

# What on Earth... Are You Doing Here?

Revealing God's Purposes in the  
Earth

by

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

The truths contained in this book have been very real in my heart for many years. God is causing these truths to once again come alive in my spirit, because I believe now the fullness of time is come for them to be brought to forth.

We have understood the Word of God in the past, especially eschatology, in terms of our predetermined frame of reference. This frame of reference was determined by teaching in our particular church setting, and our interpretation of scripture was based on that handed down to us. It is difficult to go against tradition. Because the Holy Spirit has been moving in a powerful way during the last two decades, people are beginning to question many of the interpretations that had previously been taken for granted. It is time for us to lay aside preconceived notions and traditions which have hindered us in understanding the true purposes of God in the earth.

As God's people have been stirred in their spirit with a greater hunger for the truth, many questions have arisen which need answering. Who are we? Why are we here? Why did Jesus come? When is He coming again? Why has He delayed His coming? What is God's purpose in the earth? Is our perceived purpose in line with God's purpose? What is the destiny of the world? Where do you find the answers to these questions? We find every answer to every question in the Word of God.

One of the purposes of this book is to help bring these truths into the mainstream of spirit-filled ministry. Hopefully, it can help serve the purpose of bringing proper balance and understanding to some very sensitive topics. May pastors take the boldness to begin leading their congregations in the path of light concerning God's purposes in the earth.

God desires to send a spiritual awakening to the Body of Christ, and the understanding of revelation truth will become the mainstream of God. I believe that God will begin to raise up spiritual leaders who will spearhead one of the greatest moves of God the world has ever known. Someone has to lift his voice in declaring the message of God concerning His kingdom and purposes in the earth. Hopefully, I am one of those prophetic voices, and this book will become an instrument in helping to encircle the earth with the message of God's heavenly Kingdom on earth.

By the grace of God, I have been a part of the "pentecostal movement", the "latter rain movement", "the charismatic movement", and the "faith movement". These are not separate camps as some would seek to make them. They each represent important segments of truth in the broad Kingdom of God. I see each as an extension or progression leading us to the ultimate of the Kingdom of God.

The pentecostal movement has brought us the power of the Holy Spirit with an emphasis on right or holy living. The latter rain movement was an extension of the power of pentecost

with an emphasis on the restoration of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the five-fold ministry. The ministry of the apostle and prophet was once again recognized in the church. The charismatic movement crossed over denominational lines in bringing forth the message of the Holy Spirit and the gifts. The faith movement brought us some of the same basic truths in addition to the message of who we are in Christ Jesus, with an emphasis on the authority of the believer and the integrity of the Word of God.

Contrary to the beliefs of many, the faith movement has been in many respects one of the great movements to date. It closely relates to the Kingdom of God, considering its strong emphasis on the will of God in earth as it is in heaven. There is no way one can talk about the purposes of God in the earth without consideration of the power of faith, especially to overcome. In fact, this book is based on a strong inference of overcoming faith. Hopefully, this book will bridge the gap between the strong adherents of workable everyday faith, and those who are advocating the Kingdom of God and its accompanying overcoming faith.

If there is one characterization of the present move of God, it would be the gospel of the Kingdom of God. When we understand what the Kingdom of God is, we will discover that it is all encompassing. It includes everything God was, is, and shall be. Every move of God can be swallowed up in this concept of the Kingdom. Every message and every emphasis becomes a part of this great whole.

The Kingdom of God includes salvation by faith in Jesus Christ, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, healing, deliverance, and restoration. It is the presentation of solutions for present-day problems in this life as well as what God has in store for the future. The Kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. It is eternal life, and that life is now.

The Kingdom of God is Jesus. Jesus is the very personification of this glorious kingdom. He is the focus of all things. In Him is life, and this life is the light of men. All things point toward Him. It is desired that the few pages of this book will bring an awareness of who Jesus is, and who we are in Him.

It is also desired that this book will bring an awareness of the aliveness of THE BOOK, which is the Holy Word of God. I believe THE BOOK, the Holy Bible, will come alive. When you begin to see the scriptures in proper light, there will come a new excitement never known before. The Bible could have previously been mysterious, dull, and boring, but hopefully now a new appreciation will develop. You will begin to see that what previously appeared to be discrepancies are not at all. New truths will spring forth as you search for the source of all life--the Lord Jesus Christ. The purpose of this writing is not to divert any attention away from the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, it is designed to enhance His Lordship.

There is no need for any additional interpretation or any other source book outside the Word of God. These writings are based upon the Word of God, with the King James Version (KJV) used exclusively. The method of interpreting the Word of God has been common sense (Holy Ghost sense) in comparing scripture with scripture. No scripture is of any private interpretation, and no doctrine is built upon a single scripture. The basic rule is "in the mouth of two or three witnesses let every word be established."

The literal understanding of the scripture is taken wherever possible, with the realization that there is a spiritual understanding and interpretation. Very little emphasis is upon "types and shadows", which if not used properly, can say whatever an individual wants them to say. It is

understood that the Old Testament was given for our examples, and there are many things hidden in mystery that may be interpreted by and revealed through the New Testament.

There definitely is a need for spiritual understanding and interpretation. Spiritual revelation is not intended for the unregenerated mind. Carnal man cannot understand the truth of the Kingdom of God. He can understand repentance from sins, because that is his basic need and is the beginning of any future experience in God. Other than that, the Scriptures show us the plan and the purpose of God to the church and through the church. The Holy Spirit is needed to help us to understand and to implement the purposes of God.

These pages, in my opinion, contain truths that are easily understood, readable, and theologically sound in communicating the purposes of God in the earth. We will be seeking to answer such questions as: How do we as the Body of Christ relate to natural Israel? What about "the rapture", the coming of the Lord, and "tribulation"? We will be dealing with the Kingdom of God in the earth both as a present reality and a future entity. Restoration, revival, and the destiny of the world are further considerations. Additionally, the purposes of the Lord in the earth must of a necessity include the church, or the Body of Christ.

Almost everyone is intrigued by the events of the end-time. Many find them fascinating, while others find them mysterious and terrifying. Some are excited, while others are fearful. We will be discussing our proper attitude toward all these things.

Many are of the opinion that future things should not even be discussed. "Don't we have enough problems right here and now without having to bring up things off in the future?" I believe these things should be kept in the proper perspective. There are very real problems today that need to be solved. There are answers in the Word of God, and we don't have to wait until we get to heaven to find them. At the same time, we need to understand some things which are shortly to come to pass in order for us to function properly today. If you're convinced the Lord is coming before morning, then that affects the way you function now. Unless you understand the purposes of God for the earth, you cannot be effective in being a part of what God is doing. God's intention is to include us in His purposes.

Each chapter of this book deals with a specific purpose of God in the earth. A clarification is made concerning the Body of Christ as being the chosen nation of God, as compared to natural Israel. God uses this many-membered Christ Body to destroy the works of the devil in order to bring life and restoration to a groaning and travailing creation. All things are destined to be put under our feet, though we see not yet all things under our feet. One of the great deceptions of Satan has been to distract the Body of Christ away from the purposes of God through a "fly-away pretribulational rapture." Then there is the chapter on how the saints of God are kept during the dark hours of the Great Tribulation. During this dark hour, the light will be the brightest, as we are commanded to arise and shine, "for our light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon us."

Several chapters deal with the eternal Kingdom of God, what it is, when it is, how we enter it, as well as the conditions of life in this kingdom. The book concludes by considering what the scriptures teach is the greatest outpouring of the Holy Spirit the world has ever known. I believe every single chapter of this book is divinely inspired and fits into the overall scheme of the purposes of God in the earth. However, I personally believe that the chapters on "Exposing a Great Deception of Escapism" and "Kept from the Hour of Temptation" potentially will have the greatest impact upon the church world. I would like for you to especially take note of these

important messages. They are the keys. Hopefully, this message will quickly circle the world, and I am believing that God will use this book to help sound the trumpet.

Satan has and does operate within the realm of darkness. Ignorance is darkness, and Satan seeks to keep people in darkness through ignorance. The Holy Spirit wants to bring us enlightenment. Enlightenment comes when there is an open heart to receive. We must be willing to lay aside the traditions of carnal man. As you approach the pages of this book, do so with an open spirit. "But we all, with open face (or open heart) beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord..." (II Cor. 3:18).

The truths of this book will either be new revelation to you, or they will reconfirm in your spirit what God has already spoken to you. If these truths are new, pray and ask the Lord to show you everything He desires to reveal to you. If you don't understand them, pray for understanding, put them on a shelf," and wait for God's revelation. May God bless you as you present yourself to Him in the study of His divine purposes.

# CHAPTER 2

## THE PURPOSES OF GOD IN THE EARTH

This book has been entitled, *What on Earth...Are You Doing Here?* Perhaps you have asked this question many many times. What is the purpose of my being? Why was I born? What does the Lord have for my life? What are the purposes of the Lord in this earth, and how do I fit into those purposes?

### *An Important Purpose for the Earth*

God has placed us in the earth, and He has an important purpose for the earth. The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. He has not given up on it nor given it over to the devil. The earth was created to be inhabited. It is the intention of the Lord to fill this earth with His glory and to restore it in all of its splendor.

Isaiah said that the Lord would beautify or glorify the place of his feet. Where is the place of His feet? "*Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool*", the Lord said. Earth is the place of His feet that He will glorify or beautify.

Jesus told us something about the purposes of God in the earth when he taught his disciples to pray, "*Thy kingdom come, thy will be done; in earth as it is in heaven*" (Mat. 6:10). If we desire to know the will of God in the earth, we must first discover what the will of God is in heaven. As a rule of thumb, we know that heaven is representative of perfection. Heaven is total abundance with no lack. Therefore, the will of God in earth is that of completeness or perfection, where there is no lack of any good thing.

There is a gross misconception concerning God's purpose for the earth. Many are determined that God's will is to destroy this earth. First, we must settle in our minds that God has no ought against the earth. This earth was created by God Almighty, and it has never been in rebellion against Him. The creature, or the creation of God, was made subject to bondage, not willingly, but by reason of him who subjected the same to bondage (Rom. 8:20). This includes the earth and everything in it.

God will deal with corruption and evil, but the earth has never done anything evil. What wrong have the beautiful trees, flowers, and mountains done against the Lord? In fact, David said the hills clap their hands before the Lord! I believe that nature in its own way has a way of praising the Lord!

## *"The Purposes of God in the Earth"*

### ***The Earth to be Restored and Redeemed***

Instead of a destruction of the earth, the earth will be restored and redeemed. There will be a cleansing and purging of the earth. God's ultimate goal is that there be new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. God's method of cleansing is by fire. Does this mean the earth will be totally annihilated by a raging fire? Peter said the elements will melt with a fervent heat.

What has always been God's purpose for purging? Corruptibility and flesh must be dealt with. Evil doers shall be rooted out of the earth. Everything that man has contaminated and corrupted must be rectified. Everything must be tried and revealed by fire, and only that which is of God shall remain. In essence, we know that everything that relates to flesh, including the systems of this world, will be destroyed. We may not be certain of the extent of the fire of God, but one thing we are confident of is that God desires to redeem the earth.

The flood served the purpose of purging the earth of wickedness. God saw the wickedness of man which led Him to the statement that He repented that He had even made man. When Noah stepped out of the ark, he stepped into a "new" earth. God promised that He never again would destroy all of mankind as He had done. Many have interpreted this to mean that God would not destroy by water, but He would destroy by fire. What is the difference whether destruction come by water or by fire? That's like saying, "I won't shoot you, but I will hang you!"

There is no inference in the Word of God that God will destroy all of mankind. In fact, there will be those who will not be a part of the change at the appearing of the Lord, but who will enter the millennial kingdom. It is certain many of these survived. There is no basis of truth that God will destroy the world or will even allow the human race to destroy itself through nuclear holocaust. The earth will not be left as a pile of useless ashes.

Basically, what has made the earth corrupt? First, it is because of the evil of man or the corruption of the flesh. Satan became the god of this world and the world systems through which he operates. He through these systems corrupted the earth; therefore, these world systems must be purged.

### ***Distinction between the Earth and the World***

There must be a distinction made between the earth and the systems of the world. The end of the world does not mean the earth is blown up, but it refers to the end of this present age or the end of the present corrupt world systems. The earth is not to be annihilated but to be restored.

God created the earth for man. When He created all things, He put man right in the middle of it. Everything in this earth was for man's blessing and benefit. He was given the commandment to subdue the earth and to have dominion over it. God further told him to be fruitful, to multiply, and to replenish the earth. Adam could not have done it by himself. It was necessary for him to multiply or to reproduce himself, which was an offspring in the image of God. In other words, the earth was to be populated with the righteous seed of God who would exercise dominion over the earth.

## *"The Purposes of God in the Earth"*

### **Adam's Responsibility to Keep the Garden**

Adam originally could not by himself subdue the whole earth, so God gave him the initial responsibility of keeping the garden, which was a small part of God's universe. Adam had the definite capability of fulfilling this responsibility. To keep the garden meant to keep all intruders out. Adam did not do a good job of this. The serpent beguiled his wife Eve. Adam allowed Satan to slip into the garden to deceive his helpmate.

Even though Adam was not deceived, he became a partaker of the deception. Perhaps he desired to protect his wife. More likely, Adam simply made a choice, even though he had all the proper information of the consequences. The reason Eve was deceived was because she did not have the information that Adam had. It was Adam's responsibility to communicate this information to his wife. Adam's choice became a willful sin. Mankind had to share the responsibility of paying the penalty for this act of treason. Thus, man became a prime candidate for redemption and restoration. This redemption became a focus of God's plan and purpose in the earth. God not only intends to restore mankind, but he will restore the earth, which also fell victim to this act of sin and disobedience.

God has a glorious intention for His man of creation that no other creature can be a part of. *"What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him"* (Heb. 2:6-8).

God's intention from the beginning was that all things be put under subjection to man. Adam never actually accomplished this. Even though by faith through Jesus Christ, we now have the power to put all things under our feet, we still do not see all things under our feet. This is speaking specifically of all of mankind. However, we do see Jesus, who has put all things under his feet as an individual. Through what He has accomplished, man has been provided the way by which the scripture might be fulfilled concerning everything being brought under his feet.

### ***Many Sons Unto Glory***

One of the great purposes of God is to bring "many sons unto glory", to bring forth a body of chosen believers who will do in these latter days what Jesus has already done as one individual. That purpose is to bring restoration and redemption to the earth and its inhabitants by destroying the works of the devil.

Man is a special creation of God, and earth is his domain. Man was God's crowning glory. In the garden, he had everything that could have ever been desired. He could have eaten of the tree of life and have lived forever. Because the earth is man's domain, the only legal entry into the earth is through man. Satan gained entry into the earth through man. Satan has no influence in this earth except through human flesh. That is the reason evil forces seek to indwell human beings today-- to gain entry into the earth.



## *"The Purposes of God in the Earth"*

### ***The Plan of Redemption***

God is a God of principle. He turned the earth over to man, and He, too, must gain entry into the earth through man. God's influence in this earth is through man. His means of redemption had to come through man. That is the reason Jesus had to come in the form of human flesh to pay the full penalty that brought us complete redemption. This plan of redemption became God's primary purpose in this earth. This work of redemption would affect everything that had been previously affected in the fall.

How extensive is this redemption? It goes as far in the positive direction as sin and death went in the negative. In other words, redemption represents restoration of all that was lost. That is powerful, and the church world as a whole has not comprehended the magnitude of it. That means redemption in spirit, soul, and body. That includes redemption from sin, sickness, disease, poverty, and physical death. Redemption includes provisions for every creature of God including the animal and vegetable kingdoms. Everything that has been affected by the curse is covered, and that includes the earth itself.

When man forfeited his rights and allowed an alien to come into this earth to destroy everything that God had created so beautifully, God immediately provided the means by which man could be restored back to Himself. Fellowship that had been broken with God could once again become a reality. Restoration of all things lost in the fall became the focus of God. Jesus will not return to this earth until all is fulfilled and restored. *"And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you; whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, since the world began"* (Acts 3:20-21).

