reminds us that this occurs while time is still standing and we are still in this time world. There are no months in eternity. What else does this teach us? If we will stay in the city (the church), if we will stay on this "**street**" (the narrow way) that runs right down through the middle of "**the river**" (stay in the Spirit), we can be constantly and continually productive, "**every month**." Also, it reveals that the church shall continue to reproduce itself until time reels into eternity.

Let us consider the "**fruit**" a little further. Again, Ezekiel 47:12 tells us that "the fruit thereof shall be for meat." In other words, each "**tree of life**," or each saint, feeds the rest of the church, or helps them to stay in the will of God. Romans 12:5 teaches us, "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." Then Ephesians 4:16 says, "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." When every part is working as God ordained, under the divine guidance and auspices of the Holy Spirit, two types of fruitfulness will happen: it will edify the church, and it will produce more trees.

Genesis 1:11 says, "And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself . . ." Luke 8:11 tells us that "The seed is the word of God." Every "**tree**" has seed within it to produce another one just like itself. **Verse 2** of our text says, ". . . the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." Again, Ezekiel 47:12 tells us, ". . . whose leaf shall not fade . . . and the leaf thereof [is] for medicine." Talking about the blessed man, Psalm 1:3 says, "And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." The picture of the unwithered, unfaded leaf is a portrayal of the constant, consistent, up-to-date experience. What keeps the saint from fading? He does not fade because he is planted by the rivers of water. The Holy Spirit has a free flow in his life. His life is rooted and grounded; he is unmovable, steadfast, and always abounding in the work of the Lord, because of the working of the Holy Spirit in his life.

The picture of a leaf that does not fade or wither is a picture of consistency. Consistency is truly what wins souls. Many parents lose their children because they are inconsistent, and many congregations lose their impact on a community because they are inconsistent. The world and Babylon are not consistent. Isaiah 64:6 says, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." They fade as a leaf, because they are not hooked in to the "**pure river of water of life**." They do not allow the Holy Spirit free course in their lives, and they do not want to walk in the pure, precious truths that the Holy Spirit leads one to.

Jesus said in John 3:21, "But he that doeth truth cometh to the light . . ." Honest hearts still will come to the light. When Jesus gave the parable of the sower and talked about the four types of ground, He let us know clearly what the good ground was. He said in Luke 8:15, "But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience."

Spiritually, the fruit comes because of the leaf. "**The leaves**" are "**for the healing of the nations** [or denominations]" (**Revelation 22:2**). For people to receive "**healing**" from the sickness they have from drinking from Babylon's cup, they will need to see an experience that stays fresh, healthy, and consistent. Then it will provide "**healing**" for them, so they can take hold of truth.



Those who are lame, who cannot really walk right, rather than them being turned out of the way, they can be healed. Hebrews 12:14 admonishes us, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

I trust we can see the internal beauties of the city in our text: "**the river,**" "**the street,**" and "**the tree of life.**" What a beautiful picture! No wonder the psalmist declared in Psalm 48:2, "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion . . . ." Also, Psalm 50:2 says, "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined." Thank God, through the power of the Holy Spirit we can walk right in that "**street**"! We can be conformed to the image of Christ and become a "**tree of life,**" and then we can produce fruit so others can become a "**tree of life.**"

## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO—PART TWO

### The Privileges of His Servants

*Revelation 22:3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:*

*4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.*

#### "His Servants" Are Those Who Dwell in the City

In this portion of John's vision, we read of several privileges enjoyed by those denoted as "**his servants**" (verse 3). As we consider these, first, we must identify the antecedent of the word "**it**" (verse 3) to understand what is under consideration. To do so, we must revert back to previous portions of John's writing and read when this particular scene commenced. In Revelation 21:9-10, John received a vision of "the bride, the Lamb's wife," pictured as "that great city, the holy Jerusalem." Throughout the duration of Chapter 21, "the city" is the object under discussion. Verse 23 says that "the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it." Notice the transition away from the noun "city" to the pronoun "it." From then on and into Chapter 22, the expression "**it**" is used in the place of "the city." Therefore, these things in our text transpire within the realms of "the city." Thus, the privileges of "**his servants**" are for those who occupy "the city," or the Church of the Living God.

Verse 3 of our Scripture text begins with a proclamation: "**And there shall be no more curse.**" *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* renders it as, "And there will be no more any accursed thing." The words "accursed thing" bring to mind the sin of Achan, who "took of the accursed thing" (Joshua 7:1). According to Joshua 7:21, it was, "a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold." This reveals to us that there is no "Babylonish garment," or things precious to the world, in the church.



**Achan and the Accursed Thing**

Jeremiah 51:1 and 26 say: "Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will raise up against Babylon, and against them that dwell in the midst of them that rise up against me . . . And they [those who were leaving Babylon] shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations." Saints are not to bring Babel stones out of Babylon. The Church of God cannot be built with Babel stones. Jericho, that walled city, was a type of Babylon. When the Word of God is preached, or the trumpets sounded, and there is a shout of the people, it will bring down the walls of Babylon. God's people were told not to take a thing, but Achan "took of the accursed thing," and it brought sin into the camp. It left God's people in a powerless condition. However, in this evening time, there is no "accursed thing" in this city, or the church. It is undefiled, without spot or blame.

The church is comprised of a people who are separate from Babylon. The things of Babylon and of the world find no place in the church. James 1:27 tells us, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." The church is "unspotted from the world." It is a pure city, made of pure gold, a pure people who are not worldly. Second Corinthians 6:17 states, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing." The church is composed of a people who are separate. They do not touch the "Babylonish garment" or the "wedge of gold." Those things are precious to the world, but they bring

wedges in between people, and between people and power.

As we look further in our text, we find that in this city the guidance and direction is not provided by man-made teachings, earthly headquarters, and denominational dictates. **Verse 3** says that it is provided by "**the throne of God and of the Lamb.**" In our day, the "three unclean spirits like frogs [have] come out of" paganism, papalism, and Protestantism (Revelation 16:13); they are no longer merely housed in those religious systems. They are attempting to work right around the camp of the saints, but they are not *in* the city; they are *without*. This is a city that is pure (Ephesians 5:27). Again, **verse 3** of our text says, "**And there [in the city] shall be no more curse [or accursed thing]: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it.**" Some think that is over in Heaven, but that is in the city (or the church). This is not portraying the eternal realm after time, because Christ is still referred to as "**the Lamb.**"

"**The throne of God**" is in the church as well as in the eternal realm. Jesus told His disciples, "Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matthew 19:28). That takes place when we follow in the regeneration. That is when we become "joint-heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:17). Romans 5:17 says that we "reign in life." We are on a throne, just as Christ is on a throne. In Revelation 3:21-22 Jesus said to our day: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Every overcomer sits with Christ in His throne. They sit together with Him in heavenly places, in an exalted spiritual position, in the church while time is yet standing.

When **verse 3** of our Scripture text talks about "**the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it,**" this denotes Christ's reign, rule, and authority over the church. Remember, "**it**" is speaking of the church. Revelation, Chapter 4, gives us a description of the "**throne.**" Verses 2-6 say: "And immediately I was in the spirit [it takes the Spirit of God to give you the understanding]: 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 [or the Greek says 'thrones']: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting [a picture of the ministry] . . . . And before the throne there was a sea of glass [the Word of God] like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts [or living creatures, depicting the redeemed of all ages] . . . ."

Our text portrays God's position in the church and God's order in the church. We are past the Dark Ages and the dark and cloudy day. We are past the time of the one "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" (2 Thessalonians 2:4). A man is not sitting on the throne anymore. He may still occupy a position of usurpation in that system, but it is long past the age where that was a prevailing condition in the Dark Ages. We are now in a day of light where this evening-time message reveals God in His rightful position in the true church. God is sitting on "**the throne**" in the church. God rules over the affairs of the church and over His people. In times past, they were subjected to man rule, but now in the evening time, the rule comes from "**the throne of God and of the Lamb**" (**verse 3**).

### "His Servants . . . Shall See His Face"

**Verse 3** says, ". . . and his servants shall serve him." They are "*free to worship God aright,*" as D. S. Warner penned in the song entitled "The Evening Light." In previous periods,

they were not as free to serve Him, even though He always had a people. The prevailing condition of previous periods is found in Revelation, Chapter 13. Verse 4 tells us, "And they worshipped the dragon [paganism] which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast [papalism] . . ." Then verse 15 says that they worshiped "the image of the beast [Protestantism]." The predominant condition in these periods was that man did not have the liberty nor the ability to "*worship God aright*" as we are privileged to do in our day. Thank God, now "**the throne of God and of the Lamb**" is on display right in the midst of the city, the church.

In our text, who are denoted as "**his servants**"? Romans 6:22 tells us, "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." God's "**servants**" are those who have been "made free from sin." I say this with love and kindness, but those who are not "free from sin" are not "**his servants**." That is why the truth needs to be heralded. There is rank deception today that causes people to think they are "**his servants**" when they are not "**his servants**." Religious teachings have told them they have to continue in sin, but the Bible says, "God forbid" (Romans 6:2). Christ came to loose us from the power and the fetters of sin. Thank God! When we are "free from sin," we are "**his servants**," and we have our "fruit unto holiness."

The only acceptable way to serve God is in holiness. In Luke 1:74-75, Zacharias, the father of John the Baptizer, prophesied, "That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." We serve God "in holiness and righteousness . . . all of the days of our life," not in some coming utopian society but right now.

Romans 14:17-18 tells us: "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink [it is not literal]; but righteousness, and peace, and joy [all spiritual qualities] in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men." We are to serve Christ in "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." We must have a real experience. We must be born of the Spirit (John 3:5), so we can live a life of righteousness.

The only way people can truly and acceptably serve God in the God-ordained Biblical manner is to come out of Babylon. Revelation 18:4 tells us, "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins . . ." Those who stay in Babylon, and refuse to appropriately respond to the call, will be influenced by Babylon, and they will end up becoming a partaker of her sins. Jesus said that if you "die in your sins," where He is, "ye cannot come" (John 8:21). They need to get a real experience, follow the leading of the Spirit of God, and allow their member to be set in the body of Christ, the church (1 Corinthians 12:18).

Hebrews 12:28-29 says, "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire." We must have grace to serve God acceptably, and 2 Corinthians 12:9 tells us that grace is strength. The only way we can have strength is allow the grace of God, the strength of God, to help us to have and maintain a kingdom experience. Thus, we are to be in a place where there is "**no more curse**" (**verse 3**). Remember, every bit of our Scripture text takes place in one proximity—the city, or the church. It does not take place in Babylon nor in the world. They will never encourage you to live in holiness and in righteousness. Only in the city, where a holy God and His Son are on "**the throne**," is a true provision made for a man to live holy.

How does Christ enable "**his servants**" to serve Him acceptably, to serve Him in holiness and righteousness? **Verse 4** of our text tells us how the provision has been made. It says, "**And**

**they ['his servants'] shall see his face.**" That is the key to victory. Keep in mind, "**his face**" is a symbolic picture. We are not talking about a literal, fleshly face. The Apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:16, "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh [old Judaism was all 'after the flesh']: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." Paul was one who saw a fleshly Christ, just as the other disciples did after the Resurrection. It was a glorified flesh, but nonetheless, it was a fleshly Christ. He ate fish and the honeycomb (Luke 24:42-43).

Acts 9:27 tells us, "But Barnabas took him [Paul], and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way . . ." Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures [that is all speaking of a literal body]: And that he was seen of Cephas [or Peter], then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also . . ."

Paul also said in 1 Corinthians 9:1, "Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" He definitely saw Christ in the flesh, but in 2 Corinthians 5:16 Paul said, "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh." In other words, there had been a change in dispensations. The old economy was a fleshly economy, which was based on a fleshly lineage, but a transition had been made. Verse 17 says, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." A transition was made from the *old* economy to the *new* economy, from a *literal* seed to a *spiritual* seed, from a *physical* birth to a *spiritual* birth.

We are not following a fleshly Christ. When our Scripture text says that "**they shall see his face,**" it is not talking about a fleshly Christ. In order to "**serve him**" (verse 3), we need a spiritual vision of a spiritual Christ. Religion today is full of people who know all about a literal Christ. They know where He *was* and what He *did*, but they do not understand where He *is* or what He *is doing*. They tout the Holy Land tours to see where Jesus *walked*, but I am interested in where Jesus *is walking* now. The fleshly Christ is the only Christ they know.

In Judaism, the people had great respect for tradition and credentials. Much of false religion today has fallen to that same level—tradition and credentials. However, the Apostle Paul said in Philippians 3:3-8: "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more [then he enumerated his Jewish credentials]: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;

"Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. 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." Paul let us know that following tradition and having credentials will not suffice in a spiritual, Holy Ghost Dispensation.

Far too often in sectism today, they invite a guest speaker to come in. When he comes, fifteen minutes is spent telling where he has been, what he has studied, who he knows, and what he has done. After they introduce him, he spends the next fifteen minutes verifying everything they said. Then, in the last five minutes, he tries to bring in a straggly old, powerless Jesus who supposedly leaves people bound by sin. However, the Apostle Paul let us know that fleshly credentials are of no benefit in a Holy Ghost Dispensation.

## John's Description of Christ

Philippians 3:3 says that we "worship God in the spirit . . . and have no confidence in the flesh." Those in the true church know Christ as a spiritual figure. That is why they can "**serve him**" (verse 3). They know Him with a personal, experimental knowledge. John had a vision of Christ's "**face**" earlier in the Revelation. Revelation 1:14 states, "His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire." Notice the descriptions: wool and snow. In Isaiah 1:18 God implored, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as *snow*; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as *wool*." "Wool" and "snow" are the opposite of sin.

Psalms 51:7 says, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." "Snow" represents the redemptive work of Christ, the cleansing work He brought to mankind. Think with me about "snow": one minute the earth is bare with all filth or dirt clearly visible, and then the next minute the heavens open, and the ground is covered in white. All the filth and dirt is no longer seen; it is under the snow. So it is with men. One minute the sins of man are bare and open, but in a moment of time when real repentance occurs, the heavens open, and they are covered. All that remains is white! Christ came to enable man to have sin covered and to obtain purity and holiness.

Also, notice that the "wool" and "snow" describe the appearance of Christ's "head and his hairs." The Prophet Daniel saw the same portrait. Daniel 7:9 tells us, "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool." The head and the hairs are the closest things to our minds. Thus, the uppermost thing on the mind of Christ is the plan of redemption to make man pure. When we are "**his servants**" and we see "**his face**," it will give us a burden for mankind's souls. It will be uppermost on our mind.

Revelation 1:14 also says that "his eyes were as a flame of fire." The eyes are what you see when you see a face. This portrays a very crucial element necessary to serve Him, to maintain victory, and to be able to help others. Hebrews 1:7 tells us what the "eyes" of the body of Christ are: "his ministers [are] a flame of fire." The ministry is the eyes of the body of Christ. The ministry is what God ordained to enable people to see. The Bible tells us throughout Scripture that the ministry are the ones who truly see. Isaiah 21:6 says, "For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Go, set a watchman, let him declare what he seeth." Many times Old Testament prophecy referred to the ministry as "seers," because their role was to declare what they saw.

Isaiah 52:7-8 says: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings [he was talking about the preachers; Romans 10:15], that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Thy watchmen shall lift up *the* voice [of Christ]; with *the* voice together shall they sing: for they shall see . . . ." The ministry are the watchmen. Amos 3:7 tells us, "Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets."