If God's intention is to redeem the earth, how will this be accomplished? God must begin with man. Fallen man had brought the curse upon the earth; therefore, it became necessary that redeemed man must reverse the curse. This redeemed man is the new man, who is the expressed image of the Lord Jesus Christ. Man originally was created in the likeness of God, but in his fallen condition, he could never be the proper reflection of the holy, incorruptible God.

### ***Conforming a People Into His Image***

One purpose of God in the earth became that of conforming a people into this proper image. This people is the "many-member body of sons brought to glory." *"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren"* (Rom. 8:29).

The old creation man was created. The new creation man is being formed. This people is being shaped, formed, or conformed into the likeness of God's Son.

From the beginning, it has been God's desire to have a people called unto Himself who would be an expression of His praise and His glory in the earth. It has been God's will to have a holy nation, a chosen people, an elect. He has been looking for His peculiar treasure in the earth. Paul said this treasure is in earthen vessels that the glory may be of God and not of ourselves (II

## *"The Purposes of God in the Earth"*

Cor. 3:7).

There is no glory outside of God. Yet, this glory is to be revealed in flesh. We are not speaking of flesh which is enmity against God. We are not speaking of carnality. We are speaking of the temples of clay, which represent humanity. The glory of God is to be revealed in us as, *"The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory which is to be revealed in us"* (Rom. 8:18).

The glory of God is not to be revealed in outer space, but His glory is to be revealed in the saints of God. Paul also speaks of the time when Jesus shall come to be revealed in His saints (II Thes. 1:10). Paul must have known a great deal about this glory of God, because he again referred to the hope of glory, which is Christ in us (Col. 1:27). There is not glory apart from Christ.

What type of man is this redeemed man who is restored and is to be a restorer? He is the perfect man of Ephesians chapter four. The five-fold ministry has been placed in the church to bring us to this perfection; *"unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"* (Eph. 4:13). This perfect man is complete in all things. This many-membered Christ man, which is the Body of Christ, is the fullness of him that filleth all in all (Eph. 1:23).

### ***God's Purpose Is to Destroy Every Enemy***

The purpose of God in the earth is to destroy every enemy of man. When sin was introduced into the earth, death passed upon all men. This power of sin has been broken through Jesus Christ. The truth that we are yet to understand in its fullness is that the power of sickness, disease, poverty, and death must be broken. *"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil"* (I John 3:8).

Again, everything introduced into the earth because of the fall and the sin of disobedience represents the works of the devil. Every work of darkness is the work of the devil. Satan is the author of death and darkness.

Every good and perfect gift comes from above. It is the will of God that we do good in the earth as Jesus did good. *"How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him"* (Acts 10:38). The will of God is healing and restoration; the will of God is life.

Jesus said, *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captive, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised"* (Luke 4:18).

Jesus closed the book before all that Isaiah had prophesied came to pass. Perhaps the remainder of Isaiah 61 is left to the many-membered Son of God. Isaiah emphasized that the anointing is provided to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound (Is. 61:1).

*"Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?"* (Is. 58:6).

What is the oppression which has held people in captivity, and the yoke that is to be broken? *"The Lord has looked down from the height of the heavens to hear the groaning of the prisoner and to loose those who have been appointed to death"* (Ps. 102:19-20).

## *"The Purposes of God in the Earth"*

When we see a person distorted by pain and suffering in their physical body, we see a person who is yet to be delivered from the prison of their human frailties and corruptibility. Romans 8:21 speaks of the creature that is groaning and crying out to be delivered from this corruptibility into the glorious liberty of the true children of God.

The entrance of sin into this earth brought with it corruptibility. This corruptibility must give way to incorruptibility. The works of darkness must be destroyed by the outshining glory of the light of God. The time of the manifestation of this glory is now, for our light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon us.

The first thing destroyed through Jesus was the fear of death. This fear has held mankind in bondage. *"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage"* (Heb. 2:14-15).

What greater bondage is there than fear? Fear has torment. God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind (II Tim. 1:7).

The last enemy to be destroyed is death. God identified death as an enemy. *"For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death"* (I Cor. 15:25-26). All things put under our feet ultimately means overcoming physical death.

### ***Total Restoration***

The purpose of God is to bring total restoration to this earth. The righteous rule of God in the earth is to be the norm. Even though the kingdom of God is a present reality, there is yet to be a manifestation of the eternal kingdom in this earth. Presently, the kingdom of God represents a domain of authority. It is a people who has submitted themselves to the kingship and lordship of Jesus. This kingdom is real to those who recognize it. Presently, all men have not faith. We do not yet see every enemy under foot. We don't see all men as righteous, and righteousness is not prevailing among the governments of men. There is still pain, suffering, heartache, sickness, disease, and death. Wars and rumors of wars still prevail.

The purpose of God is to restore the earth to peace and tranquility where Jesus will be the Prince of Peace. The domain of the kingdom of God is to encompass all men upon the earth. Every enemy must be put under the feet of the Body of Christ.

The curse has been broken through Jesus Christ. For those who believe, the curse has no power over them. Yet, we still see the results of the curse in the earth. When there is complete recognition of the broken curse, there will be no more pain, sickness, disease, death, or war.

### ***A Heavenly Place***

What else could we ask for that would be more glorious than this perfect day of peace and harmony? What is more glorious than a state of being which represents perfection; where there is no lack, no devil, and where there is fullness of joy? Won't it be wonderful when there are no more wars and peace prevails universally? There is nothing greater than restored fellowship with God and our fellowman.

## *"The Purposes of God in the Earth"*

"This sounds like heaven to me." Well, that's precisely what we are speaking of. Heaven is a state of perfection and completeness. In heaven there is no sickness, disease, lack, or death. Heaven is a realm of life, and heaven is being brought to earth! The will of God shall be done in earth as it is in heaven.

People become frustrated when it appears their heaven is being taken away from them. They see their vision of heaven vanishing concerning mansions and streets of gold. This comes from the lack of understanding what the essence of heaven is--a state of perfection in God where Jesus will forever be--not necessarily mansions and streets of gold. Heaven is very real, and nothing of real value is taken away.

John 14 is not speaking of a mansion being built over in gloryland. Jesus said he went away for the purpose of preparing a place for us, that where He is there we will be, also. As far as the mansions are concerned, the word "mansion" absolutely did not have the same connotation that we presently understand. A mansion is not a stately three-story house with large white columns in front. The word "mansion" simply means "abode", and Jesus said He and His Father would come to make their abode (mansion) within us. Where Jesus is, is where we will be. What more should we desire? That is heaven!

Will we ever go to heaven? Of course. But again, where is heaven, and what is heaven? The word "heaven" is an elevated position, far above everything that is of the earth. It definitely is a place, and it is not just simply a condition. Heaven is being brought to earth. The heavenly Jerusalem is descending into the earth.

I am convinced that when the change comes, we will have no limitations. All limitations will be dissipated. Walls will not be able to constrain or restrain us. Transportation will be no problem as we can be translated from one part of the universe to the other in a wink of the eye. Who is to say there will not be other worlds or planets to conquer? If God has something in mind elsewhere, that is His business. I know that I am coming into a union with Jesus the head, and where He is where I will be.

There is a great change that is coming. My expectation is to be changed. The whole creation is travailing and waiting for this change. There is victory for the Body of Christ, and there is a purpose to be fulfilled. In the following pages of this book, you will find more details concerning the purposes of God and how we fit into the plan of God for the earth.

# CHAPTER 3

## A FURTHER LOOK AT GOD'S PURPOSES

### *Having Our Senses Exercised*

Dullness of hearing has affected the Body of Christ. We have a commandment of the Lord Himself to make disciples of all men, teaching them to observe all things that he has told us. Yet, we know there shall be a famine, not for bread or water, but for hearing the words of the Lord (Amos 8:11). However, there is a quickening of the Holy Spirit that represents a spirit of revelation. I pray that the spirit of revelation will be upon us as we look into the Word of God.

Hebrews 5:11 states, "*Of whom we have many things to say and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one should teach again which be the first principles of the oracles of God and are become such as have need of milk and not of strong meat. For every one who uses milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*"

There is nothing wrong with milk. Milk is a wholesome food, but Paul is saying there is a time that the Body of Christ must come to leaving the milk and start eating the meat. We are sharing that which concerns the purposes of God in the earth. One of the purposes of God is that the Body of Christ should come to maturity.

### *Preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom*

God's will is for the gospel of the kingdom to be preached in all the world as a witness to all nations. Though we no doubt are living in the end days, many generations have felt they were the chosen generation to be alive and to remain unto the coming of the Lord. Whether we be that generation or not, the fact still remains that there will be such a generation. However, I believe that I am a part of the great eternal purposes of God in the latter days of this age in helping to preach the gospel of the kingdom of God.

Keep in mind that we are talking about the purposes of God in the earth. We are not talking about the purposes of God in heaven. It is not the matter of the will of God being done in heaven, but the will of God in the earth. Jesus said to pray "*thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven*" (Mt. 6:10).

One of the reasons it is important for us to discuss the purpose of God in the earth is

because when we begin to talk about the coming of the Lord and the "rapture", we must understand it in light of God's purposes in the earth. Understanding these purposes may help to explain why we are here--the very reason for our existence.

As we have previously stated, there is a vast difference between the earth and the world. That which is associated with the world systems is under the dominion and control of Satanic influences. That will change. It is the will of God that Christian influence operates in government. The blessings of the Lord are upon this nation because of Christian influence. Our nation was founded upon the principles of the Word of God, and we must continue to see that influence operating in our nation.

One of the primary purposes of the founding of this nation was to seek out a land where men and women could bring up their children in the ways of the Lord. That should still remain a purpose of this nation. As long as we recognize this, the blessings of the Lord will continue to be upon us. If God was willing to spare the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah for the sake of ten righteous, how much more will He spare America if people will just stand in the gap in intercession? God is raising up a righteous seed in the earth who will stand in the gap for nations and peoples.

### *How Important Is the Earth?*

How important is the earth? First, the earth is the Lord's. The earth and the fullness belong to Him (Psalms 24:1). God doesn't have anything against this earth. He is against the systems of this world controlled by Satan, and He is raising up a force against them. The earth is important enough for God to send His son Jesus to it and to redeem it, and we shall inherit the earth--*"The meek shall inherit the earth"* (Ps. 37:11; Mt. 5:5).

To understand the purpose of God in the earth today, let's see how it was in the beginning. The Word of God says that God gave Adam dominion over all the earth. First, He said, *"Let us make man in our image and our likeness."* Next, He blessed them and told them to be fruitful, to multiply, and to replenish the earth. Man was to subdue the earth and to have dominion over it. When that commandment was given to man, God meant for him to have ascendancy over the earth. He was to be the master in charge of all things in the earth.

Is it little wonder that there is so much emphasis on God's man? It is God's will that we once again gain ascendancy in the earth. I believe it is the will of God for the righteous to be in control. Righteousness should prevail in government. Righteousness should prevail in the field of education. We have a responsibility to educate our children in the fear of the Lord.

Man was given the commandment to subdue the earth and every living creature. When man lost that ascendancy, one of the purposes of God became that of restoring everything that had been lost in the fall. Jesus was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil and to restore all that was lost. Sickness, disease, poverty, and physical death are the results of the fall and are the enemies of the Body of Christ. Everything that has been lost in the fall is due for total restoration. Man is important and is right in the center of God's program.

*"What is man, that thou art mindful of him? Or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels: thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.*

*For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him" (Heb. 2:6-8).*

Properly translated, this should have stated that *"man was created a little lower than God (Elohim). God has put all things under man's feet. I Corinthians 15:25 states that "he (Christ) must reign til every enemy is put under his feet."* Experientially, man is yet to see the restoration of the original purpose in subduing all things. Every enemy will be put under foot, including the *"last enemy of death"* (I Cor. 15:26). We will be talking a little later about being alive and remaining until the coming of the Lord. I believe we are the generation David wrote about in Psalms 102 concerning the *"generation to come when the appointment with death shall be broken"* (Ps. 102:20). *"By the disobedience of one, death passed upon all men, but by the obedience of one, life has come"* (Rom. 5:17, 19).

*"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" (Deut. 30:19).* We have the power to choose. Many seem to think we have no choice in the matter, but God said in His Word that we have the choice of life or death, blessing or cursing. We have the power to choose. Responsibility lies with us.

### ***Satan Sought to Abort the Purpose of God***

When Jesus came to redeem us, He came to redeem us in spirit, soul, and body. Thank God for complete and total deliverance. Anything short of complete redemption is aborting the purpose of God. Satan has tried to abort God's plan on numerous occasions. He sought to abort God's plan for deliverance in the house of Jacob when Joseph's brethren sold him into Egypt. But out of the depths of prison, Joseph ascended to the highest office in the land just beneath Pharaoh! As a result, Joseph was in a position to one day bring life to those who had sought to take his.

Satan thought he had aborted the purpose of God when the decree went throughout Egypt to kill all the male children when they were born, but God preserved a seed in Moses. Through him, He raised up a prophet and a deliverer who helped to set God's people free from the bondage of Egypt.

Satan thought he had aborted the purpose of God when the decree was made by Herod to kill every male child two years and under in the days of Jesus. The angel of God spoke to Joseph in the night to take the child Jesus into Egypt that it might be fulfilled that out of Egypt have I called my son.

Satan thought he had aborted the plan of God when the dragon sought to destroy the manchild in the 12th chapter of Revelation, but the manchild was caught up to the throne of God. Again, Satan had been defeated.

Satan will seek to silence your voice by killing you and getting you out of the way. He will try to remove you out of the earth in any way possible, because you as the seed of God represent a threat to his kingdom. This removal can be accomplished through physical death or even a false concept of a "fly-away rapture." He will do everything within his power to keep you from being the authority of God in the earth.

God's eternal purpose is not for you to simply get saved, hang on a little while, and then

go to heaven. It doesn't affect the kingdom of darkness for you to get saved and join a dead church, put your name on a roll, and go the rest of your life being spiritually ineffective. If you don't act on the Word of God and do the will of God, you don't represent a threat to Satan. You represent a threat when you act on the Word. When you are an overcomer, you become a threat.

### ***Why Has Jesus Tarry His Coming?***

Why does Jesus tarry His coming? He has tarried His coming for almost 2000 years. Every generation felt theirs was the generation to consummate all things. If it was just God's purpose to save you and take you to heaven, He could have done that a long time ago. Jesus was an overcomer over all things. He overcame the devil when He came out of the grave. He had already defeated Satan, making a show of him openly, triumphing over him. Jesus has made the provision for us to defeat the devil. He made the provision for us to walk in the fullness of life. Again, if Jesus had the sole desire to take us to heaven, that could have already happened, but evidently He has other plans.

Well, what is taking place? God is waiting on you and me as the Body of Christ to do everything the Body of Christ was intended to do, namely to defeat the devil and put him under our feet. In Romans 16:20, Paul states, "*And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.*"

### ***The Eternal Purpose of the Church***

The purpose of God is to raise up a church that will "*declare to the principalities and powers in heavenly places the manifold wisdom of God*" (Eph. 3:10). This is according to the eternal purpose that he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. The intent of God is that the church might be the demonstration to the power of darkness in heavenly places the mighty power of God, the authority in Jesus' name, and the glory of God.

It is time that the church recognizes that God has invested in it all the power and authority over every work of the devil. Sickness, disease, poverty, and physical death are enemies to be put under our feet. We as the church need to begin standing up to be what God has ordained us to be.

### ***The Church Must Come to Maturity***

The church must come forth in maturity. The church must come forth in unity. It is time for the church to be a witness to the world. A witness to the world is more than a simple confession that we are saved, filled with the Spirit, and are on our way to heaven. The witness to the world is first of all that of unity. It is a group of people who has caught the same vision—a people anointed and called of God to triumph over every foe—a people who are overcomers.

We as the church should be tired of seeing the devil defeating the Body of Christ, with families broken and destroyed, and in general, people kicked about by the powers of evil. We should become distressed that darkness, sickness, disease, and poverty still prevail. God's whole creation is crying out to be delivered from this bondage (Rom. 8:22). It is crying out for a



manifestation of the Kingdom of God. Even people who are not believers are literally crying out for this manifestation without realizing it. This will be accomplished by the five-fold ministry. This ministry will perfect the saints in order for them to do the work of the ministry. The body will be edified. We will come into *"the full stature of the fullness of Christ."* That is the purpose of God--to grow up into the full measure of the stature of Jesus Christ. Concerning unity, Jesus prayed that we may be one as He and the Father are one.

### ***A Glorious Church***

The purpose of God is that the church might be a glorious church, which means to be full of the glory of God. It is to be without spot or wrinkle. We are the light of the world, and we are to expose the works of darkness by that light.

To be the light of the world means that we are to shine in the midst of the greatest darkness the world has ever known. Isaiah 60:1 states, *"Arise, shine, for thy light is come and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. Darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people, but thy light is come."* In the darkest hour the world has ever known, there will be a light and a witness in the earth. This light will expel and break the power of darkness.

The church has traditionally been taught that any minute now the Lord is going to come and take us out. That is missing the whole point. Jesus will not return to this earth until the times of restitution of all things spoken by the prophets (Acts 3:21). Did you hear that? ALL things spoken by the prophets!

What does it take to overcome the devil and the world? *"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith"* (I John 5:4). Defeat is not God's will. It's not even in His vocabulary.

### ***A Victorious Church***

Some may feel that it is the will of God that we be defeated in order that we might learn some valuable lesson. We certainly need to know how to deal with defeat if it comes, but defeat should not be in our thinking. It is never God's will that we be defeated. God never uses defeat as his method of teaching or instruction. Sure, we should learn from failures and mistakes if we experience them, but that is not God's method of teaching.

God's Word is a Success Book. Is it the will of God to be conformed into the image of God? God is a success. He has never failed, and He will never fail. He and He alone is our pattern. He wants you to have successful marriages, jobs, and businesses.

We have all experienced failures in many areas of life. God doesn't condemn you, and neither should we. There is help for us when we do fail. But the point is that these failures should be recognized as weaknesses, and we should look to the Lord for help. Don't blame God in order to excuse yourself.

Yes, it is God's will to walk in total victory. The victory that overcomes the world is our faith. Faith is active, not passive. It is the power to change your circumstances. Faith is something that is left up to you and me. It becomes our responsibility to take action. We take the responsibility for the opening of the windows of heaven.

The blessings of God are contingent upon our obedience to the Word of God. Our obedience enacts the spiritual laws of God that work on our behalf. You will never be blessed financially until you learn to open the door to finances. That is based upon the principle of sowing and reaping. Whatever you sow, you will reap. That is a principle of the Kingdom of God that will never fail. As long as there is day and night, winter and summer, and as long as the earth remains as it is, the principle of sowing and reaping will remain in effect. We sow sparingly; we reap sparingly. We sow bountifully; we reap bountifully.

God is telling us to take responsibility. While we have been waiting on God to do something, God has been waiting on us. The price has already been paid; the provision has already been made. Jesus Christ has made the provision that we might live an overcoming, victorious, and abundant life in this life. He has come that we might have life and that more abundantly.

### ***In Earth As It Is in Heaven***

We're talking about the kingdom of God in this earth. We're speaking about the will of God to be done in earth as it is in heaven. Is there any sickness in heaven? Is there any disease in heaven? Is there poverty in heaven? Is there any lack in heaven? Are there any shortages in heaven? The kingdom of God is the realm of total possibility, and the kingdom of God is at hand.

# CHAPTER 4

## ONE HOLY NATION

### *Who Is the Chosen Elect of God?*

Here are some questions for us to consider. To whom will the glory and blessings of God be given, or to whom are they intended? Who will be used to manifest His glory to the world? Through whom will God fulfill His purposes? Who are the saints of the Most High God who shall possess the eternal kingdom of God forever and ever?

The purposes of God in the earth are not divided between two groups of people. While some recognize the church as the chosen elect of God, others consider natural Israel. Who are the chosen people of God? Who is the holy nation? Is it Israel, or is it the church?

The book of Revelation speaks of the saints in excess of twenty times. Who are they? Who is the elect in Matthew 24? Our responsibility is to find out and to establish one people or one elect.

In order to know whom God desires to reveal His purposes through, we need to know something about these purposes. What are some of these purposes? One is that there might be a people who will be a praise in the earth—a praise unto His glory. A purpose of the Lord in this earth is that there might be a people who will destroy the works of the devil and to bring restoration to creation. Another purpose is that there might be a people who will be conformed into the image and likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Still another is that there might be a people who will be the manifestation of the glory of God in the earth.

At this point, to most Christians, the obvious answer appears to be without question the church. Even though we may recognize the chosen as the church, we still get distracted by the notion that God's holy and chosen people is a natural nation in the Middle East. We declare that we are the chosen generation, holy nation, and royal priesthood, and at the same time our attention is on another group. Do you see the contradiction?

The word elect in Matthew 24 is the same as the word chosen in I Peter 2:9. Many are called, but few are chosen. *"They that are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful"* (Rev. 17:14). There is no doubt whom these chosen are, and they are the same as the elect. We, the church, are elected because of grace. It is not by the law or by works, but by grace.

### *The Church Is Not God's Plan B*

## *"Many Sons Unto Glory"*

How do we view the church? Do we see the church as God's plan B? Let me break that down. Did God have plan A that failed, then He had to turn to an alternate plan? Many people believe Israel was God's plan A. They failed, then God had to put plan B, involving the church, into action.

God had an eternal plan in Christ Jesus from the foundation of the earth. In the beginning, when Adam failed in the garden, God had a purpose in mind. When Adam sinned, God immediately had plans to raise up a seed unto himself who would bruise the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15).

Is the church an afterthought in the mind of God? Are believers second-rate citizens in the kingdom of God? Is the Body of Christ second-rate? Absolutely not! Did you know God always had in mind a peculiar people, a holy nation, a royal priesthood, a chosen people? God's will has been from the beginning to fulfill His purposes through the church. A little later, we will define the church.

*"Now therefore if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine; and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation"* (Ex. 19:5-6).

God's condition for blessings has always been contingent upon obedience. The willing and obedient shall eat the good of the land (Is. 1:19). You may say, "God was just talking to Israel." But more than God speaking to a natural race of people or nationality, He was speaking to a people whom He had called out from those around them as a separate people unto Himself. Any way you look at it, that represented the church. The word church is "ecclesia", which means the "called out ones." God separated unto Himself a people. He said, "If you will be obedient, I will make you a peculiar treasure." Deut. 14:2 - *"For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth."*

Titus 2:14 states, *"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."* The word peculiar does not mean "strange" or "weird". The word "peculiar" means special. One of the meanings of the word is "a purchased people." We are a people who has been purchased by the blood of Jesus. We are a special people unto the Lord.

I Peter 2:9 states, *"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..."*

Who do you think Peter is talking to here? Is there any question? If he is not talking to us, he is not talking to us when he said, "By his stripes we were healed." I accept the fact he is talking to us, the church. *"Ye are a chosen generation..."* The Lord said in Exodus 19, if we would obey his voice, we would be a peculiar treasure, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation. Peter says basically the same thing. For what reason? That we should *"shew forth the praises of him who has called us out of darkness into light."* These in times past were not considered a people but are now the people of God. There was a time we were considered outside the commonwealth of Israel.

### ***God's Eternal Plan to Reveal Himself through the Church***

Why has it always been God's purpose to reveal himself through the church if the church

## *"Many Sons Unto Glory"*

is just a New Testament concept? The revelation of the church is New Testament. The church has been in the earth through the centuries. It was in the Old Testament. Keep in mind the church is a called out people unto the Lord, a people raised up for His name sake. It is a people who would be a praise unto His glory. In fact, any congregating of people could be referred to as a church if that congregation is called out from a larger group. The word "assembly" in Acts 19:32 referred to the gathering of the hostile people of the city who were angry with Paul for being responsible for destroying the idols of Diana. The word "assembly" is the same in the Greek as "church". The point here is that "church" in its simplest form refers to a group of people who are called out from a larger group of people. In the purest sense, the church is a called out people unto God from a larger group of people, namely the world.

Let's look at some examples. Acts 7:38 declares that Moses was in the church in the wilderness, again referring to the people whom the Lord had from among the Egyptians. They were a people separated unto the Lord.

When God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, He began the process of separating unto Himself a people who would produce a righteous seed. There is something exciting about the seed of Abraham. In fact, that is the key. We are the seed of Abraham. We are heirs by faith, not by the law. When God called Abraham, He said that He wanted him to separate himself from his people and from the center of idol worship among the Chaldeans. He was to pick up his belongings and go to the place the Lord would call him unto. God made a promise to Abraham that day. He said He wanted to make of him a great nation. Abraham was to be a father of nations, for that is what the word Abraham means.

### ***God's Promise to Abraham***

*"Your seed will be great"*, the Lord told Abraham. His seed was to be as the stars of the heaven and the sand of the sea. This typified a spiritual seed and a natural seed. Abraham is the father of a natural people. Among this natural seed are two groups of people; one a seed of the flesh and one of promise. One is Ishmael, and the other is Isaac.

Why did God decide one day to choose a certain race of people? Why did He decide to bless a certain nation? Why was it Israel instead of Egypt or some other nation? We all came from Adam. Why did God choose Abraham? Where do we get the idea that the Jews are the blessed people of God?

Of course, this blessedness stems from the promises to Abraham that his seed would be blessed. Actually, the blessings of the Lord upon natural Israel have been because of obedience to the principles of the Word of God. The Jews have been prosperous because they believe in the laws of prosperity of the Old Testament.

God chose Abraham because, of all people of the earth, God saw something in Abraham. He saw something in him in the midst of the wickedness of Babylon. God saw a man He could invest Himself in. Here was a man who would be obedient. God called Abraham out, but Abraham had to have faith. This calling of Abraham out of Babylon was the beginning of the church, or the called out people of God.

God's promise of blessing was reconfirmed to Abraham's son Isaac, and then to Isaac's son Jacob. Jacob's name was changed to Israel. Here is a revelation relating to a name change. Jacob means a supplanter or deceiver, while Israel means a prince with God. When we were translated from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light, there was a change of nature or name. We became a prince with God, when once we were schemers and deceivers.

## ***Jacob and Israel***

In the Word of God, when the terms Jacob and Israel are used conjointly, Jacob refers to the old nature or relationship while Israel is the new. Jacob refers to the unregenerate seed or the flesh, and Israel represents the spiritual seed of God. Probably more accurately, Jacob refers to the natural Jews, while Israel refers to the spiritual Jews. Israel is a type of the church, not Jacob. Jacob is a type of natural Israel, while Israel is spiritual Israel.

Spiritual Israel is the church. All the promises to Israel are promises to the church. The revelation of the church is a New Testament concept, but the church is concealed in the Old Testament.

Abraham held to the promises of God and wavered not. He counted those things which were not as though they were and was not moved by the things he saw. He believed God. Because of the faith of Abraham, he was able to become the father of faith--the father of all those who would believe.

### ***Who Is the Seed of Abraham?***

It is not enough to say you're the seed of Abraham. The Arabs can say they are the seed of Abraham and be correct. The Jews can say the same. We say we are the seed of Abraham (rightfully so), and we are neither Arab nor Jew in the natural. God is not dealing with nationalities and national boundaries.

*They are not all Israel who are of Israel.* In Romans 9, Paul starts out by saying that he is grieved and heavy of heart with continual sorrow for his natural brethren, who are those according to the flesh. *Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect.* The prophet Hosea said that all Israel shall be saved. But Paul was grieved because he knew that if his natural brethren did not accept Jesus, they would be lost. So all Israel shall be saved, but it is obvious that all Israel is not saved. Does this make the word of God of none effect? Never. The Word of God never contradicts itself. It is always true. All Israel shall be saved, but they are not all Israel which are of Israel. In other words, not all those who are of natural Israel are the Israel of God. Because you call yourself an Israelite in the flesh does not make you an heir of God.

*"Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children"* (Rom. 9:7). This is speaking of the natural seed of Abraham. But this is not just speaking of the natural seed of Abraham identified as the Ishmaelites as compared to the Isaacites. This is verified in John 8. It is the natural seed as compared to the spiritual seed.

Jesus told the Jews one day, *"You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free"* (John 8:32). The Jews responded that they were Abraham's seed and were never in bondage to any man. Jesus did not deny they were Abraham's seed. In fact, he acknowledged it. How could he deny they were the natural offspring of Abraham? This was irrefutable. Jesus went further to state, *"But you seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you."*

Jesus identified himself with his Father, which was not the same father of the Jews. They stated that Abraham was their father. Jesus said, *"If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham."*

Now here is an interesting observation. Jesus recognized the Jews as Abraham's seed, but he did not recognize them as being Abraham's children. *"Neither because they are the seed*

## *"Many Sons Unto Glory"*

*of Abraham, are they all children...*" (Rom. 9:7). Here's the bombshell!

Jesus had recognized their natural lineage as being the seed of Abraham, but their spiritual lineage was identified with the devil. Just being the natural seed or the natural descendants was not enough. Being a natural Jew or Israelite was not enough. They were recognized only on the basis of their spiritual relationship. They were the seed of Abraham by the flesh. Their bloodline said they were descendants of Abraham.

### ***Bloodline Is Not Enough***

It is not enough to have certain blood flowing in your veins or to be of a certain nationality or race of people. This is a spiritual matter. You are either the seed of God or the seed of the devil. God is your Father, or the devil is your father. If you are the children of God, you are going to do the works of God, namely to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

### ***The Seed of Isaac***

So, it is not enough being the seed of Abraham, but it is being the seed of Isaac. Again, this is not just making the distinction between two natural seeds--the Ishmaelites and the Isaacites. This is absolutely beyond the realm of the flesh. It is not the *"children of the flesh, but the children of the promise are counted for the seed"* (Rom. 9:8).

*"Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise"* (Gal. 4:28). This is being addressed to the spiritual seed, the church. It is not being spoken to the natural seed of Isaac, but to the children of promise. We are heirs according to the promise (Gal. 3:29).

Abraham had two sons. Sure, he had Ishmael and Isaac, one by the bondwoman and the other by the freewoman. Again, this allegory in Galatians 4:22-31 is referring to more than two natural fleshly seed, Ishmael and Isaac. The first answers to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But the second answers to Jerusalem which is above and is free, and is the mother of us all. The second is the spiritual Jerusalem. *"But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven"* (Heb. 12:22).

This heavenly Jerusalem, which is the mother of us all, is the church. The seed of the bondwoman gendereth to bondage and answers to the Jerusalem which now is (the natural city in the Middle East). This seed of the bondwoman refers to those who call themselves the seed of Abraham and are the natural Jews, for they answer to Sinai, the law or old covenant. We brethren (the saints) are as Isaac, who is the son of promise.

### ***Heirs According to the Promise***

*"And if ye be Christ then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise"* (Gal. 3:29). We answer to Jerusalem above, which represents the New Covenant. Paul said this is an allegory, for these represent the two covenants. The contrast between Ishmael and Isaac was an allegory, because it speaks of a deeper truth of contrasting the natural Jews and the spiritual Jews. One is loyal to the law, and the other is faithful to the spirit by faith.

*"For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be*

## *"Many Sons Unto Glory"*

*heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect" (Rom. 4:13-14).*

*"Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed" (Rom. 4:16).* The law was to the Jews and for the Jews. If the promises of God had come through the law, guess who would have been the only recipients of these promises? The only inheritors would have been the natural Jews. But it is by faith, and not by law. If it is by faith, it is to all who believe. (Note: The law was 430 years after Abraham).

Some seem to think it is not enough to be the spiritual seed. They preach that the real blessings are to the natural nation of Israel. But the spiritual is it! Spirituality is reality. That which is of the spirit far supersedes that which is in the flesh.

We are the children of Abraham by faith (Gal. 3:7). By faith, Christ is the end of the law. *"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10:4).*

*"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ" (Gal. 3:16).* This is not seeds plural, but seed singular. Who is this seed? Christ. For whom are the blessings of Abraham intended? They are the seed, which is Christ. That says that the only way to be heirs of the blessings of Abraham is through Christ.