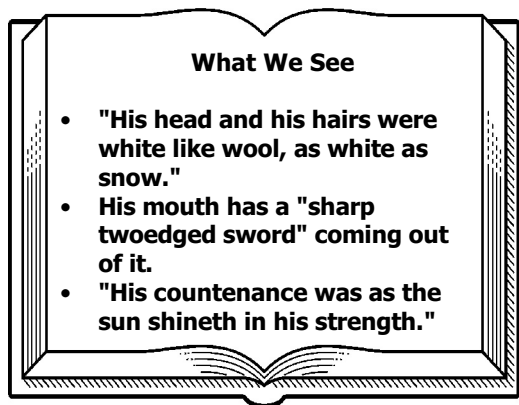
In John's description of Christ, Revelation 1:16 says that "out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword [the Word of God; Hebrews 4:12]: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." That is a very blinding light. What produces the light on Christ's "**face**"? Light is produced by the combination of the words that go out of His mouth and the ministry (the eyes) which brings the message to the people. In this evening time, we have the most brilliant light in human history.

Proverbs 4:18 says, "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." The light in the Sixteenth-Century Reformation was considered

"great" in Revelation 8:10 and was great compared to the great darkness of the Dark Ages, but in the sixth seal there was even more light. Now in the seventh seal, we are in the time of completeness, fullness. It is shining "as the sun shineth in his strength." The church's light is a blinding light like a diamond flashing in the sun: it is "clear as crystal" (Revelation 21:11). There is no more cloudy day; we have a clear, plain message.

We see Christ's radiant **"face"** because of the sword in His mouth (Revelation 1:16) and the "eyes" (or a ministry) that presents it to us. Those who will not accept the sword nor follow the eyes will never see the radiant **"face,"** but **"his servants"** will. They serve Him in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life. They "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth" (Revelation 14:4). They take the message, they follow that which is revealed by the "eyes" (His ministers); and because of that, they are a part of the body.

### How Do We See Christ's "Face"?



First Corinthians 13:9-12 tells us: "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." Notice verse 12 says, ". . . then face to face."

When is the *"then"*? Paul wrote to the Corinthian brethren in the proximity of A.D. 54-57. At that time, they had limited understanding, for only two seals had been loosed (Revelation 6:1-4). That is the reason Paul said that "we know in part" (verse 9). Verse 10 says, "But when that which is perfect [the Greek word is *teleios*, which means 'complete'] is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." Paul was acknowledging there was more to come than what was available in his day. The morning-time brethren were not in the fulness of time, but today we are!

Revelation 10:7 says, "But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished [or *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says 'completed'], as he hath declared to his servants the prophets." Amos 3:7 tells us, "Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." In the seventh seal, just as God declared to His prophets, we are not dealing with that which is "in part," but we are dealing with that which is "perfect," or complete.

Look at the analogy Paul gave in 1 Corinthians, Chapter 13. In verse 11 he said, "When I was a child . . ." He was not just speaking in a physical sense, but this also portrays the progression of the Gospel Day. In essence, it says, "When the Gospel Day was in its infancy, I had to speak as something in its infancy, I understood as something in its infancy." That is what the Gospel Day was in the morning time. Verse 12 lets us know that it was in the morning time when they saw "through a glass, darkly." Then verse 11 says, ". . . but when I became a man [or came to maturity], I put away childish things." When the Gospel Day came to maturity, verse 12 tells us we now see "face to face."

Ephesians 4:13 reads, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith [that did not occur prophetically until the evening time], and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man,

unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." The church reached spiritual maturity when "the unity of the faith" message was restored in the evening time. That is when the church came "unto a perfect [complete] man." Spiritual maturity is "the measure of the stature of the fulness."

In this seventh-seal period of time, we are not seeing "through a glass, darkly." When the morning-time brethren read Paul's words about "that man of sin . . . the son of perdition" who would sit "in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4), they could not initially grasp the full import, impact, and application of what he was talking about. It had not yet occurred. It was the prophecy they knew "in part." Now, the seals have been loosed, and we can clearly understand what Paul was referring to. We now see "face to face." We are in the age of the perfect man, the mature aspect of the Gospel Day. We are living in the fulness of time.

Again, **verse 4** of our Scripture text says, "**And they shall see his face.**" Where do we see "**his face**"? First Corinthians 13:12 says that "we see through a glass." The Greek word means "a looking glass, a mirror." According to James 1:22-23, the "glass," or the mirror, is "the word." That is where we see "**his face.**" When we see "**his face**" in the Word, we see "the sun shineth in his strength" (Revelation 1:16). The light comes from His Word. It helps us be able to serve Him in righteousness and holiness all the days of our life.

Second Corinthians 3:18 tells us, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image . . ." As we see ourselves compared to the image of Christ, we see that there is a need for greater conformity to this image. Then, the Spirit of God enables us to change into the same image held before us in the glass (the Word of God). That produces the glory of God. That verse says we see "the glory of the Lord" in the glass. Hebrews 1:3 tells us that Christ is "the brightness of his [God's] glory." When we behold in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are seeing the image of Christ, we are seeing "**his face.**" He is the Word (John 1:1), and we are "conformed to" His image (Romans 8:29). Through the Spirit of God, we can conform into the same image that we see in the glass.

The picture being set before us in our text reveals when we are removed from the curse of Babylon and are under the rule of God (**verse 3**), we will see "**his face**" (**verse 4**). Every good parent understands that; every child has seen Mom or Dad with "the look." The child knew what it meant; the parent never had to say a word. You can guide the child with your face. Likewise, Christ guides the church with "**his face**": with His eyes (His ministry) and with His mouth (His Word). That produces the sun (the light that shineth in its strength) and enables us to truly be "**his servants**" and serve Him acceptably. That makes the church victorious.

**Verse 4** also says, ". . . and his name shall be in [not on] **their foreheads.**" Truths like the truth concerning God's name, His character, and the Church of God are clearly and indelibly imprinted upon their minds. They truly are under the power of sound doctrine (Titus 2:1). God's name is a character name. A name denotes character, identity, and ownership rights. It also denotes who is entitled to an inheritance. Ephesians 3:14-15 states: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ["God"; Ephesians 1:3], Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named [Church of God]." Those in the city are conformed to the image of Christ, who is the express image of God. So they reflect God's character, His identity, and His ownership and control over their lives. Also, they are heirs with God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ (Romans 8:17).

God's name "**in their foreheads**" (**verse 4**) is a distinct contrast to those who are in Babylon. Revelation 13:16, speaking of the Protestant beast, tells us, "And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads."



Your mind is in the forehead. Thus, it is speaking of indoctrination, and the right hand is the hand of fellowship (Galatians 2:9). Those in Babylon are indoctrinated with a false mark, with false doctrine; but those in the church are under the rule of divine government. They truly see "**his face**," and they have God's name, the true doctrine, "**in their foreheads**."

Our Scripture text is conveying to us that it is a precious privilege to be one of God's people who have "come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). It affords us a clarity of spiritual vision that others do not have. While others only see a fleshly Christ, a babe in a manger, a Man on a Cross, we have a vision of a spiritual Christ. This vision of "**his face**" is essential to our continued victory, and it is also necessary to enable us to be an evangelistic force to a sin-benighted world.

May God help us realize, in this day of independent and sectish spirits, where and how the Lord has made provision for us to "**see His face**." It is in the city, the church. That is where "**the throne of God and of the Lamb**" are, where divine rule and divine guidance have their proper position. That is where fiery preachers see and then tell what they see. That is where the Word of God, the sharp two-edged sword, goes forth. That is where the light shines brilliantly amid a sin-darkened world.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO—PART THREE

### The Final Description of the City and Admonition

*Revelation 22:5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.*

*6 And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.*

*7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.*

#### "The Lord God Giveth Them Light"

In **verse 5**, the Revelator gave the final description of "the city." Then in **verses 6-7**, he received affirmation of the veracity of the truths incorporated within this vision. As we consider these verses, we also find a sobering admonition. As **verse 5** begins, the Revelator emphasized a recurrent truth. Earlier, John said in Revelation 21:25, "And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there." The word "**there**" in both verses has reference to "the city." **Verse 5** of our Scripture text continues, ". . . for the Lord God giveth them light." That is a reiteration of Revelation 21:23, which says, ". . . for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

Second Timothy 3:16 tells us that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God," and Proverbs 30:5 states, "Every word of God is pure." Thus, there is a significance to the repetition in the Scriptures. The Apostle Paul penned in Philippians 3:1: "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the *same things* to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe." There is a merit to repetition. As humans, we are forgetful. Repetition is necessary to drive the points of truth home and bring them to our remembrance. Peter wrote in 2 Peter 1:12-13: "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance." Repetition is not without purpose. Jesus told us in Revelation 1:11, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last." Then we see the same expression in Revelation 22:13. In this last chapter of the Revelation, many truths to which we were introduced in prior chapters are repeated.

The image shows the Greek letters Alpha (Α) and Omega (Ω) in a large, bold, serif font. The Alpha is on the left and the Omega is on the right, both rendered in a dark, solid color.

**Alpha & Omega**

One purpose of the repetition is to serve as added emphasis. The overall thrust of the vision of the church in Revelation, Chapters 21-22, is to show that it is a city of light. That is one of the first things mentioned when he described the evening-time church (Revelation 21:11). Jesus said in Matthew 5:14: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill [the Greek word is *oros*, meaning 'a mountain'] cannot be hid." From the onset of His public ministry, Jesus let us know that God's people were "the light of the world" and that collectively they comprise a "city that . . . cannot be hid." **Verse 5** of our text reiterates that "**there shall be no night there.**" It is again revealing that "at evening time it shall be light" (Zechariah 14:7). From now on there will be perpetual light in this city until the Consummation.

The brethren Thomas Nelson and D. O. Teasley penned in verse 3 of the song entitled "From

Babel to Zion": "God's church can be no longer obscured from human sight. For see on yonder mountain a city filled with light." This city of light cannot be obscured from man's vision anymore. There will be no more Dark Ages and no more dark and cloudy day. The evening light is going to continue to shine forth in its beauty and in its brilliance.

In this closing chapter, the Hebrew style of turning expressions as a kaleidoscope becomes more evident. Some expressions take on a little different application than earlier in the Revelation. **Verse 5** lets us know that **"they need no candle."** It is telling us they no longer need man-made things in this city. Hebrews 12:27-28 says: "And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved . . . ." This church is divine: divine in its institution and in its operation. It goes through a shaking time to shake out things that are made, or man-made. The things that remain cannot be shaken. It is a kingdom that cannot be moved. When people are being moved, it shows that they are not firmly established, settled, and consecrated in the kingdom as they ought to be.

When **verse 5** of our Scripture text says, **"neither light of the sun,"** it tells us we do not receive light through natural means. Why? **". . . for the Lord God giveth them light."** Our light comes from a divine source, not from man-made sources ("**candle**"), nor from natural realms ("**the sun**"). Psalm 36:9 tells us, "For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light." The psalmist said in Psalm 84:11, "For the LORD God is a sun and shield [or light and safety]: the LORD will give grace and glory." When we take hold of the light and put it on as a shield, God gives us the grace. That produces the glory. Then people will actually see the glory of God.

Let us consider the **"light"** in our text. First John 1:5 says, "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." Revelation 21:23 tells us that "the Lamb is the light," and Psalm 119:105 says, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light . . . ." God is light, the Lamb is light, and God's Word is light. Psalm 119:130 says, "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding . . . ." Light is understanding. Converse to light is darkness. What is *darkness*? Psalm 82:5 says, "They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness." Darkness is when people do not have understanding. The lack of understanding is what the enemy uses to hold people in darkness.

Jesus said in Luke 11:20, "But if I with the finger of God [or 'the Spirit of God'; Matthew 12:28] cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you." Notice that there are two components mentioned in this verse: the Spirit of God and devils. Verses 21-22 state: "When a strong man [one of the devils] armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: But when a stronger than he [the Spirit of God] shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils." Verse 21 tells us that these devils are armed. What are devilish spirits armed with? The armor they trust in to hold people captive is darkness and deceit. As long as they can keep people in darkness without understanding, they can keep them bound. However, the stronger than the strong man (the Spirit of God) enlightens the eyes of understanding (Ephesians 1:17-18). When He enlightens, darkness is dispelled, and the power of it is broken. Then the devils can hold that one no longer!

Every man-made religious system fosters deceit. Revelation 20:7-8 tells us: "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan [in this instance, paganism] shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog . . . ." The power of false religion is the power of deception; that is what holds people in bondage. We recall that the word **"light"** denotes understanding, and "God is light." Psalm 147:5 reads, "Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite." His understanding

is infinite. In this evening time, the power of darkness and deceit has been broken by the **"light"** of this evening-time truth. It enables people to see through the darkness with which Satan has held them in bondage and through the deceit of false religion. Look at what the evening-time light accomplishes. We see from **verse 5** of our Scripture text that **"night,"** or darkness, has forever been banished from the church. It is **"light,"** and it will get brighter and purer until Jesus splits the skies and returns to take us on into the realms of eternity.

### **Light Is Essential to Reign**

Again, **verse 5** says, ". . . and they need no candle." Notice, the pronoun **"they"** refers back to "his servants" (verse 3). God's servants (those who are in the city or the saints who are in the church) do not need sources of artificial light because they have God in their midst. He **"giveth them light."** **Verse 5** continues, ". . . neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light [or understanding]: and they shall reign for ever and ever." That is what understanding produces. Understanding produces the power to reign. It produces the victory. When you do not have understanding, you cannot have victory. However, when **"light"** comes, you can see how to obtain victory. That is why the enemy works feverishly to obscure the light, but thank God, he cannot! Brother Leamon R. Whitehead sings a song that says, *"There's not enough darkness to put out the light."*

Notice, **verse 5** says that God **"giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."** God's servants (**"them"** and **"they"**) are continually being given understanding to have a continuous and ongoing reign. Daniel 12:4, prophesying of the Gospel Day, says that "knowledge shall be increased." Daniel 7:27 says, "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom . . ." When you are a saint of God, your kingdom experience is to be an everlasting experience, because you are in "an everlasting kingdom." Isaiah 9:6-7 lets us know: "For unto us a child is born [the Incarnation, the physical component, Jesus], unto us a son is given [the divine Person who moved into that body at conception, the pre-existent Christ]: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever [an everlasting kingdom]."

**"Light,"** or understanding, is crucial to the power to reign. That is why God wants His people to "come out" of Babylon (Revelation 18:4). They cannot get understanding there. Romans 5:17 tells us, "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 [how?] by one, Jesus Christ." Remember, Jesus is the Word personified (John 1:14), and the Word is light (Psalm 119:105). So, an understanding of the Word is crucial! We reign by Jesus Christ, by an understanding of His Word.

God still has people in the realms of sectarian bondage, just as His people were in Egyptian bondage. The message is to "come out," because they are being exposed to false and erroneous teaching. Proverbs 23:7 says, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." What people believe determines how they live and act. If they believe wrong, they will act wrong. If they are in an organization that teaches a "sin more-or-less doctrine," then they are going to sin. However, Jesus said in John 8:21, "I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come."

It is essential that people get to a place where they can hear the truth, a place where light and understanding are going forth. That **"light"** will bring them the power to obtain and maintain victory, to reign in life. Revelation 1:5-6 tells us: "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God . . . ." We are to be kings, we are to reign.

Revelation 5:10 says, "And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." That is not out in some future point in time, but it is "in [this] life" (Romans 5:17). Jesus said to our day, the Laodicean period, in Revelation 3:21, "To him that overcometh [not to him that is dead] will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." We can sit down with Christ in His throne. If we take the understanding that God is giving, He will enable us to **"reign,"** not just a while but **"for ever and ever,"** a consistent experience.