Why is the natural nation of Israel even remotely considered to be blessed? Because of Abraham. The inheritance is not to the natural seed of Abraham, but the spiritual seed. The blessings must come through Christ. Not until Israel accepts Christ will they be considered the blessed people. Even then it will not be because of who they are in the natural, but in the spirit. It is their identification with the purposes of God, which is through the church. There is no entrance into the church except through Jesus Christ.

### ***Great Conversion of the Jews?***

Sure, there will be a great conversion of the Jews during the kingdom age of the coming millennial. There will be other conversions, also. This conversion does not qualify anyone to become a part of the elect of God in this age. The elect of God is being formed in this dispensation of time. The elect of God will fulfill the purposes of God in bringing deliverance to the creation of God.

Natural Israelites may become a part of this elect just like anyone else. It will come through the same channel, through faith in God through the Lord Jesus Christ. Without the shedding of Jesus' blood, there is no remission of sins. He died for all the sinners of the world. It was not just for a select nationality. Jesus died for all. He made the provision for us to become accepted in the beloved.

It is time for us to get our attention off a natural nation as far as considering them as God's blessed and chosen people, especially in fulfilling the purposes of God. The natural Jews are precious in the sight of God, and Jesus died for them. We should have a special love for them, because it was through them in the natural who brought forth the promised one. It is regretful, and our hearts should be filled with sorrow, as was Paul's, because they are lost. We should pray every day for the nation of Israel that there will be a great awakening, and it is coming.

When we understand who the true elect of God is, our attention will not be diverted from the true purposes of God, which are to be revealed through the church. The greatest revival will not come through 144,000 Jewish evangelists while the church is off in heaven somewhere. The elect of God is going to be the leaders of this tremendous outpouring of spiritual awakening that



## *"Many Sons Unto Glory"*

is coming on the earth.

When God begins to use men of reputation and influence to begin to lift up their voices in declaring this message, we will begin to see a great turnaround in this nation and world. We will begin to see a great awakening and restoration of a people who in the past has been guilty of rejecting the gospel and killing every prophet sent to them, including the Lord Jesus Christ himself. The hearts of multitudes of the Jewish people will turn to Jehovah, and finally to their Messiah, whom they rejected long ago. All Israel will be saved, but no more as a natural nation than all the United States being saved. It still stems from the fact of knowing who is of Israel--the Israel of God.

There was a time we were strangers and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. *"At that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world"* (Eph. 2:12). There was a time when we were on the outside looking in. We were strangers. Gentile means a foreigner or a stranger. I am not Gentile; I am a believer. Paul said in Ephesians 2:19, *"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God."*

### ***Who Are the Real Jews?***

I do not consider myself to be a second-rate citizen of the Kingdom of God. I have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of God, which is the kingdom of light. If we are not a Gentile, we must be a Jew! That's it! *"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"* (Rom. 2:28-29).

We are not outsiders looking in. We are in the mainstream of God. We are not a part of God's Plan B, nor are we an afterthought in the mind of God. We are the elect, the holy nation, the peculiar people of God because that is what He ordained from the foundation of the earth. We stand as the chosen of God today, because we have chosen to be obedient to Him.

### ***One New Man***

Those who were sometime far off from the promises of God are now made nigh by the blood of Jesus. Jesus is our peace, and He has made of one those who were outsiders and those who were insiders (Eph. 2:13-14). There is one man; one church; one body; one chosen; one elect; one holy people of God; one seed of God, and that seed is Christ. They are those in Christ. That which was twain or two is now made one in Christ Jesus.

This one man is more than the union of the Jews and the Gentiles. It is the union of all those who have been separated by any wall of partition, whether it be racial, religious, social, educational, political, or any other artificial wall of division or separation. We once were slaves to sin and were citizens of the kingdom of darkness. Through Christ Jesus, we have been made one with the children of light.

God is not dealing with a natural seed and a spiritual seed as his elect. He is dealing with two groups of people, but they represent the believers and the unbelievers. He is dealing with two nations; the nation of darkness and the nation of light. He is desiring that there be one new man. He desires to reconcile the world unto Himself. This will come through the redemptive

## *"Many Sons Unto Glory"*

power of the blood of Jesus.

Christ has made Himself one new man. The middle wall of partition has been destroyed. There is no room for prejudices toward any. Peter discovered this when the Lord gave him the vision of the sheet with all manner of unclean beasts on it. The Lord said, "Peter, take and eat." Peter said, "Lord you know nothing unclean has come into my mouth." Again, the Lord replied, "What I have cleansed, don't you call it unclean" (Acts 10:9-14). Peter came to the revelation that God "was no respecter of persons." He came to the realization that God had made no difference between the Jew and the Gentile.

Paul said this new man is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him, and there is neither *"Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all, and in all"* (Col. 3:10-12). Then Paul goes further to declare this new creation man as the ELECT OF GOD (Col. 3:12).

*"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus"* (Gal. 3:28). A further statement is given in Ephesians 3:5-6: *"Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel."*

Romans 10:12 - *"For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him."* The word Greek refers to more than the inhabitants of Greece. It refers to all those who are not Jews. *"And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?"* (Rom. 9:23-24).

We must understand that the blessings of God are to the Jews and Gentiles who have been born again. Born again Gentiles do not become a part of the inheritance of God with unregenerate Jews. They become fellowheirs with regenerated or born-again Jews.

Those who have become the people of God at one time were not considered the people of God. *"As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God"* (Rom. 9:25-26). Peter said concerning the holy nation and chosen people, *"Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God"* (I Pet. 2:9-10).

### ***Being Grafted In***

Why was Israel rejected? Israel was rejected because of unbelief. She has been cut off, according to Romans 11. Israel represented the true olive tree but was cut off because of disobedience, rebellion, and unbelief. Has God cast them away that they should be forever lost?

God has not cast away anyone that they cannot be restored. He did not say that because Israel was cast away that anyone with Jewish blood could not be saved. They were not accepted because of the blood they possessed, neither will they be rejected because of their bloodline in the natural.

God had not cast away the natural Jews because they were natural Jews, because Paul was a natural Jew, and God had not cast him away. Your natural lineage does not cause you to be blessed nor will your natural lineage cause you to be rejected.

I will now make a profound statement. I don't believe God has ever been interested in a natural bloodline! He has always been interested in a spiritual seed. Even under the old

## *"Many Sons Unto Glory"*

covenant, anyone who desired to become a Jew spiritually could do so simply by accepting the Jewish religion. They were accepted on the basis of their spiritual commitment, and not on the basis of their blood. These were known as proselyte Jews, and they were accepted through baptism and circumcision.

God is certainly interested in a pure race, but it is a people who have not contaminated itself with the world. *"Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a FATHER unto you, and ye shall be my SONS AND DAUGHTERS, saith the Lord Almighty"* (II Cor. 6:17).

*"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"* (II Cor. 6:14).

Where does the natural nation of Israel stand today? They need God. They must accept the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other way. They must come through the same door you and I have entered. There is no other name under heaven whereby man can be saved, except the name of Jesus (Acts 4:12). To become a part of the elect, they must come by grace through faith. There is no justification except through faith in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We become a part of the family of God through grafting. They, Israel, were cut off because of unbelief. *"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"* (Rom. 11:20-21).

God rejected Israel because of her unbelief. We stand by faith. The moment we cease to stand by faith and begin to operate in unbelief is the day we, too, will be cut off. We cannot boast because we are in. We can fall the same way as they. *"And they also, if they ABIDE NOT STILL IN UNBELIEF, shall be grafted in"* (Rom. 11:23).

We are accepted through the process of grafting. *"Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your soul"* (James 1:21). Israel will come the same way--through grafting back into the vine. Jesus is the vine; we are the branches. Jesus is the only way.

## ***A Great Revival***

There is a great revival that is coming to the nation of Israel. *"Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world...how much more their fulness?"* (Rom. 11:12). The next great revival of renown will be among the Jewish people. Their only holy purpose in the economy of God will come through the church as the holy nation and elect of God. Our responsibility is to pray for their salvation. Israel today represents one of the greatest mission fields on the face of the earth. There will be missionaries who will be raised up to feel and to hear the heartbeat of the nation of Israel. That will become their mission field.

We as the Body of Christ cannot become so preoccupied with Israel as the holy people of God to the sacrifice of the rest of the world. Different people will have different burdens or callings for different parts of the world. God is equally concerned about the salvation of all. Jesus died for all the nations of the world--including another of Abraham's seed, the Arab nations.

## ***God Is Looking for One Holy Nation***

*"Many Sons Unto Glory"*

The important thing to remember is that God from the beginning has had a purpose in mind, and that is to have a people who would be the expression of His glory in the earth. He is looking for His one holy nation who will bring restoration to a world that has fallen under the dominion of Satan.

The nation of Israel has been special to God and to the whole world. It was through them that we received the law and the prophets. It was through them that we received the greatest gift to all the world--the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We have established from the Word of God that we are the chosen generation that Peter spoke about. We are the holy nation, the elect, the peculiar treasure unto the Lord. Hopefully, we have established that there is one chosen, one elect, one holy nation, and that one holy nation is the Body of Christ. Anyone else who would ever be used in the purposes of God must come through the same door. That is possible only through the cross--by the blood of Jesus. Justification is by faith and faith alone. It is the blood of Jesus that justifies us, and we accept that and believe it by faith.

The purpose of God is intended to be fulfilled through the church, the Body of Christ. *"Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end"* (Eph. 3:21). God's eternal purpose is and has been the church. That was what it was when He called Abraham, when He sought out a people among the Israelites, and when He purchased the church with the precious blood of His son Jesus. We as the Body of Christ are that chosen people, the elect of God—ONE HOLY NATION.

## CHAPTER 5

### MANY SONS UNTO GLORY

When speaking of the Body of Christ, there is some confusion concerning whether this body is feminine or masculine. The feminine aspect comes from the fact that the Body of Christ is the church, and the church has been represented as a woman or a bride. The masculine comes from the point of view that the Body of Christ is the extension of the Son of God, or the many sons being raised to glory (Heb. 2:10).

I shall make no attempt to distinguish between two groups of people who may represent either the masculine or the feminine. I believe there are both masculine and feminine traits in each of us, both in the natural and the spiritual. Masculinity usually typifies strength and leadership, while femininity relates to warmth, caring, and understanding. We all have both types of traits. So is it in the spirit.

In this chapter, we are going to be dealing with the Body of Christ as the many-membered Son of God, or the extension of the Son of God in the earth. In the first chapter of Ephesians, we find the relationship between Jesus, the son of God, and the church, the Body of Christ. We understand who we are in terms of relationships. *"And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet..."* (Eph. 1:20-22).

#### *The Unity of the Head and the Body*

In Hebrews 2, the writer states that God created man a little lower than the angels (Elohim, which actually means God), and *"hast put all things in subjection under his feet."* We do not yet see all things put under him, but *"we see Jesus..."* (Heb. 2:6-9). So God has put all things under Jesus' feet, and gave him (Jesus) to be the *"head over all things to the church..."* (Eph. 1:22).

There is one head, and that one head is Jesus. Jesus is the head of the church, which is his body. The Body of Christ is the church. The head of the church is Jesus, which means that Jesus is the head of the body. We'll begin to see the picture shortly. God wants to bring the head and the body together into unity--into oneness.

Hebrews 2:11 states, *"For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one."* Who is sanctified? The church. *"That he might sanctify and cleanse it (the church) by the washing of water by the word"* (Eph. 5:26). Who is the sanctifier? Jesus! The sanctified and the sanctifier are to be as one.

The church is the Body of Christ, which is the fulness of him that filleth all in all. The Body of Christ is full of His anointing, His life, His spirit. Jesus said He was the vine, and we are the branches. The vine and branches can not be separated. The branches produce the fruit,

## *"Uncovering Satan's Seat"*

but the vine supplies the life. Jesus fills us with His life, which is the fulness of what He is. He fills us with His love and His power. The Holy Spirit of God indwells us. Without Jesus, there would be no life to produce the fruit. Without the branches, there would be no instrument or channel by which productivity or fruitfulness might be revealed to the world (John 15).

### *The Feet of Christ*

If all things are to be put under Jesus' feet, then what or who are the feet? I want to introduce the fact that we are the feet of Jesus. Jesus is the head; we are the body, and the feet are a part of the body. There is one new man whose head is properly attached to the body. Who has God ordained that should put Satan under foot? The church! The feet of Christ! All things have been put under his feet!

What Jesus has already done legally, we are to walk out. What Jesus did on the cross gave us the legal right to salvation, to healing, and to the inheritance. It has already been legally accomplished. The feet are to walk out on this earth all that Jesus has already accomplished.

In a normal, natural birth, the birth of a child witnesses the coming forth of the head first. That which follow are the feet. Jesus has been brought forth as the firstborn unto God, and now is the time for the rest of the Body to come forth. The head is in control. He is in heaven. Who is left on the earth walking things out? The feet!

*"The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my FEET glorious" (Is. 60:13). Where is the place of God's feet? "Heaven is my throne; earth is my footstool" (Is. 66:1). The earth is the habitation or place of the feet. God has promised to glorify the place of his feet, which is the earth; therefore, He will reveal His glory in this earth. "The earth shall be filled with the glory of God" (Num. 14:21).*

### *The Shoulder of Christ*

*"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" (Is. 9:6).*

There is a relationship of sonship in the kingdom of God, a union with Jesus Christ. But Jesus will forever hold a unique position as the head. He is the King of kings. He is supreme over all kings of the earth. We are to rule as kings and priests, but Jesus is to be King of all these kings.

Jesus' position is established, but take note of something. The government shall be upon his shoulder. I don't believe you would have to stretch things too far to say we are the shoulder of the Body of Christ. Who is the body? It is the church, or the many-membered Son. Who is manifesting the government of God in the earth? Who is to judge the world? Who is to be the ministry to the world? **THE CHURCH!**

In the local church, the government of God is manifested through men. The government of God in the earth will be upon the shoulders of the Christ, or the Body of Christ. Who controls the shoulder or any other part of the body? **THE HEAD!**

The Body of Christ has yet to come to the full understanding of who it is. We are important to the purposes of God in this earth. It is not so much that we are so important as

## *"Uncovering Satan's Seat"*

individuals but as a collective body. We are important as individuals, but God can replace an individual and still fulfill His purposes through a collective Body. That group will be made up of someone whether it is you and I or someone else.

### ***The Hands of Christ***

If we are the feet of the Body of Christ, and we are the shoulders of the body, we could take it further by saying we are the hands of God. We are to be the extension of God in the earth. We are the ministry of God in the earth. We are the vessels of honor through whom God desires to reveal His glory in the earth. Who else is going to do it? Are we waiting for Jesus to come do it? He has already done His part, so He is waiting on you and me.

If we are to do it, there is more to do than sitting around, twiddling our spiritual thumbs, sitting on the bottom of a good soft pew, and waiting for the rapture. There is a creation that is perishing. This creation is waiting for a demonstration of the glory of God.

### ***The Earnest Expectation of the Creation***

Who is creation waiting for? *"For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God"* (Rom. 8:19). These sons of God are the extension of the hand of God.

The Body of Christ will not represent a weak church or a backslidden church. It will not be a church wandering in darkness with no purpose. It will be a people who has discovered its purpose, and this people will have learned it is the light of the world. Praise God!

### ***Greater Works Through a Many-Membered Body***

*"He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father"* (John 14:12). Most of us no doubt would be satisfied to do these works. Can you imagine anything any greater than what Jesus did? Greater miracles? Possibly, only inasmuch as we will be the extension of God in these latter days to bring total restoration to the earth, which was not a part of Jesus's earthly ministry. In other words, Jesus came to make the way for restoration, but restoration was not fulfilled while He was on this earth. I believe He has left this work to His body. This will only be accomplished through our union with the head. Other than that, can you imagine greater things qualitatively than Jesus performed?

Jesus was only one individual in the earth doing great miracles of God. He was one individual who was identified as the son of God in the earth. Can you see the possibility of doing greater things as the Body of Christ simply by being a representation of many sons? If the greater works be not qualitatively, certainly we could understand them to be quantitatively. Jesus was limited to one location at one specific period of time. When He went away, and the Holy Spirit came, we were brought forth as the many-membered Christ Body in the earth. As a consequence, the manifestation of God is not limited to just one individual confined to one locality at one specific point in time. Jesus has multiplied Himself through His body.