### **This Inspired Prophecy Is for "His Servants"**

**Verse 6** of our Scripture text says, **"And he said unto me . . . ."** The pronoun **"he"** refers back to "one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues" (Revelation 21:9). Again, that is a portrayal of an evening-time ministry. These vial angels did not sound until the evening time. When we look at **verses 5, 6, and 7,** we have three different speakers. In **verse 5** John was describing what he saw in this portion of the vision. In **verse 6** one of the seven angels was speaking (a picture of the evening-time ministry). Then, in **verse 7** we

read the words of Christ. These three verses provide "a threefold cord [that] is not quickly broken" (Ecclesiastes 4:12). The "threefold cord" in this instance consists of the word of John, the word of the ministry, and the word of Christ.

**"A THREEFOLD CORD"**  
**Words of:**  
**Verse 5 – Apostle John**  
**Verse 6 – Evening-Time Ministry**  
**Verse 7 – Christ**

Jesus said in Matthew 18:16 that "in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established." Thus, in **verse 5,** John established the truth that he saw along with the preceding verses of this vision. **Verse 6** says, **"These sayings are faithful and true,"** and the **"angel,"** or the ministry, certified the veracity of the Revelation. When John began writing this apocalyptic book, Revelation 1:1 tells us that God "sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John." Then, in **verse 6** the angel said, **"These sayings are faithful and true."** That is the certification, or the affirmation, of the Revelation. The **"angel"** gave the basis for this affirmation.

**Verse 6** continues, **". . . and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants . . . ."** *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* renders it in this manner: "the Lord God of the spirits of the prophets." This reveals that the same God who moved on the prophets through the Spirit and gave them the Old Testament Scriptures and prophecy is the same One who gave the Revelation to John. God, in His omniscient wisdom, knew there would be those who would question the authenticity, the veracity, and the inspiration of the Revelation. So, He gave a "threefold cord": three witnesses to establish that the same Spirit who worked through the Old Testament prophets is the same Spirit who worked through John and gave him the Revelation, which serves as New Testament prophecy.

Second Peter 1:20-21 tells us: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of

God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The prophecy did not come by the "will of man," but it came by men who were "moved [inspired] by the Holy Ghost." They penned that which God inspired when He "moved" upon them, and it became prophecy. Therefore, John and the Revelation are placed in the same category as the prophets. Revelation 1:9 says that John "was in the isle that is called Patmos . . . for the testimony of Jesus Christ." Revelation 19:10 tells us that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." John was there to receive prophecy. The Revelation is just as much an inspired prophecy as those received by the brethren in the Old Testament. The same Spirit, or Holy Ghost, that moved on them moved on John.

In Revelation 1:10 John said, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." He received the vision of the Revelation by "the Spirit." Also, Revelation 4:2 says, "And immediately I was in the spirit," and Revelation 21:10 reads, "And he carried me away in the spirit . . . ." So, the expression "**the Lord God of the holy prophets**" (**verse 6**) validates not only the vision John was given, but it also validates his position as inspired.

As with all Scriptures, John's vision was not solely for his benefit. **Verse 6** of our text tells us it was "**to shew unto his servants.**" In Revelation 1:1 when John began to write, he used the same expression: "to shew unto his servants." It reminds us the Revelation is for "**his servants.**" It is not for the world. When the world tries to read the Revelation, they concoct almost everything imaginable from it. When false religion tries to give consideration to it, they generate more confusion than truth. It is hid from the wise and prudent and revealed to babes (Matthew 11:25). You must be born again, "made free from sin," to be "servants to God" (Romans 6:22). To receive the truth within the Revelation, you must have the same Spirit which inspired the writer to enlighten you. If you are not "free from sin," you will never understand the Revelation.

**Verse 6** continues, ". . . **to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.**" The same word "**shortly**" is also used in Revelation 1:1. John used it at the beginning of the Revelation and at the end of the Revelation, revealing to us that it applies to the entire Revelation, not just to the immediately preceding portion. Thus, all the Revelation is incorporated within the term of "**shortly.**"

In **verse 7** Jesus said, "**Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.**" This verse has a very strong resemblance to what John penned in the beginning of the Revelation. Revelation 1:3 says, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for *the time is at hand.*" Notably, as John concluded this apocalyptic writing, many of his expressions were similar to those with which he began this book. The evening time of the Gospel Day has brought us full circle; we are coming back to the original. That was John's burden when he came off the isle of Patmos and penned 1, 2, and 3 John (chronologically the last books of the Bible). He wrote in 1 John 1:1, "That which was from the beginning . . . ." He saw the church veering off the path; so, he was trying to get them back to the original.

### **We Must Keep the Sayings**

**Verse 7** of our text has the words of Christ (red letter in many Bibles). He stressed the importance of "**keepeth**" by saying, "**Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.**" Notice that the word "**keepeth**" is present and continual. We must keep keeping "**the sayings**" until He comes. Too many have grown weary in well doing. Paul warned against that, writing in Galatians Galatians 6:9, "And let us not be weary in well doing [why?]: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." He gave the same admonition

to the Thessalonians, writing in 2 Thessalonians 3:13, "But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing."

In our text, Christ speaks to us after we have received the affirmation of this glorious vision of the bride, the Lamb's wife, "that great city." As evening-time saints, we have a greater understanding than any other people since the world began. The danger of our day is in growing weary. Thus, the admonition Christ felt compelled to give was, in essence, to "keep keeping the sayings until He comes." Many have *begun*, but not as many *endure* unto the end. Jesus said in Matthew 24:13, "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." What do we endure? Verse 14 tells us, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world . . ." We must endure the Gospel unto the end. We have to continue to "walk in the light, as he is in the light" (1 John 1:7). As God continues to give understanding, we must keep pace with the understanding and incorporate it in our lives.

The power to reign is in the power of walking in what we understand. That is why **verse 7** says, ". . . **blessed is he.**" It is a blessing to have understanding. It is a blessing to reign in life. We can sit on thrones, and we can be kings. However, we must also recognize what we have today is not sufficient for tomorrow. We must continue to endure the Gospel. Again, the move of our day is to become weary in well doing and to not remain faithful, but our text is teaching that provision has been made where we can be faithful until the end if we "**keepeth the sayings.**"

In Matthew 24:42-48 Jesus said: "Watch therefore [why?]: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season [we must continue to eat spiritually]? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find *so doing* [being a faithful and wise servant]. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming."

Notice that Jesus spoke of "a faithful and wise servant," and then He spoke of an "evil servant." What made the difference? Verse 48 lets us know that the condition of the heart of "that evil servant" had changed because the Lord delayed. He did not come as quickly as the servant thought He should come. Time is a great revealer. Over time, that man's heart changed. That is why Jesus cautioned in **verse 7** of our lesson text, "**blessed is he that keepeth.**" We must keep eating the meat, keep nurturing our experience so we have the strength to endure. Speaking of the evil servant, verse 49 says, "And shall begin to smite his fellowservants . . ." Rather than providing that "meat" to strengthen his brethren, he began to smite his brethren. We see that transpiring over the land today. That is always an evidence of a heart change in the wrong direction. When people begin to smite their brethren with their tongue, something is wrong in their heart.

Jesus taught that time can work on the heart. We must continue to nourish "the inward man," so we can be "renewed day by day" (2 Corinthians 4:16). In Proverbs 4:23 the wise man cautioned, "Keep [or guard] thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." We must guard our hearts, because if we do not keep ourselves in the position we ought, it can affect us. It will also affect our thinking. Then our actions will be affected as well.

Matthew 25:49 says that the evil servant began "to eat and drink with the drunken." People who were once part of "that great city, the holy Jerusalem" are now drinking with the harlot, sipping of Babylon's cup, and eating her bread. Verses 50-51 read: "The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and

gnashing of teeth." Thus, "a faithful and wise servant" can become "an evil servant," and when Christ comes, he will be "cut asunder." Matthew, Chapter 25, gives us the Parable of the Ten Virgins. The foolish virgins said in verse 8 that "our lamps are gone out." The "lamps" represent salvation (Isaiah 62:1). If we are not diligent, over time, our lamp (or our experience) can go out. It does not happen overnight, but it is a process. When Jesus came, the foolish virgins were shut out.

Habakkuk 3:2 says, "O LORD, I have heard thy speech . . . revive thy work in the midst of the years . . ." The grave danger lies "in the midst of the years." Peter warned in 2 Peter 1:13, "Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle [speaking of his earthly frame], to stir you up by putting you in remembrance." In this evening time, with all the glorious, resplendent, brilliant, dazzling light we have, the enemy is working overtime to cause a weariness, a lukewarmness, and a lethargy. He wants us to have a lack of diligence that causes our heart to change, our thinking to change, and our lamp to go out. He wants us to be an "evil servant," one who smites the brethren, drinks from Babylon's cup, and eats from the devil's table.

Peter said in 2 Peter 1:12, "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance [Many people dislike repetition, but to not be repetitive is to be negligent. That is why the Revelation has seven different series. Each of the series bring a different aspect, a different perspective, but it is the same message.] of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth." Those who are "established in the present truth" are those who need the warning.

The encouraging aspect of **verse 7** of our text is that provision has been made to "**keepeth**," or to keep keeping, to continue to walk in the understanding as God gives it. We can keep reigning and be ready when He comes. We must keep walking in the understanding He gives as He gives it if we want to keep reigning and be ready when He comes. Psalm 91:7 encourages, "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee." Jude 24 says, "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." God can "keep you from falling." Provision has been made for a constant victory.

Sadly, many will not be among those who "**keepeth**." They will not be ready when He comes. Consider the words of our Lord after the conclusion of the vision John received of the church. **Verse 7** reads, "**Blessed is he**." If we have a revelation of truth, we are very blessed. If we are in a locality where a congregation holds forth the vision and truths of the church, we are indeed blessed! If we are not in a locality where there is a congregation holding forth the truths of the church, then we should do everything in our power to either relocate where a congregation is or labor to raise one up in our area. The Apostle Paul told Titus in Titus 1:5, "For this cause left I thee in Crete [an island], that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city." God wants truth in every locality. It is a tragedy to see areas where people cannot reasonably travel to a congregation.

Let us consider the words of Christ one more time. He said, "**Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book**" (**verse 7**). These truths will keep us if we will keep them. We live in a time when the enemy is working to make people feel that victory is difficult if not impossible, but we can have a constant, continual victory. There is a common element to victory. When John received a vision of those in Revelation, Chapter 15, who had the victory, their source of victory was that every one of them was standing on the "sea of glass" (Revelation 15:2), or the Word of God. If we will keep "**the sayings**," they will keep us. They will produce and maintain a victorious experience, a power to reign in this life (Romans 5:17).



We can be "more than conquerors" (Romans 8:37). Our Scripture text sets forth an encouraging and inspirational truth. The three witnesses in these verses provide a threefold cord. The truth of the vision of the church has been established in the mouth of all three: John, the ministry, and Jesus. Thank God, these sayings are true, so true that they will give you the power to reign, to sit on the throne with Jesus Christ, to be an overcomer right in this life, and enable you to be a faithful servant until He comes!

## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO—PART FOUR

### A Reminder of the Role of the Angel in Man Receiving Revelation

*Revelation 22:8 And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.*

*9 Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.*

*10 And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.*

*11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.*

### "The Angel" Is God's Agent of Revelation

These verses contain words that reveal an extremely unpopular truth in today's religious culture. That is because the predominant culture is dominated by independent and rebellious spirits. Certainly, a whole host of truths are housed within this text, but we want to draw our focus to **verse 8**, which vividly portrays a reminder of the role of "**the angel**" in man receiving a revelation. **Verse 8** reminds us that John was receiving a vision. He clearly stated, "**I John saw these things.**" God allowed John to be exiled to the isle of Patmos in order to use the panorama of the skies to paint this vision of truth. In **verse 8**, John mentioned "**the angel**" that had spoken to him throughout much of the Revelation. So, we must substantiate who "**the angel**" represents.

The word "**angel**" in our text is the Greek *aggelos*, which means "a messenger." This reiterates what has been taught previously: "**the angel**," symbolizing the ministry, is the agency God uses to bring truth to man. The Apostle Paul said that the Galatians received him "as an angel of God" after he "preached the gospel" (Galatians 4:13-14). Those designated in the Revelation as an "**angel**" are not speaking of celestial beings, but they portray a ministry. Our text validates that truth one last time in this prophetic book prior to its closure.

**Verse 8** tells us that John "**fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed**" him those "**things.**" This is a disagreeable truth to many, but there are some truths you will never receive a vision of unless "**the angel**," or a minister, shows it to you. Thank God for saints who read and study their Bible, but this Scripture shows the divine verification of the role of "**the angel**" as God's agent in this evening time. Sad to say, because of misuse and abuse through the Dark Ages, the dark and cloudy day, and even the charlatans, hucksters, and false preachers of our day, the position of the ministry has been denigrated to such a point where people have little trust or confidence in them.

It is still God's divine plan to use "**the angel**" (the ministry) as His agent of revelation. We see that reiterated throughout the Book of Revelation.

- Revelation 1:1 – "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it [how?] by his angel unto his servant John."
- Revelation 17:1 – "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."

- Revelation 18:1 lets us know that "the earth was lightened [or enlightened] with his [the angel's] glory."
- Revelation 19:9-10 – "And he [the angel in Revelation 18:1] 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. And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."
- Revelation 21:10 says that the *angel* "carried me [John] away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and *shewed me* that great city, the holy Jerusalem."

God choosing to use human instrumentality is not unique to the Revelation. He used Noah in Genesis, Chapter 6. Second Peter 2:5 tells us that Noah was "a preacher of righteousness." He preached a hundred years while the ark was being built. When God wanted to deliver His people from Egyptian bondage, He used Moses. He told him in Exodus 3:12, "Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain." God called a man and equipped him with a message. Amos 3:7 states, "Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." That has been God's plan and manner of operation throughout the ages.

Ezekiel 3:1-4 says: "Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll [one rendering says *scroll*], and go speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll [scroll]. And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness. And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them." The "roll," or scroll, was the Word of God. When God wanted to speak to Israel, He raised up a man and gave him a message.

In Ezekiel 33:7 God said, "So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel." Today many do not want "watchmen" (or overseers); they want over-lookers. However, God did not call over-lookers, He called overseers. In Acts 20:28 Paul told the elders that "the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers." Ezekiel 33:7-9 continues: ". . . therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul."

In every age, God has employed human instrumentality as an agency to bring understanding to the hearts of men. Some may say, "Well, I just believe you could pray, read the Bible, and the Spirit of God could reveal it." However, that is not what the Scriptures teach where a real revelation of truth is concerned. Acts 8:26-29 tells us: "And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot."

Notice who was involved: a celestial angel, the Spirit, and the eunuch who was reading the Word of God. Verses 30-31 read: "And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet

Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? [notice the reply] And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me?" God's plan is to use a man. If reading your Bible was sufficient, the angel never would have sent Philip, and the Spirit would never have directed him. However, it was not sufficient, because the eunuch did not understand what he was reading.

Verses 31-35 continue: "And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. The place of the scripture which he read was this [Isaiah 53:7-8], He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." The understanding came when Philip preached.

Let us look at what happened on the Day of Pentecost. Acts 2:4 tells us that "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost," speaking of those brethren who had come out of the Upper Room. Then, Acts 2:8 says that every man heard them speak in their own (native) tongue. However, not one of them got saved *until* Peter preached. He stood up under the anointing of the Spirit and brought them the Word of God (verse 16). At the conclusion of his message, verse 37 says, "Now when they *heard this*, they were pricked in their heart . . ." They were all in wonderment about what was transpiring, but nobody was pricked and nobody cried and said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (verse 37) until Peter preached.

Titus 1:3 says that God "hath in due times manifested his word through preaching." God's ordained plan is for a man to preach the Gospel. That is what He uses to bring understanding to the hearts of mankind. Saul of Tarsus saw the Lord of Glory on the road to Damascus. Jesus could have told him what he needed to do, but He did not. Acts 9:5-6 states: "Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he [Saul] trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."