There is a manifestation of the Christ in the earth through this many-membered body. *"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being*

## *"Uncovering Satan's Seat"*

*many, are one body; so also is Christ" (I Cor. 12:12).*

Christ means "the anointed one." We are anointed of the Holy Spirit. The same anointing that was upon Jesus is upon the Body of Christ. He is the vine, and we are the branches (John 15:5). The life that flows in the vine, flows in the branches. Christ is a many-membered body, which represents many sons which have been brought to glory.

### ***Many Sons Unto Glory***

*"For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing MANY SONS UNTO GLORY, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Heb. 2:10). Jesus' only purpose of coming to earth was not to just be one manifestation of God, but that He might bring many sons unto glory. He suffered in order for that to be an accomplished fact. Jesus is the captain. His bringing forth of many sons makes his salvation perfect, or complete. By making his salvation complete, his sufferings were not in vain.*

*Jesus' suffering of death was necessary to bring forth many sons. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24). If Jesus had not been willing to go to the cross and die, He would have been one grain of wheat. He would have been one son of God.*

You can take a seed and do one of two things with it. You can use it by consuming it, and that would be it forever, or you could take that seed to put into the ground to bring forth much more. Jesus could have been that one grain spent upon the world, and had He not gone through the process of falling into the ground and dying, He would have been the only one. He would have done the works of God, performed the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and worked great miracles. In bringing many sons unto glory, that ministry is perpetuated and extended in the earth. The harvest that is brought forth from that one grain of wheat represents many grains which are identical to the one which was planted!

Jesus was cut off from the land of the living without having a natural seed to declare his generation and to continue his namesake in the earth. It was the desire of every family in Israel to have a perpetuation of their name in the earth. To be cut off, or for the namesake to die out without someone to carry it on, was a great shame and reproach. That was Jesus' situation in the natural. But something profound happened. *"Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see HIS SEED, he shall PROLONG HIS DAYS..." (Is. 53:10).*

When his soul was made an offering for sin is when the wheat fell into the ground. This grain which fell into the ground brought forth many grains which declare his generation and prolong his days in the earth. We represent Jesus' namesake in the earth, and we are the ones to perpetuate his ministry. We, the Body of Christ, are declaring that generation and prolonging His days. That makes us more than second-rate citizens in the kingdom of God, for we are the great purpose of God in the earth!

*"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the FIRSTBORN AMONG MANY BRETHREN." (Rom. 8:29). Jesus was the firstborn among many of his kind. We were created in the likeness and image of God, which meant we were created with God-like characteristics and qualities. Everything produces after its own kind. God created man after his own kind. When man sinned and fell, he in his unregenerated state was far from being the expression of the image of God.*



## *"Uncovering Satan's Seat"*

As a consequence, we are now being shaped, molded, or conformed into the image of Jesus, who is the expressed image of God the Father. The old man was created, but the new man is being formed. *"But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine"* (Is. 43:1).

Jacob represented the old nature, or old man. Israel was the transformed one who now represents the new man. Jacob has never been a type of the Body of Christ, but Israel has. In fact, the promises of God to the church can be discovered in God's messages and references to Israel.

Jesus being the firstborn among many brethren suggests that there is a group of sons which is being conformed into the likeness and image of Jesus. Jesus is the first, but He has paid the price of falling into the ground to bring many sons unto glory. *"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God...Beloved, now are we the sons of God and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is"* (I John 3:1-2).

### ***He That Hath This Hope***

Every man who has this hope purified himself. What hope? The hope of being just like Jesus! How does that purify us? *"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."* (II Cor. 3:18). Beholding the glory of God, and the hope of becoming as He is, represents the hope that purifies us.

Satan trembled when Jesus walked on this earth declaring the power of the kingdom of God. He thought he was successful when Jesus hung on the cross. Little did he understand the dynamics of what was taking place. Little did he realize that this was the grain of wheat falling into the ground to bring many sons unto glory. We as the many-membered Body of Christ must realize that Satan should be trembling because of our presence in the earth. When we see ourselves as we are intended to be, Satan will be an insignificant force which trembles at the presence of the anointing of the Christ Body.

### ***The Seed of the Woman***

The first promise of redemption is found in Genesis 3:15. God speaking to the serpent said, *"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."* Jesus was the seed of the woman who not only bruised Satan's head, but put him and every work of evil under his feet.

Again, Ephesians 1:22 states, *"And hath put all things under his feet."* All things have been put under our feet. We are the seed of Christ, and it is the destiny of the Body of Christ to put Satan under our feet. *"And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly"* (Rom. 16:20).

Jesus has already gained the victory. He has already destroyed the works of the devil. Jesus has already conquered death. What is left, then, except for the Body of Christ to put Satan under its feet? It is God's design for us to follow in Jesus' footsteps to gain the victory and to

*"Uncovering Satan's Seat"*

conquer death.

## CHAPTER 6

### UNCOVERING SATAN'S SEAT

#### *Satan's Seat of Authority*

To further set the stage for the purposes of God in the earth, let's see if we could benefit by discovering what Satan's purpose is in the earth. To do this, let's look at what could be called the conflict of the ages. This could be subtitled, "Knowing Your Enemy." It is important to realize that we are engaged in a conflict--a spirit conflict.

In Revelation 2:13, the Lord is speaking to the church at Pergamos, and He says, *"I know thy works and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is."* Take note of that. The Lord recognized the positive attributes of the churches being addressed in addition to the note of their shortcomings. He finalized each message to the churches by saying, *"...to him that overcometh..."* That is the key message of the hour--"To him that overcometh." The positive attributes of the church at Pergamos were *"I know your works; I know where you dwell, even where Satan's seat is. Thou has held fast my name."*

It is important for you to recognize where Satan's seat is--where his seat of authority lies. His basis of authority is where he derives his power. Therefore, you have to know something about your enemy in order to combat him. II Corinthians 2:11 points out the necessity of knowing our enemy. Paul says, *"Lest Satan should get an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices."* It is not God's will for us to be ignorant. Therefore, as knowledgeable Christians, we should know where Satan's seat of authority is.

Yes, we are in a conflict, and we are learning where Satan's seat of authority is. We're recognizing who our enemy is, and we are discovering that he is not always who we think he is. Our battle is not against flesh and blood. We war against principalities and powers, against wickedness in high places, and against strongholds.

#### *Man Is Not Satan's Enemy*

There is something to take note of. Man is basically not Satan's enemy. God is Satan's enemy. Man may be the target, but God is the primary enemy. You become his enemy because you are created in the likeness of God and are very close to the heart of God. To get to God, the enemy seeks to get to you, the apple of God's eye. This stems from the persistent conflict between God and Satan. Man as the target began in the garden of Eden and has continued since.

Actually, the conflict began before the garden of Eden. In the garden was where the conflict was brought to earth and affected mankind. Something had already transpired before that. Satan was in rebellion, leading one-third of the angels in heaven in rebellion. He would

## *"Uncovering Satan's Seat"*

now like to lead man in rebellion against God, which is his way of getting even with God.

### ***Why Satan Manifests Evil Works***

There are three reasons why Satan manifests his evil works in the earth. First, it has become his basic nature. That nature is evil, and that which is associated with evil is death, sickness, disease, and poverty. Secondly, repeating what we have already stated, that is his way of getting at God. A third reason is because he seeks to protect his interest in the earth.

II Corinthians 4:4 refers to the god of this world. *"If our gospel be hid, it is hid to those who are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of those who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ who is the image of God should shine unto them."*

### ***Satan's Primary Purpose Is Not to Get People into Hell***

I would like to share what I believe to be the one thing in this earth that upsets Satan the most. I will elaborate on that later, but first I will state that I don't believe Satan's primary purpose is to get as many people into hell as possible. Otherwise, why does he seek to kill Christians when he knows that is a sure ticket to heaven for them? Why does he want to get rid of Christians? There is something else that concerns the enemy. There is a purpose of God that is being brought forth in the midst of the people of God.

There also has to be a reason why Jesus has not returned to earth after almost 2000 years. Why did it not happen 1000 years ago? It has been suggested that what God is looking for is a time that Jesus can return to this earth and clean this mess up and set up his kingdom. If that be the case, I wonder why He has not already done it? What is He waiting for?

Perhaps the reason Jesus has not already done it is because He along with the Father are waiting on you and me to do some things. There is a purpose of God to be fulfilled in the earth through the Body of Christ. God is looking for a people who will destroy the works of Satan by putting him under his feet.

God Himself could have wiped Satan out in a flash of an eye. That could have been done during the first century or the second century, or any time since. Jesus defeated Satan 2000 years ago. The only thing left is for God's many-membered man, the Body of Christ, to defeat him.

There are several things that do not disturb Satan. It doesn't upset him for you to get saved if from that point on, all you are is a professing Christian. It doesn't upset him for you to build a church building on every corner, if the church is weak and represents no threat to his authority. It doesn't even upset him for you to profess Jesus. The thing that is the most distressing to him is when a people realizes that what God wants in them is a powerful force in the earth.

I believe we will begin to see the church of the living God as a powerful, viable force in this earth. It will become a threat against the works of darkness. A message that tickles the ears doesn't mean a thing, but one that declares the authority in the name of Jesus, exercising dominion, manifesting the power of God, and coming into the image of the Son of God does. That's disturbing to the kingdom of darkness.

## *"Uncovering Satan's Seat"*

### ***The Origin of Satan***

Where did Satan originate? Isaiah 14:12 declares, *"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High."*

Take note of the number of times Lucifer says "I". This represents self-centeredness; exalting himself above God. I will ascend; I will exalt my throne; I will sit upon the mount of the congregation; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High...I, I, I...

Ezekiel 28 addresses the king of Tyrus. This is referring to a principality of Tyrus, not just to a specific king in a specific locality. There are principalities who rule over certain regions. For example, there was a principality, or a prince, of Persia who hindered the prayers of Daniel.

A literal king of Tyrus had not been in the garden of Eden. This principality was created as the anointed cherub that covered. He was upon the holy mountain of God, and walked up and down upon the stones of fires. He was perfect until iniquity was found in him. This represents a strong case for Satan being a fallen being, having fallen out of grace with God and heaven.

I am aware of a teaching that Satan was a created being, that he was not a fallen being. If that be so, what about the fallen angels who are held in reserve unto the day of judgment? Who are they? Where did they come from? Why are they fallen?

These angels were kicked out of heaven and now represent Satanic influences in the kingdom of darkness. Where did they come from? Who was their leader? We do know there was a fall. There was a rebellion, and someone had to be in leadership of this rebellion and fall. Satan was that leader, and he is still seeking subjects for his kingdom today.

There is reason to believe that Lucifer was a high-ranking cherub who was thought to be in charge of music in heaven. Understanding this might help to clarify why praise and worship are so important to the purposes of God on this earth. Have you ever wondered why praise and worship is so upsetting to those who aren't spiritually minded? Why does it stir up demonic opposition? When you praise and worship God, you are giving glory and honor to Him. When Lucifer was in heaven, he wanted to be the center of attention and to receive the glory that was due the heavenly Father. He wanted to be exalted.

Worship exalts. When we worship God, we are honoring the one that Satan hates the worst. This tells me that we should press our way into praise and magnify the Lord, because in so doing, we are waging high spiritual warfare. The anointing destroys the yoke. This is a partial revelation of where Satan's seat is. We are not ignorant of his devices, and we are uncovering his seat.

### ***Satan's Seat Is in the Earth***

When Satan was not able to overthrow God and was kicked out of heaven, he sought a kingdom of his own. Do you know where the seat or the realm of that kingdom is? Satan's seat of authority and realm of dominion is in this earth and must be enacted through man. Satan is

## *"Uncovering Satan's Seat"*

not in hell. His kingdom is in the world.

Again, there must be a distinction made between the world and the earth. We must realize that the earth does not belong to Satan. The earth is the Lord's. The Lord created this earth to be inhabited. This earth was created to be a manifestation of His glory. He loved this earth so much that He sent Jesus to redeem it.

But Satan is in charge of the world systems which presently rule this unregenerated world, namely, through governments and heads of states. That is coming to an end. The kingdom of God is destined to prevail in this earth. Though the earth is the Lord's, and the world systems are operated by Satan, we must realize that it is in this earth where these systems are functioning. This is important to understand in order to know that the world systems are destined to be destroyed, but it is not the Lord's desire to destroy his creation, the earth. Rulership in the earth is destined to be changed.

What better way to see the kingdoms and governments of this world fall than by the takeover of the righteous? Righteousness must eventually prevail. Men will be subject to righteous and just rule in the earth.

Satan gained control in this earth through Adam's forfeiture. God put Adam in charge, and he was given a dominion. When Adam released that responsibility into the hands of Satan, it became necessary that God himself through his son Jesus should come into the earth to redeem the creation back to God. The descendants of Adam were affected by their father's disobedience. Since we are the ones who have suffered by the first man Adam's disobedience, we will once again gain the ascendancy and defeat Satan because of what the last Adam, Jesus, accomplished through obedience. We as the seed of the woman will have the privilege of putting Satan under our feet.

Satan doesn't want the church to be the salt of the earth. He does not want us to pray. A praying church is a united church, and a united church will not be stopped in doing what it puts its mind to do. Satan doesn't want to see us moving in unity and in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Neither does he want to see us loving one another.

Throughout history, Satan has sought to stop the move of God. An effort was made to kill deliverers before they were brought forth. He tried to kill Moses. He sought to kill Jesus, and he will try to kill you, because you are destined to be deliverers.

### ***Satan Is No Respector of Persons***

What about those who belong to Satan? We've heard that he will not bother his own. That is not necessarily true. Many people are in the clutches of Satan, but they still represent the creation of God. Jesus died for these, too. It does not matter whether you belong to the devil or not. A person may be under the influence of Satan, but he still potentially represents a threat as long as he is alive. At any time, the situation can change when a person is translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. Of course, a person who is in the camp of the devil may not suffer afflictions and persecutions, but when it comes to life and death, Satan is no respecter of persons. An individual who is in the clutches of sin are the ones most likely to go to an early grave.

The devil always comes to get his dues. He is the author of death and destruction. This is exemplified in stories such as The Devil and Daniel Webster, The Devil and Tom Walker, and The Damned Yankees. The underlying theme of each of these stories is that a person makes a

## *"Uncovering Satan's Seat"*

deal with the devil in exchange for power, wealth, or fame. Right in the prime of life, when the deal is all but forgotten, the devil shows up to collect his dues, namely, the soul of the individual. Is this not what is happening for those who are willing to gamble a life for a moment of pleasure? What about those young athletes who will risk life and health by taking steroids in order to accomplish a feat now but pay later? What about those who risk the possibility of AIDS and other social diseases for a pleasurable moment?

The devil is a hard bargainer. You may sell yourself out, but in the prime of life, he will come to collect his dues and often that is to snuff out a life right in its prime. How many persons who have gone to the depth of sin lived a long life? Just take a look at the gangster world. Look at the world of alcoholism and drug addiction. Because you are in drugs, murder, and underground activities does not guarantee you are immune to the works of Satan in violence and murder. These people die younger than anyone else. They who live by the sword usually die by the sword. Long life only comes through keeping the commandments of the Lord.

Satan is destined for hell. He certainly wants plenty of company there. Yet, at this point in time, I'm not sure whether Satan is convinced that he will end up there. Perhaps in the back of his mind, he still believes he will prevail over God in the end, and he is fighting with all that is within him to accomplish this feat. At any rate, he is not in hell now. He is loose in the world. But, the time will come according to the book of Revelation (chapter 20) that Satan, the beast, and the false prophet will be cast into the lake of fire, which contains death and hell.

In the meantime, Satan is to be bound for 1000 years during the glorious reign of the kingdom of the Lord and of His Christ upon this earth. He then will be loosed for a season to lead one last rebellion against God. Make no mistake about it, Satan and the kingdom of darkness are doomed, and we are going to be the group to make it happen!

### ***Why Would Satan Want to Kill Anyone?***

Why does Satan seek to kill Christians even though he knows that by doing so they are straight on their way into the presence of God? He has to know he can't stand a chance of getting them then. I have dealt with people in my ministry who were in and out, up and down. They would get saved every time the evangelist came to town for revival. Some of you Baptists may not believe in backsliding, but I'll tell you a lot of Pentecostals do! They have so much faith in it, that they practice it quite frequently.

A statement was made in a joking way one time which has some possible merit. It was said that we would do these people a favor if while they were crying out to God and their heart was right toward God that we just hit them in the head with a hammer and kill them so they could go on to be with the Lord before they backslid again! Of course, we know that's not the way to do things! Besides, we couldn't get away with it!

The point is, if a person dies in a state of righteousness, there should be no question as to their eternal destination. To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. So the question becomes, "If Satan is interested in getting hell full, why does he kill Christians when they are on their way into the eternal abode of God?" A possible answer is, that is one sure way of getting them out of his way in order that he may accomplish his mission in earth. That is one way of silencing their influence in the earth.

***Satan's Purpose Is to Control the Earth through Silencing Man***

What is Satan's purpose? It is to control the systems of this world, and thereby the inhabitants. Anything that can be done to incapacitate you and to get you out of operation is serving this purpose of Satan. You can be made ineffective in many ways.

Just because you go through the motions of confessing the Lord, putting your name on a church roll, and showing up in church every once in a while doesn't disturb the enemy. You can be just as religious as you please, but that doesn't upset him. When you become what God has called you to be; when you begin to walk in the power and the anointing of the Word; and when you begin to believe what the Word of God says about you and your inheritance (not only on the other side, but on this side)--that's what is disturbing.

If I am lifting my voice as a trumpet, there is nothing that would please Satan any more than to silence my mouth. He doesn't have to always go to the extent of killing people. He can kill their influence. Anointed ministers of the gospel can be deceived and fall into the snares and pitfalls of the evil one that will make their lives and ministries of no effect. Voices in the land crying out against the evils of our day such as abortion, crime, pornography, and other wrongs of our time are prime targets of Satan. He'd like to close their mouths by destroying their influence and their character.

Anointed men of God with gifts in their lives have fallen into lustful operations, and have been enticed by fleeting riches. How many men of God have been spoiled, for example, by the lust for riches? This eventually will lead to destruction and removes them out of effective operation. If you can be lulled to sleep, Satan has succeeded. If your mouth is silenced, he has accomplished his purpose. So, the concern is not whether you go to heaven, but whether you can be taken out of the way and to become inactive and ineffective in the earth. Many people have fallen into traps which destroyed their influence and witness, but they got things right with God. This perhaps assured them of going to heaven, but their influence and ministry for all practical purposes was dead.

When we realize these pitfalls, it will change our thinking in many respects. It will change our thinking toward life, health, and even death. If you are laid flat on your back with an incurable disease, you are not totally effective for the kingdom of God. God is much more glorified by our walking in life and health.

***The Dead Have No Influence in the Earth***

As hard sometimes as we try to justify premature death, the fact still remains that Satan has gained at least a partial victory because another threat to his kingdom has been removed. Satan doesn't like people who are alive! The dead do nothing. They say nothing. They have no influence or power in this earth. Therefore, it is time for the children of the kingdom to rebuke death, be filled with life, and go forth in the name of the Lord Jesus preaching the everlasting gospel of His kingdom. We must declare the establishment of the kingdom of God, which is a kingdom of light and life, and the demise of the kingdom of darkness.

A sure way toward a powerless life is for that life to be contaminated with sin. That's the reason Satan hates holiness. He can duplicate (or should I say counterfeit) certain demonstrations

## *"Uncovering Satan's Seat"*

of power and gifts, but he cannot manifest the true holiness of God. Holiness is the essence of God Himself, which cannot be duplicated--it can only come from God Himself.

### *Satan's Desire to Remove the Saints*

I would like to share another thought-provoking idea which will be elaborated on later. One of the biggest lies which has ever been conceived by Satan--and he's going to see that it is overemphasized more than ever before--is that the purpose of the Lord is to take us out of this world and leave the earth to the antichrist. I heard the Spirit of God speak to me in one of the most explicit ways ever that Satan would like nothing any better than to get all the saints of God out of the earth, even through a so-called "rapture".

The Word of God does not teach that the saints will ever be removed so the devil can have free reign in the earth. The scriptures teach the coming of the Lord, the resurrection, and a change from corruptibility to incorruptibility, but the purpose of God is never to remove Satan's opposition to allow him complete access to the earth without opposition.

We will never give the earth to the devil! Satan would like nothing any better. But do you know what will upset him? It will be for you to be here and to overcome him! That is precisely what God is beginning to reveal. This is the purpose of God. A false concept of a "fly-away rapture" has diverted people's attention from the true purposes of God in this earth more than anything else. The time has come for us to know the truth concerning this deception.

### *Overcoming Faith and Victory for God's People*

Yes, we are discovering where Satan's seat of operation is, and it is in deception. We are discovering what his purpose is in the earth, and that is to rule over the affairs of men and to propagate his cause in opposition to the kingdom of light. His cause and message is death, destruction, sickness, disease, and poverty.

What is the gospel of Jesus Christ? He has come that we might have life and that more abundantly. It is the message that He has come to deliver us and to give us the power to overcome. He has given us all power in heaven and in earth by giving us the authority of His name.

There is no power in heaven or earth that can come against you to prevail. No tribulation, persecution, afflictions, trials, or any other thing can hinder or stop us. The church will be strong and powerful. We will not be numbered among those who cry, "Lord, come and take us out of this mess before we are all destroyed!" Many see the works of darkness becoming so strong that if the Lord doesn't come to take us out of it soon, no one will be saved.

We are destined to overcome. If you are going to be a part of the church of the living God, you must learn to be an overcomer. That is the message of faith--the message of overcoming. *"In the world you shall have tribulations, but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world"* (John 16:33). This is the victory that overcomes the world, even your faith (I John 5:4). Faith denotes responsibility on our part. While we have been waiting on God, God has been waiting on us.



*"Uncovering Satan's Seat"*

## CHAPTER 7

### EXPOSING A GREAT DECEPTION OF ESCAPISM

#### *A Well-Devised Plot*

It is necessary to understand the purposes of God in the earth in order to understand the "rapture" and the coming of the Lord. We sought to establish this in a previous chapter. The teaching of the "rapture" in this chapter is not according to traditional teaching of the church world. However, anything which is not in agreement with the Word of God must be rejected. We should not follow nor adhere to any teaching which is contrary to the Word of God.

When we deal with the subject of the "rapture", I will be attempting to expose what I believe to be a great deception brought into Christian teaching. It is a well-devised plot of Satan to distract the Body of Christ from the purposes of God in the earth. The primary purpose of God in the earth is found in Ephesians 3:10. *"To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God."* The church is important. It is the vehicle of God to usher us into the fullness of the kingdom of God. The church is called of God, ordained of God, anointed of God, filled with the power of God, and given the authority of God through the name of Jesus to declare to the principalities and powers the many-faceted declaration of God's wisdom. This is according to the purpose that He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The purpose of God is to raise up a witness through the church and to manifest its influence in the earth. It is to raise up a mighty army, a force of righteousness, which will prevail over every force in this earth. The purpose of the Lord is ultimately to destroy the works of the devil through the church.

Jesus has already won the victory. He has triumphed over death, hell, and the grave. It is left up to you and me as the Body of Christ to win the victory over the devil. If the purpose of God was to save you and get you out of the earth, He could have done that a long time ago. But, there is a responsibility upon us. While we have been waiting on God to do certain things, God has been waiting on us.

The Body of Christ is yet to come to maturity and unity. We still must put Satan under our feet. To do this, we must understand his devices. His purpose is to establish a kingdom in opposition to God. The kingdom of darkness is headquartered in the earth and operates through the systems of this world.

Changes are beginning to take place primarily because the Body of Christ is beginning to recognize who it is. Satan is doing everything within his power to distract us. His job is to defeat us through ineffectiveness. If he can stop us from being a powerful force in this earth, by whatever means, he has been successful.

All this brings us to a point. One of the subtle devices of Satan has been to instigate the present-day popular theory of a pretribulational rapture of the church. Of all teachings of the present-day church, there perhaps has not been one more distracting in fulfilling the purposes of God in the earth than this pretribulational rapture theory. This theory says that before tribulation, the Lord is going to remove the Body of Christ from the earth for a 3 1/2 or 7 year period. During this time the devil runs rampant with full authority without any opposition.

Satan would like nothing any better, but good news! The Body of Christ is the salt of the earth and the light of the world. The glory of the Lord is come, and the light of His glory is risen upon us. This light is manifest in the midst of great darkness that covers the earth, while gross darkness is upon the inhabitants of the earth (Is. 60:1). It is now time for the Body of Christ to shine forth as lights of the world to expel the darkness.

If this is a device of Satan, then it becomes necessary to look further into this "rapture" teaching. There are three questions that are often asked: (a) What takes place at the rapture? (b) How soon will it take place? and (c) Who will be a part of it? These questions have been asked for a number of years, but we are going to deal with them in two basic categories: (a) What is the rapture? and (b) When is the rapture?

### *A Look at the Traditional "Rapture" View*

First, it would be helpful to look at the traditional teaching of the "rapture." It basically is the idea of a "catching away." The Bible says nothing about a "catching away", but it says something about a "catching up." Nothing is said about the Lord coming back "after" a glorious church, but He is coming "to present unto himself a glorious church." There is a difference.

Words are important. The Bible does not contain the Word of God, it is the Word of God. It is divinely inspired, which means that every word is inspired. We have no right to take away from or to add to it. Often a preposition can be changed and the whole meaning of a statement can be altered.

The scripture says nothing about the Lord coming to take his "waiting Bride away." The songs we sing say that. Songs have been more responsible for distorting truth than preaching. Music is a powerful force to get across messages to people. This force should be used constructively in teaching truth. Jesus will come to be united with His bride. He is not coming after a glorious church, but He will come to be made one with it. There is nothing in the Word of God that speaks about the removal of the saints of God from the earth, but it speaks about the manifestation of the glory of God in them.

### *The Word "Rapture" Is Not Found in the Bible*

The term "rapture" is not even found in the Bible. It is not found in any Bible in any language. It implies a "catching away" or a removal from the earth. If the word rapture is not found in the Bible, where does it come from? It comes from a Latin word "rapio" which carries a basic meaning of "snatching away violently" or "to rape." That perhaps is where the traditional

## *"Exposing a Great Deception of Escapism"*

view of the rapture came from which says that the Lord will violently snatch his people away or to seize them forcefully.

Another meaning of rapture, which might be closer to accurate, has reference to ecstasy, or a state of great joy. If that be the case, many of us has been raptured many times! We have literally been caught up into the ecstasy of the presence of the Lord many times in the spirit.

Traditional pictures of the rapture show saints coming up out of their graves and meeting the Lord in midair. There also is the concept of "at any moment." This has been used effectively by many evangelists to scare people into an experience of salvation that very often was based on shaky ground. The teaching of the rapture should not be designed to bring you into the kingdom of God through the tactics of fear.

We are saved and brought into the kingdom of God as we are drawn by the Spirit of God. There is a spirit within us which has been created in the likeness and the image of God, and that is what draws us to Him. Deep calls unto deep. Spirit calls unto spirit. The spirit of man within us seeks to be united with the Father of all Spirits. We can not even be saved without being drawn by the Spirit of God. There is an innate desire to know the Lord; God put it there.

### ***At Any Moment***

"At any moment" is not God's plan to have a purifying effect upon us as some would insinuate. That which purifies us is the hope that when we see Him we will be like Him. We are changed from glory to glory as we behold ourselves in a glass. That glass is the Word of God. This glass is a reflecting glass. We look into the perfect law of liberty to see what manner of person we are. The Word of God shows us where we are lacking in our developing image. It does not leave us there but shows us how to become pure as He is pure. In other words, we measure ourselves by the standard of God's Word, which has a purifying effect upon us as we seek to be as He is. Then, we are cleansed by the washing of the water of the Word of God.

### ***Chaos and Confusion***

Another traditional picture of the rapture is one of chaos, as airplanes, automobiles, and trains are left without drivers. Bumper stickers have been used to further this spirit of confusion and fear by stating, "In case of the rapture, this car will be driverless." Can you imagine such a chaotic disaster? God is not the author of confusion, neither is He the God of fear.

Many who teach this theory declare they are not a prophet of doom and gloom. They would refer to those who preach we're not leaving this earth when the winds of tribulation begin to blow as prophets of doom and gloom. I challenge anyone to find anything in the Word of God that would be associated with doom and gloom for the children of God as they relate to the purposes of God in this earth and what He desires to bring forth within them. Our message should be nothing but a message of total victory. This victorious message is one of total overcoming. The devil is to be put under our feet. We have a defense in God that protects us from all the attacks of the devil and an offense which puts him to flight.

Other implications of the rapture are that we will be with the Lord for all eternity. To this, we say amen. Another implication is that it is the means to escape this world. "This world is not my home, I'm just passing through. My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue." So goes the song.

I have good news for you. I'm not interested in this world either, but I am interested in

## *"Exposing a Great Deception of Escapism"*

the purposes of God in this earth. We are not conformed to this world. We are to be delivered from the corruption of this world. We are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. We're not citizens of this world's systems, and we should have no desire to be a part of its corruption.

### *Means of Escape?*

A third implication is that the rapture will be the means by which we shall escape the Great Tribulation. Matthew 24 says that for the elect sake that time will be cut short. Of course, people say this is for the Jews. This had been dealt with more in detail elsewhere, but God has one chosen people. We as believers are that chosen people, the royal priesthood, the holy nation, the peculiar people, and the elect of God.

In the purposes of God there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile. The middle wall of partition has been broken down, and that which once was twain is now made one in Christ Jesus. He is a Jew who is one inwardly. There is one chosen and one elect. There is one eternal purpose of God-- not one for the Jews and one for the church. The church is not God's Plan B in the earth. It is not an afterthought or parenthetical insertion in God's purposes. There is one group of saints. Everything in the book of Revelation speaking of the saints (over 20 times) refers to one group, and the church is the elect group to fulfill His purposes.

### *God Will Have to Apologize*

To be raptured in order to escape tribulation insinuates either one of two things. First, we are too weak to survive and God is not big enough to keep us, or secondly, God is far too good to allow us to be subjected to such pressure. If that be the case, God will have to apologize to every generation who has ever suffered any persecution in this earth. He will have to apologize to the early Christians who were fed to the lions. He will have to apologize to every martyr recorded in Foxes Book of Martyrs. He will have to apologize to those in Southeast Asia and others who have suffered the great tragedy of war in our lifetime.

Many have suffered the agony and pain of seeing their loved ones killed and tortured before their very eyes. What about the Holocaust? To use the reasoning that God is far too good is not legitimate. By this same reasoning, God is far too good to allow sickness, disease, and death, or God is too good to allow anyone to go to hell. God is far too good to allow children to suffer and die. God is the author of none of these, but of course, He allows them to happen. There will be no cessation of these atrocities until Satan is completely overcome and destroyed.

### *Three Major Positions*

When will this rapture that tradition teaches take place? There are three major positions: pre-tribulational, mid-tribulational, and post-tribulational. Pre-tribbers say that the Lord comes to take us out before tribulation, which in my opinion is born out of fear and selfishness.

The mid-trib position was born out of the confusion of not being able to distinguish between tribulation and the wrath of God. We will never experience the wrath of God as believers. If you cannot distinguish between the two, it is easy to take the mid-trib position, which is basically one of compromise. This position says we experience a little tribulation, and then the Lord will take us out of here.

## *"Exposing a Great Deception of Escapism"*

Finally, the third position is a little closer to the truth. This is the post-trib position which says we go through the tribulation, and then we are taken out of the earth. However, Jesus prayed that we be not taken out of the world, but that we be kept from the evil of the world (John 17:15).