Verses 10-12 let us know that the Lord sent Ananias to Saul. He used human instrumentality; He used a man, a messenger, a ministry. Then verse 17 tells us that Ananias dealt with Saul, and Saul was saved. Acts, Chapter 10, tells of Cornelius, who was a Roman soldier. Verses 2-6 say: "A devout man [a Jewish proselyte], and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day [or 3:00 p.m.] an angel of God [a celestial being] coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: *he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.*" Again, God used a man.

People rise up with an independent spirit today and say, "No man is going to tell me what to do." Well, it is God's plan for a man to tell you. No one gets saved without the operation of a man. Some may say, "I got saved at home reading the Bible," but who wrote that? Men, inspired by God, did. Others say, "Well, I got saved when I heard a song." Who wrote that? Who sang that? Who played that? Any way you want to look at it, it comes right back to God using human instrumentality.

Romans 10:13-14 states: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" The truth of

these verses is reflected in **verse 8** of our Scripture text when it says, "**And I John saw these things, and heard them.**" John was giving a divine verification and vindication of the role of "**the angel**" as God's agent in this evening time. Sadly, there are those today who are as the people in Jeremiah's day. Jeremiah 6:16-17 tells us: "Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein. Also I set watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken."

They were saying, "Yes, we see the old paths; yes, we hear the trumpet; but we will do as we think." We are living in a time when unclean spirits have come out of religious systems, and they are working right around the camp of the saints. They have enveloped the religious world and have caused people to profess but not possess salvation. They want to cause the saints to feel that they can take the message or leave the message, agree with it or disagree with it. However, God still has a people who will go "the good way," whether you or I go that way or not. It is still God's chosen way.

Ezekiel, Chapter 33, speaks of conditions paralleling with what we see today. In Ezekiel 33:30-33 God said: "Also, thou son of man, the children of thy people still are talking against thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the LORD. And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not. And when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them."

We also see conditions today as they were in Jeremiah, Chapter 18. The people did not like Jeremiah's message. It was contrary to the popular message of the day. He did not preach a "feel-good gospel." Others were prophesying peace and safety when destruction was looming on the horizon for Israel as a nation. Jeremiah was an unpopular man, a man who stood alone.

Jeremiah 18:18 tells us, "Then said they, Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come, and let us smite him with the tongue [let us undermine his influence, misrepresent him, assassinate his character, question his integrity, and impugn his divinity], and let us not give heed to any of his words." The very first truth portrayed in our text is that if we desire to receive a vision of truth, we must realize that it is God's ordained method to reveal it through "**the angel**," or the ministry. If we refuse the messenger and the message, we refuse God.

### **"Worship" Belongs to God**

The next truth we see depicted is that a true ministry is humble. They do not take any position or glory that belongs to God. **Verses 8-9** say: ". . . **I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not.**" He was not looking for that which was not due to him. Peter exemplified this humility. Acts 10:25-26 lets us know: "And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man." That flies right in the face of what they teach and practice in popery. Catholics claim that Peter was the first pope, but popes readily let people bow down before them, kiss their ring, and kneel before them. Peter said, in so many words: "Stand up. I am a man just like you are."

Speaking of Paul and Barnabas, Acts 14:7-18 says: "And there they preached the gospel. And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked. And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker. Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people.

"Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them."

When Paul and Barnabas were lauded as gods, they refused it. Worship belongs only to God. Again, **verse 9** of our Scripture text says, "**Then saith he ['the angel'] unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.**" The injunction was, "Don't get down at my feet; worship God." The desire of a true ministry is to teach and encourage people how to acceptably "**worship God.**" Unless people have an understanding of truth, they will never be able to maintain victory, and they will never be able to serve God acceptably.

First Timothy 2:3-4 tells us: "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." Second Corinthians 2:11, in essence, tells us that if we have ignorance, or a lack of understanding, then the enemy can employ his devices and get the advantage of us. It is the ministry through the message that exposes Satan's devices. That brings understanding so we are not ignorant, so we are not taken advantage of, and so we do not lose our victory. Romans 12:1 says, "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." We find out what is "reasonable" and "acceptable" through the ministry with a message. This is how we receive our vision, or insight to truth.

Hebrews 12:28 tells us, "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." One avenue to maintain a kingdom experience and to serve God acceptably is through "the word of his grace" (Acts 20:32). That Word is brought to us by "**the angel.**" God ordained to bring grace to the hearts of man through His Word. Therefore, it is essential that we appropriately and properly understand it. That enables us to "**worship God.**" Worshiping God is not solely something that we do when we assemble, but worshiping God is based on how we live *before* we assemble. There is great power in bringing victorious lives together into an assembly.

Let us look at the thought of "**worship God**" in **verse 9** of our text. The word "**worship**" in the Greek is the word *proskuneo*, and it literally means "to kiss, like a dog licking his master's hand." If you have had a pet dog and you leave that dog for just any time at all, then when you come back into his presence, he is excited. He jumps and barks and tries to lick all over you. He is excited to see you, excited to be in your presence. That is what the meaning of the word

**"worship"** is. When we come into the presence of our Master, we should be excited. We should be thrilled! We should jump and leap and shout! We should want to show Him affection and adoration!

If you were away for a week, and when you came home and opened the door, your dog rolled his eyes and looked away and went back to sleep, you would ask, "What's wrong with my dog?" That is not the way a dog acts towards its master. When that dog hears the car or when he hears you on the steps, he is standing at the door, wagging his tail, and panting. He is excited! You can hardly get the door open, and there he is, all over you. That is the same excitement we should have when we are in the presence of our Master. That is what we should bring to worship services.

In John 4:23, Jesus said that "the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit." The word "spirit" does not have a capital S, which would stand for the Holy Spirit. It has a small s, which tells us that the true worshipers are the ones who get *their* spirit involved. They are like that dog: "Oh, the master is here! I am back with the master again!" I wonder, does that speak of our worship? John 4:23 mentions "the *true* worshippers." There are all kinds of people worshipping all kinds of things. Speaking to the Samaritan woman (who was much like the religious world today), Jesus said in verse 22, "Ye worship ye know not what." Sadly, most of them do not have the faintest idea what they are worshipping. They think they are worshipping God, but they are worshipping the dragon, the beast (Revelation 13:4), or the image (Revelation 13:15).

John 4:22-24 says: ". . . we know what we worship [because we have salvation] . . . But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." You must involve your spirit, your affection, your adoration, and your emotion into worship. If we have maintained victory through the message preached, if we "worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness" (Psalm 96:9), it will cause us to manifest our love, affection, and excitement in our **"worship."**

### **"The Angel" Was a Prophet and John's "Fellowservant"**

When John **"fell down"** at **"the feet of the angel"** (verse 8), then verse 9 tells us that **"the angel"** referred to himself as **"thy fellowservant."** This shows the humble equality of the ministry. False religion is based on human pride. Third John 9 speaks of "Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence." A whole host of religious organizations are built on ranks and orders and classes and positions of prominence. Roman Catholicism is perhaps the most familiar with parish priests, bishops, archbishops, cardinals, and ultimately the pope. It is all built on a hierarchical system. However, **"the angel"** placed himself as a **"fellowservant"** with John, even though he was **"of thy brethren the prophets."**

There are different ministerial offices in God's church, and the church profits from them all. Though they differ in roles and responsibilities, no gift is superior or inferior. Ephesians 4:11-12 tells us: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." The ministry is comprised of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers.

In our text, **"the angel,"** or the minister, refers to himself as **"of thy brethren the prophets."** Some today discount the office of being a prophet, saying that a prophet was only an Old Testament office. However, the Bible teaches us that "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Romans 11:29). The office of a prophet is still operational, functional, and necessary

today in this twenty-first century as it was when the church was instituted in the first century.

A prophet is a New Testament office. Acts 11:27-28 tells us: "And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit . . ." It is a Holy Ghost-called office. Then, Acts 13:1 says, "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch [in the New Testament church] certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul." Also, 1 Corinthians 12:28 states, "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."

Although **"the angel"** in our text was a prophet, he placed himself as John's **"fellow-servant."** The different ministerial offices are all designed to complement one another, and we are to each serve as a **"fellow-servant."** Paul said in 1 Corinthians 7:7 that "every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that." Each one has his own gift designed to fill his own office, but they are all equal.

In **verse 9** of our text, notice that **"the angel"** said he was **"of them which keep the sayings of this book."** This teaches us that the ministry holds to the same truths as the people. In reality, they are a partaker of the truths first. Second Timothy 2:6 says, "The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits." For a ministry to be effective, they must lead by example. In Philippians 3:17 the Apostle Paul wrote, "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample." Philippians 4:9 states, "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and *seen in me*, do: and the God of peace shall be with you." Then, 1 Thessalonians 2:10 says, "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe." That inspires confidence in the people and also enables authority.

### **"Seal Not the Sayings"**

In **verse 10** of our Scripture text, John wrote, **"And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand."** The character of the truth of the Revelation differs totally from much of the Old Testament prophetic writings. In Daniel 12:4 Daniel was instructed to "seal the book." It was not for their day. The prophecies Daniel received were for another time: "the time of the end." When was this time?

Hebrews 9:26 tells us, "For then must he [Jesus] often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Prophetically, "the end of the world" commenced when Jesus sacrificed Himself in A.D. 33. First Corinthians 10:11 says, "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 [present tense]." Daniel's prophecy was not to stay perpetually sealed, but it was sealed until "the time of the end," or until Christ ushered in the final dispensation, this New Testament Dispensation.

Daniel 12:4 reads, ". . . even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." Hebrews 12:1 clarifies Daniel's words, saying, "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." Daniel was speaking of the Christian race. In the Gospel Day, when his words would become unsealed and people would be running this race, they would need instructions. So, knowledge was increased as the seals were loosed, as understanding was given.

Many of the prophets were looking down through the telescope of time, as it were, to this



New Testament Dispensation. In 1 Peter 1:10, Peter said, "Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you." It did not come to them, but they "enquired and searched diligently" concerning these New Testament realities. Verse 12 reads, "Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves [Old Testament brethren], but unto us [New Testament brethren] they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into."

Daniel's prophecy was sealed up in his day (the Old Testament Dispensation), because the seal (the Holy Spirit) was not an availability for all mankind. Thank God, Jesus made Him available! Jesus said in John 16:7, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." When Jesus sent the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, the seals began to be loosed, or knowledge began to be increased.

A seal is used either to hold something in or when it is broken, to let something loose. The Holy Spirit is that seal. Ephesians 1:13 says, "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." Ephesians 4:30 tells us, "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Speaking of the Old Testament brethren, Peter said that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21). The Holy Spirit's abiding presence, as a reality for all through salvation, was not accomplished until the church was instituted on the Day of Pentecost. John 7:39 says, "But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." The seal was not loosed until after Christ was glorified.

Thank God, we are now in the New Testament dispensation! We have the seal, the Holy Spirit. Christ loosed Him. Daniel was told to "seal it [his prophecy] up," and when John saw a book sealed in Revelation 5:1, he "wept much" (verse 4). Why? Because "no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book" (verse 3). However, he was told in verse 5, "Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." Christ opened all the seals (or loosed the Holy Spirit to bring understanding), and as the seals were opened, knowledge was increased. Now people know how to run this race successfully with victory. In our text, "**the angel**" told John "**seal [it] not.**" There are no seals left on the "**book.**" In this seventh-seal period, it is an open "**book**"! We have the seal of the Holy Spirit. When "**the angel**" (or the ministry) preaches, the Spirit enlightens us. "**The angel**" works with the Spirit. When "**the angel**" showed John the judgment of Babylon (Revelation 17:1), he was "in the spirit" (verse 3). It takes a man with an anointed message, and the Spirit who uses that message, to give us a vision of Babylon. Also, it takes a message, a minister, and the Spirit to give us a vision of the church (Revelation 21:9-10).

**Verse 10** of our Scripture text says, "**Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book** [or the vision of truth]." "**The angel**" and the "**seal**" work together so we can be victorious and "**worship God.**" I am glad we live in a day of light! The message is not sealed, but rather understanding is being given!

**Verse 11** of our text says, "**He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.**" Initially, at a casual glance, this may seem confusing. Is the Lord not interested in converting people? Does He want them to be "**unjust still**"? No, the cry of the Gospel is, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted" (Acts 3:19). The Lord does not desire people to remain "**unjust**" when provision has been made for them to be converted (2 Peter 3:9). What

is **verse 11** conveying? We must take it in its context. When a ministry, under the anointing of the Spirit, proclaims "**the sayings of the prophecy of this book**" (**verse 10**), regardless of people's professions, the mirror of the Word reveals their true condition. Regardless of what people say they are, the Word of God reveals what they truly are.

Today many people are making all types of professions, but their living belies their profession. When the mirror of God's Word (James 1:23) is held before them by a faithful ministry, it reveals the "**unjust**," even though they may proclaim justification. After all of their proclamations, they are "**unjust still**." One may claim he is "**righteous**," while the mirror (the Word) reveals he is "**filthy**." Regardless of all of his protestations, he is "**filthy still**." God does not desire that people be "**unjust still**," but the Word will reveal them for what they are.

It is a portrayal of those who when the message goes forth, they continue to profess and fail to own their condition and to rectify it; therefore, they are "**unjust still**." Their profession does not change their condition. Paul said a very similar thing when people did not want to acknowledge the truth in 1 Corinthians 14:38. He said, "But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant."

Our Scripture text has its prophetic time setting in the evening portion of the Gospel Day. It is bringing us right down to the very closing portions of the evening time, revealing that in the face of all the brilliance and radiance of the city of light, there are still dishonest people. There were dishonest people in Jesus's day, dishonest people in the time of the morning-time church, and there will be dishonest people until time reels into eternity. However, God is a faithful God (Lamentations 3:23). His Word is shining forth. It is a radiant truth, so men will be without excuse. The truth will reveal their true condition. Psalm 50:16-17 states: "But unto the wicked [like those in our text] God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee." The Lord called them "*wicked*," even though they had professed, practiced, and preached religion.

In Matthew 23:23-24 and 27, Jesus said: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. . . . Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." Jesus called these scholars of the Mosaic law "*hypocrites*." Though their heads may have been full, their hearts were empty. Much of religion is in that condition today.

Truth (the Word of God; John 17:17) is that "sharp threshing instrument" (Isaiah 41:15) which reveals and exposes what is truly within a man. Hebrews 4:12 says, "For the word of God is quick [alive], and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." I am so glad for that! The enemy will shoot his fiery darts and cause thoughts to enter into your mind you wish you never had. However, God knows the difference between the thoughts of your mind and the intents of your heart. Verse 13 says, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

In Revelation 22:12 Jesus said, "And, behold, I come quickly." When viewed with **verse 11**, we see that the truth is making manifest the secrets of men's hearts in this evening time. We are living in a day of great revelation, not only a revelation that brings knowledge but also a revelation of the good and the bad. The seventh parable in Matthew 13:47-50 (the Parable of the Net, which corresponds with our day) relates that the net was full when it was down in the depths of

the sea. No one could see what was within it, but when it was brought up to the light, it revealed the good and the bad, and then a separating work was wrought.

First Corinthians 14:24-25 says: "But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth." Prophecy, the anointed message from "**the angel**," will bring a revelation of man's true condition, the condition of man's heart. When his secrets are made manifest, it will serve as a convincing agent, so he can humble down and gain the help that God desires to give. Luke 8:17 says, "For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad." We live in a time of exposure. The Lord is exposing things and people for just what they are. It is a day of preliminary judgment. God and truth are being faithful to the souls of mankind for one last time prior to the Second Advent of Christ.

Our Scripture text serves as a forceful reminder of the role "**the angel**," with the Spirit, plays in holding forth the vision of truth. That way people can clearly see their condition, and the saints will not be deceived. Then, they can maintain a victorious experience, be in a position to "**worship God**" acceptably, and be ready when Jesus comes.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO—PART FIVE

### The Vivid Distinction Living the Truth Makes

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

*13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.*

*14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.*

*15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.*

### Judgment Is on the Horizon

As we progress further into the final chapter of this apocalyptic account, Christ is directly speaking and taking a more active role (the first time Christ directly spoke in this chapter was in verse 7). In **verse 13** Jesus uttered the words, "**I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end . . .**" Certainly, this is so in the Book of Revelation. His first words recorded in this book were, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending" (Revelation 1:8). His final words are recorded in Revelation 22:20. He said, "Surely I come quickly." That is much the same as He said in **verse 12** of our lesson text. **Verses 12-15** portray the vivid distinction living the truth makes.

We must view our text in conjunction with the previous verses. Previously, we found that the Lord employs messengers ("the angel"; verse 8) to convey His message and to provide a revelation of truth to mankind. Regardless of the profession one may make, if the searchlight of truth reveals one as "unjust," he is "unjust still" (verse 11). In continuance with the proceeding verses, Jesus said in **verse 12**, "**And, behold, I come quickly.**" Remember, the prophetic time setting of this portion of this series is the evening-time portion of the Gospel Day. Romans 13:11 says that "now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." We are closer to the Second Advent and the threshold of eternity than any people in human history. So, Christ validates the truth that He is coming.

Just as there were scoffers in Peter's day, so there are in our day. Second Peter 3:3-10 tells us: "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come . . ." It will come. That is the first truth we see in this passage.

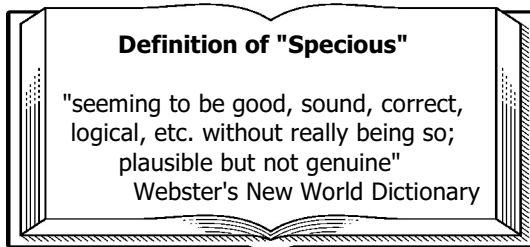
In **verse 12** of our text Jesus said, "**And, behold** [that gains our attention; it implies that we need to stop and consider], **I come quickly.**" Again, 2 Peter 3:10 says that "the day of the Lord will come." It is on the prophetic clock. It is incorporated in the divine will; it was factored into

the equation before time ever began. Second Peter 3:11 says, "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation [or conduct] and godliness." We (as the people of God), more than any people, should live with eternity in view. Our day is the last day. There are no further seals to be loosed. There are no more periods of time that succeed this seventh-seal time period.

The second truth that we see portrayed in **verse 12** of our Scripture text is that the judgment rests with Christ. He said that **"my reward is with me."** On that final day, one's profession will not matter because it will be up to Christ; He is the Judge. Second Timothy 4:1-2 tells us: "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick [alive] and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word . . . ." The Word needs to be preached, because we need to live in the light of eternity. We must realize the Judgment is looming on the horizon. Christ will leave the mercy seat and assume the Judgment seat.

In this day, while time stands, Jesus is our "advocate" (1 John 2:1). He is our lawyer to plead before the high court of Heaven and secure mercy and a pardon for us. However, on the Judgment Day, He will no longer be an advocate; He will become a judge. Romans 14:10 says, "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all [saved and unsaved] stand before the judgment seat of Christ." Jesus brought the Judgment into view when He said, **"And behold, I come quickly" (verse 12)**. He brought us to the thought that right beyond the seventh seal is the Judgment and eternity. Second Corinthians 5:10 states, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

In John 5:22 Jesus said, "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." What will Jesus use as the criteria for judgment on that fateful day? In John 12:48 He stated, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." That brings us to the implication that Jesus uttered in **verse 12** of our Scripture text when He said that **"my reward is with me."** He emphasized that He and His Word alone are the final authority. Thus, it behooves us to "study" (2 Timothy 2:15) to know what the Word of God teaches, to know the truth of His Word because we will be judged by His Word.



Christ and His Word are inseparable; Christ is the Word (John 1:1, 14). He and His Word alone are the final authority. It is crucial to know that because we live in a day of specious deception. The definition of the word *specious* well describes the conditions of our day (see box). Some say, "We cannot live perfect; no one's perfect." That seems logical, but it is not right. Jesus said,

"Be ye therefore perfect" (Matthew 5:48). Some people say, "Well, I've been baptized, I live a good moral life, and I'm a good neighbor." That seems good and correct and plausible, but all of that is specious. We live in a time of specious deception, because deception is not only working in the realms of religion, but now it is also reaching right amongst those in the camp of the saints.

Is the Laodicean age, the very day and time in which you and I live, under a specious deception? Certainly so! Jesus said in Revelation 3:17, "Because thou sayest [here is their profession], I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing [what a deception, because here is the true assessment by Christ]; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." That was their true condition; the Word revealed it. Jesus told them they were "naked." The reason that some are "naked" is because "unclean spirits like

frogs [have] come out" of false religion (Revelation 16:13) and stripped them. These spirits are no longer merely housed in those systems that they once gave rise to, but they are working right around the camp of the saints to cause a specious deception, to make people think they are something they are not. It is hard to find a lost person today; everyone seemingly has a profession.

Revelation 16:15 reads: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." Those "unclean spirits" want to strip the saints of their "garments." Their "garments" are "salvation . . . the robe of righteousness" (Isaiah 61:10). Those spirits strip people of reality and leave them with a shell. They strip them of a possession and leave them with a profession. The Laodiceans thought they had "need of nothing," but Jesus said that they were "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Revelation 3:17). They had been robbed, stripped of their garments of salvation. That occurs when another spirit works on people to gather them away from the truth.

Ecclesiastes 1:9 tells us that "there is no new thing under the sun." In 2 Corinthians 11:3-4 Paul warned: "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. 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." There was "another spirit" loose in the first century. Just as the enemy worked and beguiled the first Eve (the bride of Adam), he worked and is working in this seventh-seal period to deceive the second Eve (the bride of Christ, the church). He uses "another spirit" to present "another gospel." In reality, he is foisting "another Jesus" on people. When they imbibe one of those spirits of devils, they are stripped of their garment of salvation and left with a profession but no possession and go into the condition of being under a specious deception.

How does the enemy use those "unclean spirits" to foster deception? Second Thessalonians 2:10 says, "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." The enemy uses "deceivableness of unrighteousness." In other words, he causes people to think they are right when they are wrong. The sectarian religious realm came "up out of the earth" (Revelation 13:11), or out of the minds of men. However, Jesus let us know that there are only two places to be: on the "rock" or on the sinking "sand" (Matthew 7:24-27). Yet today, people are on the earth or sand, everywhere other than truly on the Rock, and are deceived into thinking that they are right. This happens to them, "because they received not the love of the truth." It is not that they do not *know* the truth or *understand* the truth; they do not *love* the truth." That is how they end up under a deception. This deception is not one working today predominantly in sect Babylon, but sadly it is working on those who have known truth and are being moved by the "unclean spirits" that have "come out."

### **Judgment Determines "Reward" Based on "Work"**

The third truth portrayed in **verse 12** of our Scripture text is that Jesus is going **"to give every man according as his work shall be."** Our current spiritual position and ultimate judgment is based on our **"work."** The Final Judgment is not to determine our fate. Our fate is determined by our *state* when our eyes close in the finality of death. In Luke, Chapter 16, when the rich man died, "he lift up his eyes" (verse 23) in hell. Judgment had not taken place. Jesus told the thief, "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). Again, Judgment was yet in the future. Judgment is to determine our **"reward,"** based on our **"work."** Matthew 16:27 says, "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall re-

ward every man according to his works."

Our rewards will have different degrees at the Judgment. The Bible talks about those who will have "greater damnation" (Matthew 23:14). Hebrews 10:28-29 says: "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy . . . Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath . . . done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" The reason the Judgment cannot take place immediately after one dies is because "their works do follow them" (Revelation 14:13). We are benefitting from John's works now, as we study the Revelation. Every time someone gains a benefit, more gets credited to his reward. A true measurement of his works and our works cannot be measured until time stops.

Second Corinthians 5:10 tells us, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Our Scripture text is encouraging "**work**" over profession. We need to make certain our lives are in line. It is not what we have said that will be so vital on the Judgment Day, but it will be what we have done. Do our lives match our profession? Do we walk in the light of truth? In 1 Samuel 15:3 Saul had been told to "smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not." That was the Word, the message that God's minister brought. Verse 13 tells us Saul told Samuel that he "performed the commandment of the LORD." That was his profession. However, verse 14 says, "And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" In other words, Samuel said, "It appears what you have done is something different from what you are saying."

In this day in which we live, the profession of many will not pass the shock of the Judgment. Matthew 21:28-31 tells us: "But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first." What was said was not nearly as crucial as what was done. Christ bases our judgment predominantly on what we do, not on what we say.

Judgment being based on works seems an elementary point. But sadly, we are living in an age of such a specious apostasy when people are saying so many things, but what they say nowhere nearly matches up with what God's Word sets forth. Matthew 7:21-24 tells us: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth [does and keeps doing] the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them . . ." The real blessing is when we do what we hear. We need to make certain we do not allow another spirit to move in. Do not entertain the thought, "Well, I know what the Word of God says, but I don't think that applies to me; I think I'm an exception in this case." There is no alternative to doing what God's Word says. The deception of our day is that many say that there is. Also, the deception of our day even attempts to use Scriptures to justify their erroneous moves and stances. This is called wresting (2 Peter 3:16) and "turning" (Jude 4). This is why it is so specious of a move.

As we move to **verse 13** of our Scripture text, Christ said, "**I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.**" This recurrent theme is what enables us to "**do his commandments**" (**verse 14**) and not be deceived. "**Alpha and Omega**" are the first and last characters of the Greek alphabet. In the Revelation, Christ made that pronouncement four times (Revelation 1:8; 1:11; 21:6; and 22:13). We find that He said "the beginning and the end" three

times (Revelation 1:8; 21:6; and 22:13). Then, He also said "**the first and the last**" four times (Revelation 1:11; 1:17; 2:8; and 22:13).

The idea of "**Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last**" conveys completeness. The Greeks used from "**alpha**" to "**omega**" to indicate completeness, and the Hebrews used from aleph to tau to indicate completeness. Psalm 119 is broken into twenty-two sections. Each section is a Hebrew letter. It takes the reader through the complete Hebrew alphabet, or we would say "from A to Z." That whole psalm is talking about the Word of God, teaching us that the Word of God is complete and all that mankind needs is housed within it. Christ is the Word personified (John 1:1). So we "are complete in him" (Colossians 2:10).

### **There Is Great Danger in Disregarding Any Part of the Word**

In connection with our text, we have to realize that we need Christ to "**do his commandments.**" We need Him completely, and the only way to be complete in Him is to adhere to all the tenets of His Word. We cannot discount, disregard, or disobey any portion of His Word and be able to have acceptable "**work**" that will stand the Judgment shock. Paul said in Colossians 2:8-10: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him [Christ] dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power." One rendering says in verse 8, "Beware of anyone getting hold of you by means of a theosophy which is specious or make believe." The word *theosophy* means, in essence, "trying to establish with and receive revelation from the divine without adhering to the Word of God." However, no one is going to get a revelation from God by disregarding His known, revealed revelation, the Word of God.

Remember the story of Saul with the witch of Endor (1 Samuel, Chapter 28). When we disregard the known Word of God and then try to seek a revelation outside of God's revealed Word, we are leaving ourselves open for rank deception just like Saul. Again verse 8 cautions, "Beware of . . . a theosophy which is specious." It will seem plausible, but it is not genuine. When that apparition spoke to Saul, he thought it was Samuel, but it was deception. It was the work of a spirit. There are spirits working "vain deceit" (Colossians 2:8). Paul was saying, in so many words, "Don't let men deceive you into thinking there is other access than Christ and His Word." Many readily admit Christ, but what are they doing with the truth of His Word? They say that they love the Lord, but they do not love His Word. Jesus said in John 14:15, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." You cannot divorce Christ from His Word. They are inseparable. They are one. He is the Word.

John 8:31-32 says: "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth [His Word; John 17:17], and the truth [His Word] shall make you free." When we adhere to and continue in the truth, it will set us free. However, when people will not continue in the truth, that same truth will bind them up. When those who are not honest-hearted abandon the truth they once stood for, "another spirit" will come in. Paul called them "seducing spirits"; they will cause people to "depart from the faith" (1 Timothy 4:1). Our Scripture lesson warns against that. Look at the contrast set forth between **verses 14 and 15**, which read: "**Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.**"

These verses show us that separation is not relegated solely to the eternal realm. God has a



separation taking place while time is yet standing. **Verse 14** speaks of those who "**may enter in,**" and **verse 15** speaks of those who are "**without.**" What makes that distinction? **Verse 14** says, "**Blessed are they that do his commandments . . .**" The distinction is made by what we do with His Word. That is the line of demarcation.

The word "**commandments**" in **verse 14** is an expression denoting the Word of God. Psalm 119 employs many expressions that all denote the one-and-self-same thing—the Word of God. The many expressions speak of different aspects and attributes of the Word. Psalm 119:97-104 reads: "O how love I thy law [Thy Word]! it is my meditation all the day. Thou through thy commandments [Thy Word] hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies [Thy Word] are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts [Thy Word]. I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word. I have not departed from thy judgments [Thy Word]: for thou hast taught me. How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through thy precepts [Thy Word] I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way." When our Scripture text talks about "**commandments,**" it is not talking about the Ten Commandments. It is talking about the Word. Psalm 119:172 reads, "My tongue shall speak of thy word [what is it?]: for all thy commandments are righteousness."

We are in a day of preliminary judgment. It brings a separation now. When John the Baptizer prophesied concerning Christ, he said in Matthew 3:12, "Whose fan is in his hand [the ministry; Revelation 1:16, 20], and he will thoroughly purge his floor [*The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says 'threshing floor'] . . . ." Study when David purchased Ornan's threshing floor (1 Chronicles 21:22). It later became the place where Solomon built the temple (2 Chronicles 3:1), a type of the church. So, the church was built on a threshing floor to separate the wheat from the chaff. Matthew 3:12 says, ". . . he will thoroughly purge his [threshing] floor, and gather his wheat into the garner [the church]; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." The fire is God's Word (Jeremiah 23:29). God's Word (or the message) separates the wheat from the chaff.

Matthew, Chapter 13, tells of the Parable of the Tares, which is the second of the seven prophetic parables. It is a picture of the morning-time apostasy (A.D. 270-530). In Matthew 13:24-30 Jesus said: "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."

When is "the time of harvest," prophetically speaking? Revelation 14:15 tells us, "And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe." That was in the sixth seal, which started in 1880. We are living in "the time of harvest," the entire evening-time portion of the Gospel Day.

**A Ω**

**Alpha & Omega**

Matthew 13:37-41 reads: "He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed [the Word of God; Luke 8:11] is the Son of man [Jesus; Matthew 16:13]; The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom [or what the Word produces]; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The en-

emy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world [the evening-time portion of the Gospel Day, while time is yet standing]; and the reapers are the angels [the ministry]. 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 [His ministry], and they shall gather out of his kingdom [His church] all things that offend, and them which do iniquity."

### A Great Separation

We are living in a day of separation. Christ is separating the wheat from the tares, those who *do* from those who *say*. Matthew 13:42 states, "And shall cast them into a furnace of fire." Isaiah 31:9 lets us know that God's "fire is in Zion, and his furnace [is] in Jerusalem." So, the furnace of fire is right in the church. The "fire" is God's Word (Jeremiah 23:29). It binds up people who do not really want to take truth. Through the sounding forth of the Word of God, the ministry gathers out those "things that offend, and them which do iniquity." If those with "things that offend" in their lives will not straighten up and turn loose of the "things," stop professing without possessing, they will be "gathered out." Verse 43 says, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." That is happening right now in the church.