### *A Brief History of the Pre-Trib Rapture*

Let's take a look at a brief history of the pre-tribulational rapture theory. First of all, the early church never taught it. The apostles did not teach it. In 1830, a young lady by the name of Margaret McDonald had a vision. Evidently, she had been through a period of sickness, in which afterwards she had a vision of the church leaving here before the tribulation. This gave rise to the two-phase returning of the Lord; first for His saints and second with his saints to rule on the earth.

Many people have had legitimate visitations from God during or shortly after a crisis of physical sickness. That does not invalidate the visitation from God. We are not insinuating that. We are saying that no doctrine or spiritual issue should be contingent upon a dream or a vision which can not be validated by the Word of God.

Based on McDonald's vision, the teaching of the pre-trib rapture caught the attention of many. This vision was excitedly embraced by an excommunicated minister of the Church of Scotland, Edward Irving. He wrote a book concerning the sinfulness of Christ's humanity, which led to his excommunication from the church. His motive for teaching a new revelation could possibly have stemmed from a desire to draw attention to himself, or on the other hand, he could have been sincere.

Irving began to teach this two-phase rapture throughout all England and Scotland. In one of his prophetic meetings, John Darby of the Plymouth Brethren heard this teaching, and from him, C. I. Scofield, author of the Scofield Bible, popularized this teaching through his footnotes and comments. More people base their belief of the coming of the Lord on Scofield's notes than on the Word of God itself. His teaching has become the basis of the vast majority of the traditional teaching of the rapture unto this day.

Clarence Larkin was influenced by Scofield, and he devised charts to reinforce this teaching. Larkin was not a spirit-filled believer, and yet most of the Pentecostals at the turn of the century still adhered to his charts and teachings. These teachings have been embraced in our present-day Charismatic teachings.

### *Removal From the Earth?*

What about the removal from the earth? The scripture declares that the righteous shall never be removed. Psalms 37:9 says that evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait upon the Lord shall inherit the earth. Psalms 37:11 says, *"The righteous shall inherit the earth and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace."* Psalms 37:29 declares, *"The righteous shall inherit the land and dwell therein forever."*

Now, here's a good one. Proverbs 2:21-22 says, *"The upright shall dwell in the land and the perfect shall remain in it, but the wicked shall be rooted out."* I like this one: *"The righteous shall never be removed, but the wicked shall not inherit the earth"* (Proverbs 10:30). How much plainer can that be?

In Matthew chapter 13, we find the parable of the wheat and the tares. The good seed

## *"Exposing a Great Deception of Escapism"*

represents the children of the kingdom. They were sown in the field which is the world. The evil one came and sowed the tares. When the question was presented concerning the pulling up of the tares, the Lord said to wait until the end of the world (or the end of the age). The tares will then be gathered, bundled up, and burned. Then shall the righteous be gathered together to shine forth in the kingdom of the Father. If you're talking about rapture as being removal, then who is raptured? Sounds like the rapture of the wicked!

*"But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Mat. 24:37-39).*

As it was in the days of Noah, so shall the coming of the son of Man be. They knew not (who knew not?) until the day the flood came and took them (who is them?) all away. The wicked knew not, because Noah knew. Who was taken away? The flood came and took the wicked all away. A rapture?

Two shall be in the field; one shall be taken and the other left. Two shall be at the grindstone; one taken, one left. Two shall be in the bed; one taken, one left. Who was taken, and who was left? You can answer that for yourself.

Who do the religionists say is taken? Traditionally, it is taught that the righteous are taken. Is this what the scripture is saying? Take another look. It is apparent that the wicked are taken and the righteous are left! As it was in the days of Noah...this is the context of this scripture.

### ***What Actually Takes Place?***

Then what actually takes place at the time we commonly refer to as the rapture? The three basic scriptures are I Thessalonians 4:14-17, Matthew 24:29-31, and I Corinthians 15:51-52. Let's read these to see what takes place. Before we go any further, make no mistake about it, there is a coming of the Lord. This same Jesus whom you've seen go away shall come again in like manner. Jesus is returning to this earth. Something definitely takes place according to the above scriptures.

### ***A Gathering Together Unto the Lord***

If we are not taken out of the world, then what does take place? Three things take place, all after tribulation. The first thing is our gathering together unto the Lord. The context of I Thessalonians 4 is to give hope to those who have lost their loved ones. There is hope if they have died in Jesus, for these are the ones God brings with Him when we shall all be reunited together.

*"We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (or precede) those who are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout and the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God. The dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (I Thes. 4:14-17).*

We are to comfort one another with these words. Paul is giving comfort to those who have lost their loved ones to death. They will be a part of the consummation and the coming of the Lord. They will not be left out.

## *"Exposing a Great Deception of Escapism"*

In John 14, Jesus says, *"I go away to prepare a place for you and I will come and receive you unto myself."* Jesus did not say that He would come to take us to our mansion in the sky. He said, *"I will come to receive you unto myself."* Where Jesus is, is where we will be. This is the key. Where Jesus is, is where I want to be. Wherever or whenever is of little consequence compared to the fact of being with the Lord. So shall we ever be with the Lord.

Ephesians 1:10 declares that in the dispensation of the fullness of time, God shall gather together all things which are in heaven and in earth in Christ Jesus. This means that those who have already gone on represent the army beyond the veil, and those on earth represent the army of God in this realm. The time will come when all things in heaven and in earth will be brought together in Christ Jesus. This is the gathering together time in the Lord. You talk about a great reunion, this will be it. Thank God for this hope!

II Thessalonians 2:1 states, *"I beseech you brethren by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and by our gathering together unto him..."* Does that say anything about the Lord coming to take you away? No, it speaks about our gathering together unto Him. *"That you be not soon shaken in mind or be troubled by word or spirit"*, for that day should not come before certain things transpire. The Wicked One must be revealed in order that the Lord might destroy him with the brightness of His coming. Evil and darkness must be revealed first in order that the manifestation of light, or the brightness of His coming might destroy them. Therefore, we should not become alarmed with the darkness which is covering the earth. It is simply the darkness before the break of day. The daystar is arising!

In Matthew 24:31, the scripture says, *"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sign of the coming of the son of man shall appear in heaven. He shall send forth his angels with a sound of a trumpet to gather together his elect from the four corners of heaven."* In Luke's account, the gathering is from the four corners of earth and heaven. All these scriptures denote a gathering together unto the Lord.

### ***The Resurrection of the Sainted Dead***

The second thing associated with the coming of the Lord is the resurrection of the dead. Thank God for the resurrection! The resurrection is our hope for those who have already died. The Word of God teaches two resurrections: that of the just and of the unjust. Daniel says some will be raised unto everlasting life and some to everlasting contempt. Jesus spoke about the resurrection of the righteous and of the unrighteous. Revelation 20 says the two resurrections are separated by 1000 years.

### ***Translation of the Living Saints***

A third thing that takes place is the translation of the living saints. This is recorded in I Corinthians 15:51-52. Notice all these scriptures we are referring to are the same ones used by pre-tribulational rapture people. Paul says, *"This I say brethren, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God."*

To enter the great eternal kingdom of God requires a change. Flesh and blood cannot enter. *"I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed."* This means that all will not go by the way of the grave, but all will be changed. Corruptible flesh cannot inherit the incorruptibility of the kingdom of God. Our mortality cannot inherit the immortal glory of God. There must be a change.



*"Exposing a Great Deception of Escapism"*

### ***At the Last Trump***

When does this change take place? It takes place AT THE LAST TRUMP, and it takes place in a moment in the twinkling of an eye. *"For the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."*

So what takes place at the coming of the Lord? We're gathered together unto him; the dead in Christ are resurrected; and those who are alive will be translated or changed. When will this be? We have been waiting on this. Many people have problems with the timing. Those who have come to the understanding of when it takes place have not resolved what takes place. Likewise, those who think they know what takes place have not resolved the timing.

If this event takes place after tribulation, what tribulation are we speaking about? It is the greatest tribulation the world has ever known. *"Immediately after the days of that tribulation shall appear the sign of the coming of the son of Man..."*(Mat. 24:29). Notice, it's after tribulation.

This brings us to something very interesting--the trumpets. It is difficult to refute the timing of the coming of the Lord, the resurrection of the dead saints, and the translation of the living saints when considered in light of the trumpets.

There is no way that the resurrection of the dead, the translation of the living saints, and our gathering together unto the Lord will be any other time other than after the tribulation. Let's look again at our three foundational scriptures. I Thessalonians 4:16 says, *"The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the TRUMP OF GOD..."* Notice the trump of God.

Let's now look at I Corinthians 15:52. *"In a moment in a twinkling of an eye, at THE LAST TRUMP..."* Note the last trump. After the last trump, there are no more, because that is the last one.

What takes place at that last trump? The change comes for those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord. Rapture adherents declare that this is the rapture; the change is the rapture, and this is at the last trump. There is a significance here. If that is the last trump, it can not take place before tribulation, because after tribulation, there is a sound of a trump.

*"Immediately after the tribulation...shall appear the sign of the son of man in heaven...son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory...and he shall send his angels with a GREAT SOUND OF A TRUMPET"* (Mat. 24:29). That's after tribulation. I Corinthians 15:52 says AT THE LAST TRUMP there shall be a change. If that last trump takes place before tribulation as the rapturists state, where did this trump come from in Matthew 24?

At the sound of the seventh (last trumpet of Revelation) angel in Revelation 11, the declaration is made that *"the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of the Lord and of his Christ."* This represents the beginning of the prevailing kingdom of God upon this earth in visible form that is initiated at the coming of the Lord. He that overcomes will sit with the Lord on his throne. This kingdom shall be everlasting and eternal, not just for 1000 years, though it will certainly include the significant 1000-year period.

### ***The Ten Virgins***

How will the coming of the Lord be? It will be likened unto the ten virgins who awaited

## *"Exposing a Great Deception of Escapism"*

their bridegroom. Five were wise and five were foolish. All ten of them were virgins, and they all slept. Only five were prepared with sufficient oil. When the cry went forth that the bridegroom was on his way, the five foolish desired oil from the wise. The wise declared that they only had enough for themselves. They could only be responsible for themselves in that moment of time.

### ***The Door Is Shut***

While the five foolish virgins went to buy oil, the bridegroom came, entered in with the virgins who were prepared, and shut the door. The five foolish virgins returned only to find it was too late to enter into the consummation with the bridegroom. The bridegroom had taken the bride into the place where they were at the coming, not in heaven. It was here where the five foolish knocked on the door and found it was too late. They had not made the proper preparations. The bride had made herself ready and entered into union with the groom.

### ***Going Out to Meet Him***

When the Lord returns, the church will go to meet him and be joined together with him in union that they may forever enter in together and be one. This is representative of the consummation of the marriage in the natural.

The customs of Biblical times were for one to run out to meet another when coming to visit, especially if it was a special occasion or if the two have not seen each other for some time. When Abraham sought a bride for his son Isaac, as the bride was returning, Isaac ran out to meet her. As they were joined in fellowship, they then proceeded together back into the house. This is of course only a type, but it shows the significance of going out to meet one who has come from a long journey and then to proceed back into the house with them.

That the coming of the Lord will be at the sound of a trumpet, there is no doubt. The dead in Christ rises first, and we which are alive and remain shall be caught up, not away.

### ***Caught Up***

John the revelator was caught up in the spirit, and his feet still remained on the ground. Paul said he was caught up to the third heaven. He didn't know whether in the body or not, but he was caught up. If he was caught up in the spirit, his feet never left the ground. Ezekiel was caught up to see many things. My wife, Nancy, was caught up in the spirit for a tremendous visitation of the Lord without ever having left her bedroom floor. (Account recorded in *I Was Caught Up to the Third Heaven*). Her catching up was very real and could never be denied.

Our being caught up to be with the Lord might be purely spiritual or it could certainly be a literal meeting of the Lord in the physical air. If we assume that it is a literal catching up, at the most, it will only be a split-second momentary thing that I believe will not even affect our functioning here on this earth. It will be in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye.

### ***In the Air***

One noteworthy thing is that the catching up is still in the air or the earth's atmosphere. It is not in outer space as many would have us to believe, as we sing "I'll go sailing through the

## *"Exposing a Great Deception of Escapism"*

air." Air only goes so many thousands of feet up from the earth, and it is still considered to be a part of the earth's atmosphere. It is not in outer space, where there is no air or atmosphere. So the gathering together unto the Lord is within the immediate atmosphere of the earth.

### ***In the Clouds***

According to I Thessalonians 4:17, our catching up unto the Lord will be our gathering together not only with Him but with those whom He brings with Him. We are caught up together in the "clouds." Let's take a look at these clouds. Jesus is not coming back "on a cloud", but the word of God says he comes "in clouds" (Mat. 24:30) and "with clouds" (Rev. 1:7).

A cloud is symbolic of the manifestation of the glory of God, as God appeared in a cloud on numerous occasions in the Old Testament. Clouds also are symbols of people. "*Seeing we are encompassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses...*" is referring to a group of select people who were identified as heroes of faith (Heb. 12:1).

Jesus is returning with these clouds as He returns to this earth. To further show that clouds typify people, Peter spoke of the ungodly as "*wells without water: and clouds that are carried with a tempest*" (II Peter 2:17). Jude referred to these same individuals as "*clouds without water*" (Jude 12).

Why do Christians always have to find the most carnal interpretation of the Word of God to justify their doctrines? If Jesus were coming riding on a cloud, or we're "stepping on a cloud, going to see Jesus; rising to meet him in the air" (a once popular gospel song), what would happen if the Lord came on a cloudless day? Some see a cloudy day, and they say, "This could be the day the Lord comes."

Clouds are only so high above the earth. In fact, if you take an airplane ride, you most likely will be flying above the clouds. If Jesus came while you were in the airplane, would you go up to meet Him, or down to meet Him? Consider another thing. If people in the United States went "up" to meet the Lord, and people in China went "up" to meet the Lord, where would they end up? Going up from the U. S. and up from China would be in opposite directions! Just some food for thought!

### ***The Eastern Skies?***

*"As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be"* (Mat. 24:27). Could this be where the theory that Jesus will split the eastern skies came from? I find nowhere in the Word of God that Jesus is coming out of the eastern sky. This scripture says, AS the lightning shines from the east to the west, so shall the Lord's coming be. First, lightning fills the whole sky in a flash of an eye. It completely envelops the whole heaven. The coming of the Lord will likewise be. His coming will be everywhere as a flash of the lightning.

### ***No Man Knows the Day***

*"But of the day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels of heaven but my Father only"* (Mat. 24:36). Though we may not know the specific moment in time of the coming of the Lord, we can and should know the times and the seasons. "*But of the times and the seasons,*

## *"Exposing a Great Deception of Escapism"*

*brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you" (I Thes.5:1).*

Jesus said in Matthew 16:3, "*O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?"* If we have the natural ability to know the signs of the skies, how much more should we have the supernatural ability to know the times and the seasons concerning the coming of the Lord?

### ***A Thief in the Night***

Some would insinuate that since the coming of the Lord is as a thief in the night, then that day will sneak upon us. This is where no doubt the idea of a secret rapture comes in. "*But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness" (I Thes. 5:4-5).* That day will not take us unawares. God will do nothing unless He reveals it to his holy servants the prophets (Amos 3:7).

### ***What the Word of God Teaches***

In summary, the Word of God does not teach a removal from the earth of the righteous, but it does teach a change. It teaches a gathering together unto the Lord. The Word teaches a resurrection. It also teaches a translation of the living saints. This all takes place after tribulation immediately preceding our ruling with Christ as a part of the eternal kingdom of God on this earth.

### ***The Blessed Hope of the Church***

The blessed hope of the church says nothing about the rapture or when it will be--whether before, during, or after tribulation. The blessed hope of the church in Titus 2:13 is the "*glorious appearing of the great God and saviour Jesus Christ.*" This certainly has no reference to a pre-tribulation rapture.

Hope is what we look forward to. It is something yet future. We have the expectation for it. I John 3:3 says that every man who has this hope purifies himself. That hope we have in him is not the rapture of the church, but it is the expectation that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Every man who has this hope purifies himself. The fear of an uncertain rapture never purified anyone. The expectation that we will be just like Him does.