Let us look at the seventh parable, the Parable of the Net (the one that corresponds with our day). Matthew 13:47-50 says: "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 [we are in the fullness of time], 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 [the ministry] shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire." In other words, the ministry with the message brings the separation. Let us put it in another context: if you keep the griddle hot, the flies will not land on it.

The separation is being described in **verses 14-15** of our Scripture text. **Verse 14** describes those who "**do his commandments**," so they "**have right to the tree of life**." They have "come out" of Babylon, and they are obeying the injunction: "be ye separate" (2 Corinthians 6:17). They have not only come out, but they have entered "**in through the gates into the city**." Deuteronomy 6:23 tells us, "And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in . . ." That way "we all [can] come in the unity of the faith" (Ephesians 4:13).

The city, the church, is comprised of those who "are complete in him" (Colossians 2:10). They continue to eat God's Word. They have access to "**the tree of life**." Christ is "**the tree of life**." So, those in the city have a right, a provision, and a privilege to have access to Christ. Then, they are "conformed to the image of his Son [Christ]" (Romans 8:29), which causes every saint to be a "**tree of life**" also. No wonder **verse 14** of our Scripture text proclaims "**blessed are they**"! "**They**" can be fruitful and bring others into the image of Christ.

In **verse 15** of our text, we see the sobering contrast—those "**without**." You are either "**in**" or "**without**." There is no in-between. In Matthew 7:17 Jesus reduced all humanity to either a "good tree" or a "corrupt tree." Jesus said in Matthew 12:30 that you are "with me" or "against me." You are either in "the holy Jerusalem" (Revelation 21:10) or in "Babylon the great" (Revelation 18:2). That is "the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:3).

Our text confirms the words of the prophet. Isaiah 35:8-10 reads: "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and

everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Also, Isaiah 52:1 says, "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean." There is a vivid distinction portrayed between the holy city and Babylon the great.

**Verse 15** of our text goes further and tells us the conditions of those "**without.**" It says, "**For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.**" Remember, we are dealing in symbolic expressions. Let us view this in the tenor of the text. It has been speaking of those who *say* but do not *do*. The first thing they are referred to are "**dogs.**" Why is that particular symbol used for those that are "**without**"?

Second Peter 2:1-2 says: "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies [sects], even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." Verse 10 states, "But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness [they gratify human desires], and despise government [church government]. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities."

Verses 18-22 read: "For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty [that is the cry of apostates today, but what they are calling liberty is bondage], they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. For if after they have escaped [they were once saved, but they fell under a seducing spirit] the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein [they did not keep pace with truth], and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again." That is why the "**dogs**" are "**without.**" No unclean thing, like "vomit," is in this city.

That is a picture of people who were once so sick of what they had within, they could no longer stomach it and had to separate it from themselves. Then they turned right around and took back the very thing that once made them sick. Paul said in Galatians 2:18, "For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor." You cannot walk against the light that God has revealed to you and stay clear. So, these "**dogs**" are people who were once sick enough of the world and Babylon to get it out of their lives, but then they went right back to those spirits and practices. They took them right back into their lives as a dog does his vomit.

As we proceed further in **verse 15** of our Scripture text, we find the word "**sorcerers.**" How does the Revelation use this expression? Referring to the sixth-seal age, Revelation 9:20-21 says: "And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood [the gods of Babylon; Daniel 5:4] . . . Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries . . ." Those who engage in "**sorceries**" are those who promote and practice deceit and deception, holding people in Babylonian bondage. Speaking of Babylon, Revelation 18:23 says, ". . . for by thy sorceries were all nations [or denominations] deceived." Remember, Babylon is comprised of people. They once had been a golden cup (Jeremiah 51:7), but they refused to walk in the light. Their stars fell (Revelation 8:10; 9:1), and in the place of what went

down came up a beast (Revelation 13:11). Today, there are those who were once within the ranks of the city, but now they are "**without**" acting as "**sorcerers**," working through works of deceit to deceive others, to draw others into the condition they are in spiritually.

**Verse 15** of our text speaks of "**whoremongers**," those who have become drunken on Babylon's cup. They love her illicit bed because there are no vows or requirements. Revelation 17:2 tells us, "With whom [Babylon; verse 5] the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication." Babylon is not merely an organization, but it is a spiritual condition. The deceitfulness of our day is that we are not just dealing with Babylon in name, but we are dealing with those who once knew "the way of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:21), but they became seduced by another spirit. They still have a name that they live while they are dead (Revelation 3:1). They have picked up the same spirit that motivates Protestantism.

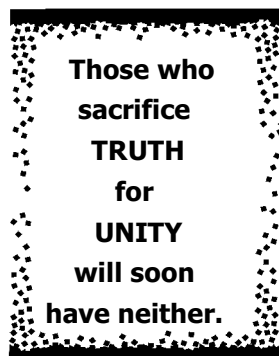
Proverbs 7:10 says, "And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart." In verses 17-18 she said: "I have perfumed my bed [that is the goal—get them in bed, defile them, and take their purity] with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning: let us solace ourselves with loves." Verse 27 reads, "Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death." We also see death and hell in Revelation 6:8, which talks about the spirit that gave rise to Protestantism.

Our text proceeds in **verse 15** to talk about "**murderers**." In John 10:1 Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." He was talking about people trying to make a way other than the God-ordained way. In John 10:10 Jesus said, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy." False teachings promoted by false spirits kill people, spiritually. They act as "**murderers**." The Apostle John said in 1 John 3:15, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." In 1 John 3:11 He instructed us to "love one another." Then, in verse 12 he admonished, "Not as Cain." Why did Cain slay Abel? It was religious jealousy (Genesis 4:1-8)! Sad to say, that has led to much of the spiritual murder taking place today! Because some brethren's efforts are not as large, influential, or effective as others, because their sphere of influence is not as large, in an effort to elevate themselves and their importance, they resort to character assassination to work to kill the influence of other brothers. In their hearts, they wish the object of their ire would be removed. Therefore, they are in their hearts indeed "**murders**."

Throughout **verse 15** of our Scripture text, we see a description of the nature of those who comprise what actually is in reality spiritual Babylon. It is a vivid contrast to the church and the nature of those who comprise the church. Indeed, those overcome by "the spirits of devils" are those who "**loveth and maketh a lie**." Isaiah 28:15 states, "Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell [there is death and hell again] are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves." That is where we find false religion; both their teachings and their lives are "**a lie**." Just as Saul said one thing and did another (1 Samuel 15:13-14), many today make lies by professing one thing and living another, and they love it that way. Sadly, not only do they make "**a lie**" by living errant lives, but they make lies by their false accusations concerning those of whom they are envious and jealous (as Cain was of Abel). At the root of it all, we find the expression "**idolaters**" in **verse 15** of our text. What is the idol to whose shrine they bow? Second Peter 2:10 lets us know that they are "selfwilled." They bow to the altar of self-will. They are their own idol.

Another aspect of this specious deception fostered by those who are "selfwilled" is the move of the enemy through an ecumenical spirit to bring those "**without**" back "**into the city**" with

no change of spirit. What the enemy could not fully accomplish, as Jude said, by those "who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit" (Jude 19), he is trying to accomplish by an ecumenical acceptance of those "**without.**" Our text makes a clear line of demarcation between those who "**may enter in**" (verse 14) and those "**without**" (verse 15). We need to make certain in these final days that we can "discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not" (Malachi 3:18).



**Those who  
sacrifice  
TRUTH  
for  
UNITY  
will soon  
have neither.**

I, nor the Scriptures, advocate a "cut-off attitude" or being unduly judgmental. Many today have been caught up by influence and errantly led wrong. It is by the Lord's "faithfulness" (Lamentations 3:23) that they will see that error and make a move to restoration. However, those who have the spirit that caused such "**a lie**" must be discerned and not allowed to accomplish an even greater deceptive work by ecumenicalism, an attempted mixture of those "**in**" and those "**without.**" Though the Lord is working in this day to effect a greater unity, those who sacrifice truth for unity will soon have neither. True Biblical unity is based on both "the Spirit of truth" (John 16:13; Ephesians 4:3) and "the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15; Ephesians 4:13).

The Scriptures remain expressly clear. "For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Corinthians 6:14). The Apostle Paul plainly instructed that there should be "no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Ephesians 5:11). We should both by our actions, or "**work,**" and words ("as the Spirit" gives "utterance"; Acts 2:4) stand against those moves that attempt to foster ecumenicalism, or an attempted mixture of fellowship, or that which our text clearly pronounces as separate. That is yet the call today: "Be ye separate . . . and touch not the unclean thing" (2 Corinthians 6:17).

In these closing days of the evening time, deception is specious and rank. However, Jesus is "the faithful and true witness" (Revelation 3:14). As He spoke to the Laodiceans in Revelation 3:22, may God help us to "hear what the Spirit saith." I trust we can see the truths as they are being conveyed in this portion of the apocalyptic passage. We must truly view things in the light of eternity. We must not allow ourselves to be moved by false spirits away from obedience, and the true possession of God's presence. Jesus' words should ever ring in our ears and sober our living: "**I come quickly.**" We must live and conduct ourselves with Christ and Eternity in view!

## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO—PART SIX

### The Final Contrast Between the Church and Babylon

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

*17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*

#### Three Important Affirmations

These verses clearly show we are approaching the final portion of this apocalyptic book. Our text is a vivid contrast to the preceding verse, revealing the final contrast between the church and Babylon. The previous verse (verse 15) depicted the true nature of ones who comprise modern Babylon: "dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." The utilization of these particular expressions reveal the specious move in our day. Sadly, some who once were inhabitants of this "great city," the church, have turned back to those things they once found repulsive and sickening. They are modern apostates who have imbibed Babylon's spirit, falling prey to seducing spirits, because they were not in the position they should have been in. They have worshiped an image to the beast (Revelation 19:20) and in essence, created an image to the image, becoming sectarian in spirit and in practice, though they might not have adopted a sectarian name.

**Verse 16** of our text begins with the voice of divine authority when it says, "**I Jesus . . .**" Colossians 1:13, speaking of Jesus, says, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." Colossians 1:15 reads, "Who is the image of the invisible God . . ." Then, Colossians 1:18 tells us, "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." So "**Jesus**" is God's "dear Son" and "the head of . . . the church," and He is designed to "have the preeminence." What a contrast to Babylon! In our text, "**Jesus**" was rising in the face of all the falsity that verse 15 enumerates, and He was contrasting it with the divine.

THE AUTHORITY OF THE ANGEL: we see in our text the affirmation of three things. **Verse 16** says, "**I Jesus have sent mine angel . . .**" First, He affirmed the authority of the agent, His "**angel**." It is almost as if the "**angel**" is a messenger carrying a letter with the king's seal. In Revelation 22:6 the angel said, "These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done." That was the proclamation the "**angel**" made, and then "**Jesus**" gave us the affirmation of that claim.

THE AUTHORITY OF THE MESSAGE: the second affirmation in our text is an attestation. **Verse 16** says, "**I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify . . .**" In other words, Christ was attesting to the authenticity and accuracy and authority of the message. There are those who decry the role of the "**angel**" and dispute the contents of the message, some even would rise up and question the validity of the Revelation; but Jesus gave us an attestation.

THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH: the third affirmation is concerning to whom the agency was to address. **Verse 16** says, "**I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches.**" *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* renders *churches* as "the congregations." Jesus

affirmed His authorization of the instrument He employed to communicate the message of truth to mankind—His church. If you want to hear the truth, come to the true church that has been entrusted with the message of truth.

In **verse 16 "Jesus"** proclaimed, **"I am the root and the offspring of David . . ."** The words **"I am"** invoke the authority of deity. They are the same words spoken to Moses at the burning bush. Exodus 3:13-14 says: "And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." The words "I AM" are the same Greek words used in the Septuagint that are used in our text. Jesus let us know He is the I AM. He was establishing His divinity and His authority. What a contrast to sorcerers! Christ's voice is the voice of God.

In **verse 16** of our text, the expression **"the root and the offspring of David"** invokes royalty and the fulfillment of prophecy. Isaiah 11:1 says, "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse [the father of David], and a Branch shall grow out of his roots [a Messianic prophecy of Jesus Christ]." Jeremiah 23:5 also says, "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper . . ."

In the Revelation, the expression "the Root of David" was initially introduced in Revelation 5:5, in the verses that prefaced the Seals Series. The book was still sealed. However, Christ "hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." The expression **"the root and the offspring of David"** in our text reiterates the truth of Revelation 22:13, which says that Christ is "the first and the last." He was at the beginning when the book was sealed, and He is at the end when the book is all unsealed.

**"I am the root and the offspring of David"** is a crucial acclamation, because it is in sharp contrast to the organizations that are built on "a lie" (verse 15). They have made lies their refuge (Isaiah 28:15). However, the name **"David"** brings to mind a king and a kingdom. It reminds us of Christ's royalty, His throne, and His kingdom, which are all based on "a more sure word of prophecy" (2 Peter 1:19).

Let us look at the "word of prophecy." Isaiah 9:6-7 states: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this." We could be much more exhaustive concerning David, but we want to just glean enough to get the gist of what Christ was conveying in our text. Jeremiah 23:5-6 says: "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS [or the Hebrew *Jehovah Tsidkenu*]." The symbol **"David"** represents Christ's royalty, His reign, and His kingdom.

When Gabriel made the annunciation to Mary, in Luke 1:31-33 he said: "And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." According to Matthew 1:1, Jesus is "the son of David," or The Amplified Bible says the "descendant of David." Those verses let us know that He will reign (and He is reigning now). Isaiah 32:1 tells us, "Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness . . ."

## Truth Concerning the Throne of David

Three questions that confuse the religious world need answered as we consider our text. The invoking of the throne of David that is spoken of prophetically gives insight to the truth that will sweep away false religion's refuge of lies. The three questions we must address are: (1) when did Christ assume the throne of David? (2) what is the duration of His kingdom? and (3) what is the nature of His kingdom? These questions are important because some teach that Christ has not yet assumed the throne of David. Therefore, His reign has not properly begun. Consequently, they put a time element on the duration of His kingdom. They also give it a literal, physical nature. However, in this day when the seals are loosed and when understanding is given, we can sweep away the refuge of lies with some solid truth concerning the throne of David. That is necessary because this kingdom is housed in the city we have been considering in Revelation, Chapters 21 and 22, the city that the Lord has spent so much effort to describe as contrasted to those that are "without."

Let us address the first question. When did Christ assume the throne of David? False religious advocates will tell you He is going to come another time, riding a white horse, wielding a sharp sword. They say that there is going to be a battle, the blood is going to run up to the horses' bridles, and Christ is going to be victorious. Then, He is going to sit on the throne of David and restore sovereignty to old Israel. However, there is no truth in any of that. Let us study to find the answer to the question.

In Acts, Chapter 1, before the Holy Ghost was given, even the disciples were still in confusion concerning the truth of the kingdom. They questioned in Acts 1:6, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" They still did not understand. Jesus answered in verses 7-8: "And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

The Holy Ghost came upon the disciples in Acts 2:4. Acts 2:14 tells us, "But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice . . . ." He was then under the unction of the Holy Spirit. Verses 29-36 read: "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell [or in the grave], neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Notice, the prophecy Peter quoted in verse 30. He said that God would raise up Christ to sit on David's throne. Verse 31 clearly tells us that "this . . . spake of the resurrection of Christ." He was talking about something that was a consequence of the Resurrection. Then, verse 32 says, "This Jesus hath God raised up . . . ." God raised Jesus in the Resurrection and that enabled Him to sit on David's throne. Next, verse 34 tells us, "For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou . . . ." Christ began to sit on David's throne when He was raised up in the Resurrection. Shortly after is when He made His ascension to the "right hand" of the Father, and He has been right there sitting on David's throne ever since.



Acts 2:34 says that "David is not ascended," so David is not in Heaven. He is in paradise with all the other departed souls. However, Christ ascended. He is sitting on the throne of David, where the mercies of David are dispensed. Consider if He is not on the throne, He cannot even dispense mercy. Isaiah 55:3 says, "Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." How did God make the everlasting covenant? Hebrews 13:20 tells us, "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead [the Resurrection] our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant." It was ushered in by the victorious work of Christ.

Isaiah 55:3-4 reads: ". . . and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people." Christ, a leader and a commander, is on the throne; and it is a throne of mercy. Isaiah 16:5 says, "And in mercy shall the throne be established: and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David . . . ."

Let us look a little further at "the tabernacle of David," where Christ is sitting on the throne. Acts 15:13-16 tells us: "And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon [or Peter] hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up." The tabernacle of David was built again and set up on the day of Pentecost. That is when Jesus built His church (Matthew 16:18).

Hebrews 8:1-2 says: "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." When Christ ascended to the right hand of the Father, He formally sat down on the throne of David in the tabernacle of David, the true tabernacle that the Lord pitched. Clearly, the throne of David is neither a future nor a literal event; rather, it formally occurred when Christ "ascended up on high" (Ephesians 4:8) and was able to "Sit thou" (Acts 2:34).

The second question we must address is: what is the duration of Christ's kingdom? Is it temporary? Will Christ only reign a thousand years, as some would suggest? Again, let us go to the sure word of prophecy. Isaiah 9:7 lets us know, "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end . . . ." First Corinthians 15:24 says, "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God . . . ." There will be a kingdom until time reels into eternity, and then it goes on throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity, because it "is an everlasting kingdom" (Psalm 145:13).

There is a faulty teaching that says that the kingdom is people who do not see the church and that they need to move from the kingdom to the church. However, Christ is going to deliver up a "kingdom" (1 Corinthians 15:24). Also, Babylon will be emptied out (Jeremiah 51:2) and all the saints will be in the church (Revelation 18:22-23) before Jesus comes again. So what kingdom would there be to deliver up if it differs from the church? The truth is that since the day of Pentecost the kingdom and the church are the same.

Isaiah 9:7 continues, "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever." It is an everlasting kingdom. Daniel 7:27 tells us, "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom . . . ." Then, in Luke 1:33 the angel Gabriel said, "And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for

ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

The third question is, what is the nature of Christ's kingdom? In John 18:36 Jesus told Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world." It is not a worldly kingdom. So it is not going to be set up over in old Palestine or Salt Lake City or anywhere else. Verse 36 continues, ". . . if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence." In other words, it is a spiritual kingdom not a literal kingdom.

Luke 17:20-21 says: "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation [or The Amplified Bible says 'not with visible display']: Neither shall they say; Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." It is spiritual, it is something that is within the hearts and lives of men. It is not literal, any more than "that great city, the holy Jerusalem" (Revelation 21:10) is a literal city. Its nature is spiritual.

Romans 14:17 says, "For the kingdom of God is . . ." I want to point out that it is a present-tense reality. That verse did not say that "the kingdom of God will be." Paul was writing this after the advent of the church on the Day of Pentecost and after the kingdom came with power. Romans 14:17 continues, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink [not literal, not physical]; but righteousness, and peace, and joy [all spiritual qualities] in the Holy Ghost."

### One Last Contrast Between the Church and Babylon

In our lesson text, Jesus was drawing a distinct contrast between Himself, a spiritual king with a spiritual kingdom, and those in verse 15. He referred to Himself as the son of "**David**," who was "a man after his own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14). His kingdom is based on righteousness. What a contrast to those who "loveth and maketh a lie" (verse 15). Jesus went further in **verse 16** of our text and proclaimed, "**I am . . . the bright and morning star.**" He and His kingdom are light, as opposed to "the unfruitful works of darkness" (Ephesians 5:11). He gave us one last contrast between truth and error, right and wrong, and the church and Babylon.

The "**morning star**" also is an expression that was introduced earlier in the Revelation (Revelation 2:28). The Apostle Peter spoke of it, as well; although, he used a slightly different terminology. Second Peter 1:19 says, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place . . ."

When Christ came, Israel was in a dark place. Between Malachi the Prophet and John the Baptizer, there was silence for 434 years. Man had not heard a public message from God. In Daniel, Chapter 9, in Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks, Daniel spoke of that period of time in which nothing would be accomplished for threescore and two weeks (Daniel 9:25). Multiply that 62 by 30 days to a Jewish calendar month, and you come out with 434 days. Give a prophetic reckoning of "each day for a year" (Ezekiel 4:6), and you get the 434 years. So Matthew 4:16 says, "The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up." There were 434 years between Malachi and John the Baptizer. During that time, no public message was sounded forth, and the people "sat in darkness." Thank God, when Jesus came, a new day commenced, the Gospel Day!

Second Peter 1:19 continues, ". . . whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." Then we can read where Moses wrote prophetically of Christ, our Star. Numbers 24:17 says, "I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel . . ." When the "day star" arose, a "day dawn" took place. A new day, the

Gospel Day, was ushered in. It was a day of light, but sadly, there was a spiritual eclipse that followed. Amos 8:9 tells us, "And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord GOD, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day." That was when the Dark Ages ensued. Following the Dark Ages, Ezekiel 34:12 lets us know that there was a "cloudy and dark day."

In **verse 16** of our text, Christ revealed the light of the morning is back, and now it is even more bright. Earlier in the Revelation, He just said that He was the "morning star" (Revelation 2:28). However, in this evening time, He said that He is **"the bright and morning star."** Isaiah 30:26 tells us we are in a day that has "the light of seven days." It has never been brighter than today, as far as the understanding of precious truth. Isaiah 30:16 in the Amplified Bible says that it is "as the light of seven days concentrated in one." We are in a day of light and in a city of light, and we are "the children of light" (1 Thessalonians 5:5). We have every reason to be encouraged.

**Verse 17** of our Scripture text reveals the appeal of light in contrast with Babylon, which is filled with those who "loveth and maketh a lie" (verse 15). Babylon holds people by a lack of understanding of truth. Psalm 82:5 tells us, "They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness." Darkness is a lack of understanding, but Christ is **"the bright and morning star."** He provides light, or understanding, through His **"angel."** **Verse 17** says, **"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come."** He wants all to enter this blessed city of light.

Our text shows a spiritual, unified work that is done in light. It is not a carnal, fleshly move of men that involves "sorcerers" (verse 15) who work deceit and deception. Instead, we see a holy unity among **"Jesus,"** His **"angel,"** and **"the Spirit and the bride."** Also, their message is clear. It is simply **"come."** **Verse 17** says, **"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come [unity], And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."** The **"water of life"** is the "pure river of water of life" (verse 1) in the midst of the city, or the true church.

The **"water of life"** is in the same place as it was in the morning time. In Revelation 21:2 John "saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven." That was a picture of the institution of the church on the Day of Pentecost. Verse 6 says, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." This evening-time church is right in the same place it was in the morning time. The truth is right in the midst of the city, the church.

The invitation extended in **verse 17** is not only an invitation to salvation, but it is also the *last* invitation to come where **"the water of life"** is. It is a final call to "Come out" of Babylon (Revelation 18:4) to "come in the unity of the faith" (Ephesians 4:13). The call is to come in through the gates of this city and come in where you can have life. Come to listen to the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers whom God has truly called and gifted. Jesus has sent His **"angel"** to testify, and when he testifies, **"the Spirit and the bride say, Come."** In essence, a message similar to the one given to the antediluvians, which was, "Come into the ark of safety for a destruction of this world is on the horizon."

**Verse 17** says, **"... let him that is athirst come."** Isaiah 55:1 appeals, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." There are honest hearts out in the realms of false religion who are thirsty. Psalm 42:1-2 says: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." Honest hearts are not satisfied with what is "without:" dogs, sorcerers, whoremongers, murderers, idolaters, and systems built on a lie. So the message is: **"Come," "Come," "come";** come out of Babylon and come into the unity; enter into this city of light where **"the water of life"** flows

freely; take "**the water of life**" freely; "**come**" where "**life**" is; "**come**" where "**the Spirit**" is; "**come**" where your soul can be satisfied, where truth is not rationed at a starvation rate and diluted by the poison of deception.

I trust we can see the message being conveyed by the expressions employed in our Scripture text. These verses, for one final time in the Revelation, show the vivid contrast between truth and error, and they extend the final invitation in this seventh-seal period of time to "**Come**." It is a message of unity from the lips of "**Jesus**," the "**angel**," the "**Spirit**," and the "**bride**." The people who are in unity also desire that others enjoy the unity that they are enjoying, the unity that "**Jesus**" came to give to His people so they can take of "**the water of life**" and have life and maintain life. It is found by coming to "that great city, the holy Jerusalem," the Church of the Living God.



## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO—PART SEVEN

### The Final Warning and Words

*Revelation 22:18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:*

*19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*

*20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.*

*21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

### Words of Warning

We have now progressed to the final verses of this apocalyptic account. These words close the Revelation with both a sober warning and a note of hope and encouragement. In **verses 18-19**, we see an admonition that has a reminiscent tone to it. They speak of "**if any man shall add**" or "**take away from the words of the book of this prophecy.**" That type of warning has been given repeatedly throughout the Scriptures.

Deuteronomy 4:2 states, "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you." Thus, this admonition is as old as the Book of Deuteronomy. The word *Deuteronomy* means "the second giving of the Law." It was given in 1451 B.C. after the Israelites had wandered forty years in the wilderness. A new generation had arisen; so Moses, as his last work, wrote "the second giving of the law." The admonition given in Chapter 4 was repeated in Deuteronomy 12:32, which reads, "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it." The admonition in our text was also reiterated by the wise man Agur in Proverbs 30:5-6, which says: "Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar."

The Apostle Paul, in essence, put forth the same admonition. He penned in Galatians 1:8-9: "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. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." The words of warning set forth at the conclusion of the Revelation are words of an age-old admonition. The words reveal at least five truths. First, they reveal the veracity of the Revelation. *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines *veracity* as "accuracy of statement; accordance with truth." What is "truth"? Jesus said in John 17:17 that "thy word is truth."

The Revelation is a valid part of the Scriptures, because the same injunction given in our text was given throughout the annals of time concerning the Word of God. The warning is based upon the truth that God is "declaring the end from the beginning" (Isaiah 46:10). It is not a mere coincidence that this injunction was given in our text. Moses penned it in the Books that begin the order of the sacred canon, the Pentateuch. The word *Pentateuch* comes from two words: *Penta*, which means "five," and *teuchos*, which means "book." It is the first five books of the Bible. So, this injunction is in the very first portion of the sacred canon, and John recorded it in

the book that closes the order of the sacred canon. Again, this substantiates the veracity of the position of the Revelation in the Scriptures.

In His infinite foreknowledge, God knew there would be those who would produce and promote books of supposed extra-Biblical revelation. For instance, the Latter-Day Saints' own literature states: "The Book of Mormon is a book of holy scripture, comparable to the Bible. The book was written by many ancient prophets by the spirit of prophecy and revelation" (www.lds.org). They are placing an extra-Biblical revelation on par with other Scripture. That violates the injunction given in our text to not **"add unto these things."** God in His wisdom knew that men would rise up and attempt to add their own revelation to His Revelation. Therefore, He warned, in so many words: "Don't do that; don't tamper with the Word of God. If you do, you are doing it at the risk of your own peril."

The Book of Mormon is not the only writing of supposed extra-Biblical revelation, but it is one that has gained much popularity. So, it behooves us to sound forth the trumpet of truth. Ephesians 6:12 states that "we wrestle not against flesh and blood." We are not against individuals, but we are against religious systems that are contrary to the sound teachings of God's eternal Word.

**Verse 19** of our text also cautions against those who **"take away from the words."** Sad to say, there are those who attempt to do so. One author wrote a discourse entitled "Considerations on the spuriousness of the Book of Revelation." However, the Book of Revelation is not *spurious*, which is defined as "not authentic," "not inspired," and "not sacred." God knew there would be such attacks against this portion of His Word. Thus, again, He warned man of such brashness and rashness.

The thought of **"take away"** can be more local. **Verse 18** of our text says, **"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book . . ."** We can become guilty of **"take away"** when we *hear* the words but do not *do* what we hear. This thought of **"take away"** does not only mean just "to leave it out of the sacred record," although, that is certainly a large part.

We are cautioned to take heed to what we hear. We should not entertain everything that touts itself as religious or spiritual. In Mark 4:24 Jesus said, "Take heed what ye hear." Everything is not fit to listen to. Over in Luke's Gospel, Jesus brought it down a little closer. Luke 8:18 says, "Take heed therefore *how* ye hear." We should also take heed *how* we hear, because once we hear, we become responsible.

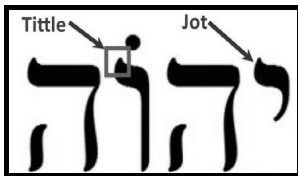
Jesus laid severe judgments on those localities where many of His mighty works were done. Matthew 11:20-22 tells us: "Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you." He laid severe judgment because light brings responsibility. Opportunity was afforded to the people of Chorazin and Bethsaida that had never been afforded to Tyre and Sidon.

In verses 23-24 Jesus continued: "And thou, Capernaum [Jesus' adopted hometown, the base of operations for His ministry; Matthew 4:13], which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee." Sodom did not have the opportunity that Capernaum had. Sodom did not hear the Gospel as Capernaum did, and Sodom did not have the presence of Christ that Capernaum had. Opportunity and understanding bring responsibility.

When we hear truth, when we are afforded an opportunity and provided understanding, it is not something that should just be dismissed. Hebrews 2:1-3 cautions: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him." We are responsible to put what we have heard into practice.

### Every Word Was Verbally Inspired

The second truth revealed in the admonition in our text is verbal inspiration. **Verses 18-19** say: "**For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book . . . And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy . . .**" We can see that every word was verbally inspired, every word has significance and importance. Proverbs 30:5 tells us, "Every word of God is pure." There is a divine design, intent, and purpose behind every word.



In Matthew 5:17-18 Jesus said: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." He was referring here to the Hebrew formation of characters. The Hebrew writings had little marks known as "jot" and "tittle," and one of those could change the meaning of a word. The inspiration of the Scriptures extends all the way down to the most minute mark over the letter.

Second Timothy 3:16 says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God . . ." The Greek word for *inspiration* is *theopneustos*, which means "God-breathed." Just as God "breathed into" man "the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7), the Word of God has the life of God breathed into it. It can bring spiritual life to mankind.

Our text says not to "**add**" or "**take away**" from the Scriptures. We must not alter or revise them. The Apostle Peter also warned against that. In 2 Peter 3:15-17 he wrote: "And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest [the Greek word *strebloo*, which means 'pervert'], as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." The "error of the wicked" is wresting, or perverting, the Scriptures. It is using an agenda contrary to divine will to make the Scriptures say what you want them to say.

Remember Balam's error in Numbers, Chapter 22. He was willing to say what Baalak wanted to hear for financial gain, but God would not let him. However, he was still charged with the error (Jude 11) because he was willing to do it. If we are not careful, we can fall from our own steadfastness by twisting or turning the Scriptures to try to get them to say other than what they mean. Whole religious organizations are built on those types of perversions. That is why we need to recognize that the Word is verbally inspired, and it should not be added to or taken away from.

The third truth revealed in our text is that violation invokes retribution. **Verses 18-19** revert back to the moral law of retribution, the moral law of sowing and reaping. If an individual adds,



then they will be added to; and if anyone takes away, they will have things taken away. Moral law emanates from God's moral nature, as the moral Governor of the Universe. Moral law predates Mosaic law, Levitical law, or any other type of law. It has been in force all throughout time, because God's moral nature never changes.

After Noah came off the ark, God instituted that which should govern the post-diluvian world. Genesis 9:6 tells us, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." The underlying moral principle is "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7). Moral law is ages old, and it was set down by God. It is woven all throughout the fabric of the Scriptures.

Proverbs 26:27 states, "Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him." In proverbial language, this is again setting forth the law of sowing and reaping. Also, in the Book of Esther, Haman constructed a gallows for Mordecai, but it was Haman who hung on that gallows (Esther 7:10). Jesus said in Matthew 7:2, "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." This is all indicative of that moral law. The warning in our text invites violation at the cost of retribution.

The fourth truth we can glean from our Scripture text is that there is the victory in the verbiage. **Verse 19** tells us that **"if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."** That is written in the negative sense, but if the negative sense is true, then the converse (the positive sense) is true. The **"words"** produce and maintain life. They enable us to be inscribed in **"the book of life"** and to enter **"the holy city,"** the church. That is why there is such a warning against tampering with these **"words."** These **"words"** are the wonderful words of life.

In John 6:63 Jesus let us know that "the words . . . are life." When anyone takes them away, either in the sense of removing them physically or in the sense of not adhering to them practically, that person is taking away the element that brings life. That is why many in false religion have no life. They have so altered the Word that they have taken the very power of life from it.

Philippians 2:16 says, "Holding forth the word of life." When John received a glimpse of the church in the evening time, they all had a common position of victory. Revelation 15:2 says, "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass . . ." They may have had different things to deal with throughout life's way, but the commonality of their victory was that they were all standing in one position: "on the sea of glass" (the Word of God; James 1:23). Everyone had the victory, because when they heard the Word, they did what they heard. That is why they could stand and be and remain victorious.

Psalms 137:1-2 says: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof." When the people were in Babylon, they sat down. They were not in systems that encouraged or enabled victory. They could not stand as the Lord designed and their harps were hung. However, when they stood upon "the sea of glass," they had "gotten the victory." Revelation 15:2 reads, ". . . having the harps of God." They had their "harps" back; they had their song back. Victory will give you a song. When they came to Zion, they were harpers harping on their harps again, praising God for the victory He had given them. The Word enables us to obtain and maintain victory. First, it is what enables us to be born again. James 1:18 says, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth . . ." Then 1 Peter 1:23 says, "Being [present and continual tense] born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."

The Word that enables us to obtain spiritual life also enables us to maintain spiritual life. It is the basis of understanding. First Timothy 2:4 says, "Who will have all men to be saved [or born again; that is when you obtain life, but there is more to it], and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." The knowledge of the truth, or the Word, is what enables us to maintain that life. It enables us to abide in "**the holy city**," the church. There we can be fed and able to maintain that victory. That is why the Word must not be tampered with. It brings life and maintains life.

The fifth truth held forth by our text is the virtue of the "**city**." Everyone in "**the holy city**" has their name in "**the book of life**" (**verse 19**). Everyone in "**the holy city**" is holy and separate. When they violate the Word, they are put out, because this "**city**" is going to stay pure. Revelation 21:27 tells us, "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." A person can be any kind of rascal and get on the roll books of sectarian organizations, but you can only get in this "**city**" when your name is inscribed in the Lamb's "**book of life**." If an individual becomes impure by adding to or taking away from the Word, they are immediately taken out. The church is pure. Ephesians 5:27 tells us the church is "holy and without blemish."

Someone may ask, "Do you really think the church is that holy?" Isaiah 52:1 tells us, "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean." If one becomes "unclean" because he "**shall take away**," as our Scripture text says, then "**God shall take away his part**." Exodus 32:33 says, "And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book." When sin enters one's life, that individual goes out. The "**holy city**" is separate. Revelation 21:24 tells us that "the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it." Walking in the light of the "**city**" brings a line of demarcation between those who do and those who do not. The Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 6:14, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" He said in verse 17, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate . . ." Light will separate us from darkness and all the works of darkness.

### **"The Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ Be With You All. Amen."**

As we progress to **verse 20** of our text, we see again the words of Jesus. In these words of our Lord, in the next to the last verse of this Revelation, He established the truth that He spoke in verse 13, when He said that He was "the first and the last." His words bring this famous piece of apocalyptic writing to a climax and a finality. Remember that the prophetic time setting is the seventh-seal period of time. It is the period of time immediately preceding Jesus' coming. He told us in verse 12, "I come quickly." He reiterated it in **verse 20**, saying, "**Surely I come quickly**." The repetition of these words indicates the emphasis He desires to place on the truth that nothing succeeds the seventh-seal period of time but His coming.

Today, there are still other prophetic fulfillments yet on the horizon. If all prophecy were fulfilled, Jesus would have already come. In this volume and the previous volume (Volume 5), we have studied prophetic truths that are housed in Revelation, Chapters 17-20, at great length, and we have found that they have not yet realized full fruition. However, nothing succeeds this seventh-seal period of time but His coming. At the end of the seventh-seal period of time, time will reel into eternity. It is the final time period.

It serves to notice Jesus' words in Luke 17:26, which state, "And as it was in the days of Noe,

so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man." How was it in the days of Noah? After the ark was completed, Genesis 7:7 says, "And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood." That verse, in essence, is saying, ". . . the flood is coming." Verse 10 reads, "And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth." Verse 16 lets us know that "the LORD shut him in."

Let us get the proper picture. The ark was built for man's salvation, and Noah was "a preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5). He preached a message that would save those people from the wrath to come. When the ark was completed, Noah went in. He was in the ark of safety for seven days with the door open. At the end of the seventh day, the Lord shut him in and the deluge came that overflowed the then-known world. Luke 17:26 is teaching us that Jesus has built an ark of safety, the church, that man can enter into to be saved from the wrath to come. He has given seven days, or seven periods of this Gospel Day, for the door to be open. At the end of the seventh period of the Gospel Day, the door will be shut (Matthew 25:10), and time will reel into eternity. Our text says in **verse 20, "I come."**

The Apostle Paul warned us in 2 Corinthians 2:11, "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us." The Lord desires we understand "his devices." In the Book of Revelation, Christ gives us an understanding of Satan's devices. Throughout the Revelation the Lord has exposed "the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11). The Greek word for "wiles" is *methodeia*, which means "a method." The enemy is not haphazard. He is a very intelligent spiritual being; he is a master schemer, a master planner. God gave the Revelation to expose the devices, plans, and schemes, of the enemy. God had them penned and preserved before they ever occurred.

In the Revelation, the Lord has exposed paganism, papalism, Protestantism, and the eighth beast. He has shined the light of truth upon these darkened works of the enemy, so we would not be ignorant of Satan's devices. After all of the moves through the ages that the enemy has used against the souls of man and the Church of God, Christ has revealed that there is sufficient grace for everything that we must face, individually or collectively (2 Corinthians 12:9).

The last verse of this apocalyptic writing says, "**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.**" After all has been revealed, the book fittingly closes with commending us to "**grace.**" It is as if Christ said, in so many words: "I have written to expose all the power of the enemy, and I have made provision for the church to have power over the enemy. However, to do so, you must access "**grace.**" So I have provided the ample "**grace**" for whatever you face. The church is well able to come out with victory!" In **verse 21** of our text, the Greek word for "**grace**" is the word *charis*, which means "the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life."

In Luke 10:19 Jesus said, "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you." What was He speaking of when He employed the expressions of "serpents and scorpions"? In Matthew 23:29 He said, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" (Those were the religious leaders of that day.) In verse 33 He called them "*serpents*, ye generation of vipers." The nature of a serpent or a viper is to strike at an unguarded time and to inject venom that can cause sickness and death. That describes the spirit of false religion. You come across a radio program that seems like the preacher is preaching the truth. However, when you are least expecting it, he strikes and injects the venom. He may preach a good salvation message for fifteen minutes, and then turn around and say, "But you know, no one can live above sin." That is where he puts in the poison.

Ezekiel 2:3 tells us, "And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me." Verse 6 says, "And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou

dost dwell among *scorpions*: be not afraid of their words . . . ." Literal scorpions do not talk; He was referring to "rebellious" spirits. Why are they like a scorpion? The scorpion's sting is in its tail, and in the end, rebellion will sting you. A person who has a rebellious spirit may sow their wild oats for a while, but it will sting them in the end.

Again, Luke 10:19 says, "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents [religious spir- its] and scorpions [rebellious spirits], and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you." What a wonderful promise! No dragon, no beast, no image, no eighth beast, no spirit of unbelief, no spirit of apostasy, no spirit of compromise "shall by any means hurt you." They cannot hurt you, because Jesus has revealed them through the Revelation. He has shown the light of truth and has revealed the wiles of the devil, Satan's devices, so we can see them as they truly are.

Hosea 4:6 says, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." If you are being destroyed through a lack of knowledge, seek God, and He will give you a knowledge of truth. Thank God, it will preserve you, it will keep you! God has given you power "over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (Luke 10:19). What is this power to be victorious in the face of the enemy? It is the power of grace. There is all-sufficient grace that is adequate to give us power, so nothing will hurt us. The only way we get hurt is when we hurt ourselves by not doing what we hear and by not walking in the light. We hurt ourselves when we fall from our own steadfastness.



When Paul was at sea in a terrible storm, some of the seamen were going to flee in the lifeboats. However, he said, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved" (Acts 27:31). Likewise, we have to "abide in the ship" (the old ship of Zion, the church). That is where salvation is. That is where strength is to stay saved and to keep your victory. Stay in the ship! Too many are jumping ship today. They are getting hurt, and they are dying. However, "nothing shall by any means hurt you" if you stay in the grace of God.

Second Corinthians 12:9 says, "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee [this is a parallelism; so if that is unclear, it continues]: for my strength [grace is strength] is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." The same Greek word translated as "strength" is also translated as "*power*" in that verse. The Greek word is the word *dunamis*, and our English word *dynamite* comes from it. The grace of God has a power comparable to the power of dynamite.

Grace is power to be victorious; it is "strength." It is "the power of Christ," and the Scriptures are very clear on how to obtain it. In Acts 20:32 Paul said, "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up . . ." The "word of his grace" will build you, strengthen you, and empower you. One of the avenues grace comes is through the Word, but there is another avenue. Hebrews 10:29 speaks of "the Spirit of grace." The Spirit of God also ministers grace to us.

Let us look at a prophetic picture of how grace works through the church. Zechariah 4:1-3 says: "And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep [today people need to be wakened out of their sleep], And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick [or the Hebrew says a 'lampstand'] all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof: And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof."

Verses 11-14 say: "Then answered I, and said unto him, What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick [or lampstand] and upon the left side thereof? And I answered again, and said unto him, What be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves? And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth."

Let us consider this a little. What was Zechariah actually getting a vision of? What is the "candlestick," or lampstand? Revelation 1:20 says that "the seven candlesticks [the Greek says 'lampstands'] . . . are the seven churches." In other words, they are the church throughout the seven periods of the Gospel Day. The candlestick (or lampstand), God's agency of light, is the church! In Matthew 5:14 Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world." Then in verse 15, He talked about putting your light "on a candlestick" (the Greek says "lampstand"), or in the church.

Again, Zechariah 4:2 says, ". . . I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold . . . ." Ephesians 5:27 tells us that the church is without "spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Gold represents purity. Zechariah 4:2 goes on to speak of "seven lamps." The lamps represent salvation (Isaiah 62:1). The number *seven* lets us know that they represent the message of salvation that was set forth before mankind throughout the seven periods that comprise the Gospel Day.

Zechariah 4:3 says, "And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof." Verse 12 lets us know that the two olive trees have "two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves" and into the lampstand. So what are the two olive trees? Revelation 11:3-4 tells us that the "two witnesses . . . are the two olive trees." The two witnesses are the Gospel, or the Word (Matthew 24:14), and the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 10:15).

The "two olive trees," or the Word and the Spirit, pump the "golden oil" through the "golden pipes" to keep the lamps burning, or the light shining in the church. So what are the "golden pipes"? Second Peter 1:4 says, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature . . . ." The precious promises that come from the Word of God keep pumping the divine nature into us. They are the "golden pipes."

The "golden pipes," God's promises, are pumping the golden oil from the Word of God and the Spirit of God into the church. What does that produce? Zechariah 4:7 tells us, "Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it." The prophecy is revealing grace; that is what the Word and the Spirit produce. They are referred to as "the word of his grace" (Acts 20:32) and "the Spirit of grace" (Hebrews 10:29). When they are produced and come together in the saints (or the church), they produce light. They enable us to continue to be partakers of God's divine nature and to maintain victory. The power of grace is power over all the power of the enemy!

Grace is a fitting word to be in the last verse of this apocalyptic writing and to be in the final verse of the order of the sacred canon. We realize that the Revelation was not chronologically the last book of the Bible, but it is placed as the last writing. The last verse of the last chapter of the last book of the New Testament canon says, "**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.**"

Provision has been made through "**Christ**" for whatever we, as individuals or collectively as the Church of God, need now or in the days that lie ahead. That ought to thrill your soul! It does not really matter what lies ahead, because His grace is sufficient. Nothing we will face is

beyond the scope of "**grace.**" What an encouraging truth upon which to conclude the book of Revelation! We not only live in the most brilliant and illuminated day of human history, but we also live in one in which the greatest victories are possible.

Someone may say, "Don't you realize the church has an abundance of enemies?" Romans 5:17 says that we can have an "abundance of grace." Then, Romans 8:37 says that "we are more than conquerors," because 2 Corinthians 2:14 tells us that God "always causeth us to triumph in Christ." Hebrews 13:8 lets us know, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." In this evening time, there is still an all-sufficient "**grace.**" Christ's words ring resoundingly clear through the ages when He says, "My grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Corinthians 12:9). There is an all-sufficient "**grace**" that provides power over all the power of the enemy and power to be victorious.

I trust this volume has been used of the Lord to be, as Ephesians 1:18 proclaims, "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened." Though the opposition is great, we have every reason to be encouraged. We live in a glorious day with an unprecedented understanding of truth! We have an "abundance of grace" to deal with the foes we face and the prophetic promise that the Church of God, "**the holy city,**" shall remain victorious!

The last word of the Revelation is "**Amen.**" This word is a transliteration from Hebrew into both Greek and English. It has many varied meanings by its application and context. One meaning in the conclusion of something that is said is, "So let it be." The Revelation closes, saying, in essence, "So let it be; the Revelation is true." Revelation 1:1 begins, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ . . . ." Thus, it is indeed fitting for the final word to mean "let it be," and so say I, as John—"Amen!"



# The Book of Revelation Explained

## Volume 6

In this, the final volume of a six-volume series, the truths of Revelation, Chapters 20-22, are examined. As with much of this apocalyptic writing, these chapters are commonly misunderstood and mistaught. In this volume, these chapters are viewed in the scheme and harmony of the preceding portions of the Revelation.

It is the burden and desire of the author that the Spirit of God may use this book to enlighten the eyes of understanding of the saints to the precious and vital truths being conveyed in this portion of the Revelation. We trust that this book will be a blessing to you and an enhancement to your spiritual growth.



Brother Borders is married to his wife of forty-five years, Sandra, who has faithfully labored with him in the ministry. They have five children, eighteen grandchildren, and two great grandchildren.

Earl R. Borders was born and raised in Ashland, Kentucky. At the age of eighteen, he was privileged to come in contact with some saints of God and "be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). On December 20, 1972, having just turned nineteen the preceding month, the Lord called Brother Borders into the ministry. He has continued in the ministry for forty-eight years.

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