### ***The Coming of the Lord Is Real***

The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is very real. He will come to be glorified in His saints before He returns in the manner He went away. I believe in the coming of the Lord, but not the going of the church. I believe in the appearing of Christ, but not the disappearing of the saints. If you want to see your loved ones at the coming of the Lord, just hold fast. If they died in the Lord, they will be coming to you! The Lord returns with His saints. That is a comfort and a hope!

*"Kept from the Hour of Temptation"*

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **KEPT FROM THE HOUR OF TEMPTATION**

#### *The Church Will Be Here*

We have been dealing with the coming of the Lord and the purposes of God in the earth. We're not talking about the purpose of God in heaven, because we know the will of God in heaven will be brought to earth. *"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, in earth, as in heaven"* is the way Jesus taught his disciples to pray. We're interested in what God has to say to the church in this hour. We want to find what God wants to do with this generation. So often when we talk about the kingdom of God, we refer to that which is futuristic. There certainly is a future manifestation, but we must discover our relationship to the Lord and His kingdom in this present time.

We have discussed in a previous chapter the "rapture", exposing what I consider to be a great deception. That of course is the pre-tribulational teaching of a catching away out of the earth of the saints before an intense period of time known as the Great Tribulation. This teaching seems to have originated with a vision of a young lady who saw the saints being caught up before the tribulation period. This teaching is basically only about 150 years old. The early church apparently did not teach it.

Those who take a stand against a pretribulational rapture may be branded by some as a false prophet. But what harm is done if I have told you to prepare yourself for an event near in the future known as the Great Tribulation? If I am wrong, it would be a tremendous blessing if the Lord did return before tribulation. But what if the pre-tribulational position was wrong? Which would you prefer?

Hopefully, we have established in the hearts of the readers that the church will be here during days of tribulation. The righteous shall never be removed, but the wicked shall not inherit the earth. If this is to be the case, there is an event preceding the coming of the Lord known as Great Tribulation that we must prepare ourselves for. In this chapter, we will be discussing how the Lord has prepared a way for His saints to escape the hour of temptation.

#### *The Days of Great Tribulation*

I have entitled this chapter, "Kept From the Hour of Temptation", or it could be subtitled, "Tribulation: Protection by Removal or Preservation." I will be sharing what tribulation is, who it is directed toward, and how it differs from the wrath of God. Jesus was asked in Matthew 24:3, *"When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the*

## *"Kept From the Hour of Temptation"*

world?"

These things were referring to the disasters Jesus was speaking about in the earlier part of the chapter. A great deal of what was being referred to was fulfilled in 70 A. D. when Titus overran Jerusalem. The temple was destroyed during that time when the city laid in ruins. The second part of the question concerning the sign of his coming and the end of the age is addressed in verse 21. *"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."* Verse 29 speaks about *"immediately after the tribulation of those days..."* After this period, shall appear the sign of the coming of the Son of man in heaven.

### ***Two Aspects of Preparation***

If we are speaking about the hour of preparation, there are at least two aspects of that preparation. One aspect is that of a spiritual preparation. The second aspect is that of a physical preparation. To this point, I have not considered the physical. It is not to say the physical is not important. God has given some men instructions concerning making these physical preparations. In fact, one writer emphasized he believed in both aspects, but God gave him instruction concerning the physical. If the time comes that the physical should be addressed in our teaching, I will be subject to it at that time. This writing now is dealing strictly with a spiritual point of view.

Spiritual refuge is the only real safety you will ever find. You won't find protection from the devil in a geographical location on the face of this earth. The only place of safety is abiding under the shadow of the Almighty and in the secret place of the Most High.

That is why it is important to understand that our protection is in God. Jesus said He would have gathered us under his wings as a hen would her brood, but we would not. That was an offer some refused. Jesus is now again making that offer to us. When the storms come, there will be a hiding place. That's the way the mother hen protects her young when the storms approach, by hiding her chicks under her wing.

### ***Building on the Right Foundation***

Today is the day of preparation for the coming storm. Our preparation is based upon hearing and acting upon the Word of God. Any truth we hear which is not acted upon will never do us any good. In Matthew 7:24, Jesus said, *"Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock."* When the rains descended and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon the house, it fell not. It was founded upon a rock.

You can rest assured there will be winds. The floods will come. Aren't you thankful that the Word of God says that when the enemy comes in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord will raise up a standard against him? (Is. 59:19). So the man who hears and does the word is like a wise man who builds his house upon a rock. There is only one rock to build upon, and that rock is Jesus the Christ.

When a man hears the Word of God and does nothing about it, he is like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand. When the rains descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, it fell and great was its fall. That which is not built upon a solid rock, the sure foundation of the apostles and prophets with Jesus as the chief cornerstone, will be

*"Kept From the Hour of Temptation"*

in for a great fall. It will not stand the pressures and storms of tribulation.

### ***Having Done All--Stand!***

To withstand the fiery darts of the enemy, we are admonished to put on the whole armour of God. Having done all to stand, we are to continue to stand in the evil day. Why are we commanded to stand in the evil day if we will not be here during the evil day as many surmise? If you are not to be in battle, why put on the whole armour of God? The commandment of the Lord is to put on the whole armour. Having done all, we stand and know when the battle is over, we will still be standing!

### ***The Days of Noah***

The coming of the Lord has been likened unto the days of Noah. As Noah was commanded to prepare an ark--not for escape out of the world, but to be kept or preserved in the flood--so is the command going forth today to prepare the ark of safety. When the day came for the spirit of God to give the command to enter the ark, those who were obedient were preserved. As the ark is now being prepared, people are invited to enter for protection from the coming tribulation.

The way of escape in tribulation is not a cop-out, but escape out of tribulation could be. What did Jesus pray in the garden? He prayed, *"Father, I pray not that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil thereof"* (John 17:15).

That brings us to Revelation 3:10. The Lord said, *"Because you have kept the word of my patience, I will also keep you from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth."* Immediately, one might reason that the Lord is going to take us out. But again, nowhere do we find removal in the Word of God as an option.

He does not say he's coming to take his "waiting bride away." It does not say that he is coming to take the church out, but to present himself a glorious church--a perfect church, an overcoming church, a victorious church, a church filled with power, a church that is a voice and an influence in the world, a church that represents a light, a church that is declaring to the principalities and powers in heavenly places the manifold wisdom of God. That is what the Lord Jesus Christ is seeking! He will present unto himself such a church which has been cleansed, not by the "rapture", but by the washing of the water of the Word!

### ***Take Them Not Out of the World***

The Lord will provide protection for those who have kept the word of his patience. He will keep them from the hour of temptation. That word to "be kept from" is identical to what Jesus prayed, "Take them not out of the world, but keep them from the evil thereof. That denotes a preservation right in the midst of. At this point, it looks like protection is by preservation instead of by removal.

Many may have held to a traditional teaching because of fear. They can't seem to fathom how it is possible for any one to survive tribulation. Either they believe they're too weak or God is too good to allow it. The mentality of many is, "Lord, if you don't hurry and get your church out of here, we're all going to go down the tube!" Too much emphasis is placed on the great falling away. "If the Lord doesn't hurry up and come, almost everyone will fall away." So goes

## *"Kept From the Hour of Temptation"*

the traditional line of reasoning.

Actually, I see the opposite. I see revival in the land. I see an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in an unprecedented manner. I see a mighty move and manifestation of the glory of God that is just about ready to be released in this earth. The devil is doing everything in his power to keep it from happening. He's seeking to keep you in ignorance or to distract your attention away from that which God is doing.

There is victory, and there should not be one element of fear. God's people should never be fearful of the things that are coming upon the earth. That is a tactic of the devil. God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind (II Tim. 1:7). Men's hearts will fail them for fear because more emphasis is placed upon suffering tribulation than upon overcoming tribulation. There is more emphasis upon the mark of the beast than upon the mark of God. There is more emphasis upon the antichrist than upon the Christ. Our attention should be upon the Lord, His power, and His provisions.

God is raising up prophetic voices which will speak the truth concerning future things near at hand. When we place our attention on the antichrist and the beast, we are being diverted from the real thing God wants to do in and through us. The Lord wants to put a seal and mark upon us. He wants us to know that there is a body in the earth known as the Body of Christ which is far superior to the antichrist body known as the beast system. Daniel 2:44 says that in the days of these kings shall a kingdom be established which shall never be destroyed. The armies of the Lord will prevail; the church of the living God will triumph.

### ***Distinction between Tribulation and Wrath of God***

At this point, there must be a distinction between the tribulation and the wrath of God. Almost everyone agrees that the Christian will never suffer the wrath of God. I don't know anyone who has any credibility who has ever declared otherwise, because the Word of God never taught it.

### ***What Is Tribulation?***

What is tribulation? It is basically persecution and afflictions, which could be represented by plagues, famines, earthquakes, wars, sicknesses, and starvation. Therefore, there have been varying degrees of tribulation since the beginning of time. But we are dealing with tribulation that never has been nor shall ever be afterwards.

If you want to find out what tribulation is, just study history. Because we are in America and have never suffered any of these things doesn't make us immune. Our teaching or idea of the tribulation should not be based upon our previous experience of problems. If it is, then it would stand to reason that we Americans would never preach tribulation because we have not come close to experiencing what many others have already experienced in other parts of the world. Other countries and other people have experienced tribulation through the centuries. God has been good to America and blessed her, hopefully because of her Christian influence and heritage.

The attitude of many is that the Lord is far too good to allow His children to suffer. If that be the case, God will have to apologize to every saint who has ever suffered. Many of the Christians behind the Iron Curtain will deserve an apology from God. Those who have been burned at the stake and those who have given their lives as martyrs in other days will need an explanation.



*"Kept From the Hour of Temptation"*

Why does God allow suffering? Why does it appear that God stands idly by while millions of people, including innocent babies, die of hunger? Why does God allow tragedies of war? While we will not seek to answer these questions in detail, it is all because Satan is a thief and a robber. He has come to steal, kill, and to destroy. All these things will continue to be so until Satan is forever purged from this earth.

That's what this book is all about. There is a way of escape. That way is through the Word of God and our trust in the provisions of God through Jesus Christ.

Tribulation is the same as afflictions, persecutions, and troubles which come from Satan. Tribulation is not that which comes from the hand of God. Sure, God allows it just as He allows people to be lost. That does not mean it is His will or that He is the initiator of it. If you study the root words of tribulation, affliction, suffering, and trials, you will discover they are basically the same. Is it proper to attribute these things to God?

The Word of God teaches that in the midst of every tribulation the will of God is deliverance. *"Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all"* (Ps. 34:19). Now if God is the author of afflictions and also the deliverer out of afflictions, then that sounds like a contradiction to me.

Some say, "God is teaching us." First, is that God's method of teaching you? What happened to His Holy Spirit? What happened to the five-fold ministry and the Word of God? Why would God all at once in the end of the age use such drastic measures to teach His people when all these other methods were ordained of Him?

The scriptures teach there is a rest for the people of God, and we are not to fail to enter because of unbelief. Through much tribulation we are to press our way into the kingdom of God (Acts 14:22). The kingdom of God suffereth violence and the violent take it by force (Mat. 11:12). There is a pressing into the kingdom, and there will be things to overcome in pressing our way in.

The Great Tribulation has been referred to as the time of Jacob's trouble. Do you remember the distinction made earlier in this book concerning Jacob and Israel? We established that Jacob referred to the seed of the flesh, while Israel represented the seed of the spirit. Jacob was unregenerated and Israel was redeemed. Jacob represented the natural, while Israel represented the spiritual.

There is still a dealing of God with Jacob. I believe there are yet prophecies to be fulfilled concerning the natural nation of Israel. Yes, the natural Jews will be involved in the fulfillment of scriptures, especially concerning their reconciliation unto God. Perhaps the Great Tribulation, or the time of Jacob's trouble, will be the major instrument in bringing Israel back to God.

Everything that happens in the visible realm has already been established in the invisible realm. Warfare that begins in the visible realm has already been established in the invisible realm. Warfare that begins in the realm of the spirit will eventually manifest itself in the natural. Before an outward battle rages, there must first have been a warfare in the heavenlies. Before Great Tribulation manifests itself in the earth, you can be sure there has already been a raging war in the heavenlies, which I believe is now taking place.

As we have seen, the time of Jacob's trouble is specifically referring to the natural nation of Israel. The seventieth week of Daniel refers to this period, and gives rise to the theory of seven years of tribulation (week of years). Some believe it is only a 3 1/2 year period because of the break in the middle of the week when the antichrist breaks his truce with Israel. Some believe the first half is light tribulation while the last half is when all hell breaks loose. Others

## *"Kept From the Hour of Temptation"*

believe the first 3 1/2 years will be tribulation and the last 3 1/2 years will mark the wrath of God. I'm not sure the world could stand 3 1/2 years of the wrath of God. David said he would rather be subjected to 3 1/2 days of the judgment of God (knowing the mercy of God) than 3 1/2 years of famine or 3 1/2 months of being defeated at the hand of the enemy (Is there a possible significance to the 3 1/2 number here?).

## ***What Is the Wrath of God?***

David's indictment was because of his sin of numbering the forces of his armies, trusting his own might rather than God's. He had forgotten that God was able to work by many or by few. The main point here is that even though David chose the mercy of God, the wrath of God was so severe that God cut his judgment short because of the intensity.

The wrath of God will mark the closing days of Great Tribulation, which is associated with the coming of the Lord. *"And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thes. 1:7).* The revealing of Jesus from heaven is associated with the flaming fire of vengeance.

Let's see further what the Word of God has to say about the wrath of God. There will be judgments of the Lord in the earth. God is righteous, holy, and just. The God of justice is a God of judgment. The just and righteous dealings of God are known as the judgments of God. They will come upon the children of disobedience.

Ephesians 5:6 speaks of the works of the flesh. Because of these works of the flesh cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. For whom is the wrath of God intended? The children of disobedience and those caught up in the works of the flesh are the obvious targets. Our responsibility as believers is to *"...mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affections, evil concupiscence, and covetousness which is idolatry for which thing sake the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience" (Col. 3:5-6).* Jesus said, *"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).*

So, what protection do we have from the wrath of God? Romans 5:9 says, *"Now being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."*

In Revelation 12, you will find three groups of people. First, the manchild is caught up to the throne of God, which represents the glory and the authority of God. The dragon cannot touch the manchild. His attention is then directed toward the woman. Provision was made for her by the wings of the eagle which pick her up and transport her into the wilderness. After this failure on the part of the dragon, attention is drawn to the remnant of her seed. These have the testimony of Jesus Christ and keep the commandments of God. Here there is no indication of escape as in the two previous situations. This might suggest that just naming the name of Jesus does not guarantee escape from tribulation. It takes overcoming faith, believing in His provisions.

## ***Overcoming Faith***

Those who escape tribulation are those who have come into a realm of overcoming power. *"In the world you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the*

### *"Kept From the Hour of Temptation"*

world" (John 16:33). *"This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith"* (I John 5:4).

Overcoming means exercising faith. Naming the name of Jesus in confession of sins does not within itself mean acting in overcoming faith--that is saving faith for initial salvation. Faith in the name of Jesus; faith in the authority of that name; faith in His provisions will bring overcoming power and victory. Confessing the name of Jesus, receiving the remission of sins, and being justified by His blood gives us protection against the wrath of God.

Thank God for the blood of Jesus! Thank God for his provisions! The wrath of God is for children of disobedience. Justification by his blood brings salvation from wrath. I Thessalonians 5:9 states, *"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ."* I Thessalonians 1:10 says, *"Even Jesus who has delivered us from the wrath to come."*

### *Protection from Egyptian Plagues*

All scripture is given by inspiration. All scripture is profitable. Everything that has been written is for our benefit. Old Testament scriptures are for our examples. In the Old Testament, we find one of the most profound examples of God's exemption for his chosen. During the plagues of Egypt (typical of the wrath of God) provision was made right in the midst of Egyptian bondage. This was under the old covenant, and we now have a better covenant. If that provision was made under this old agreement, just think of the provisions of the new covenant.

Under the old covenant, in the middle of Egyptian bondage and in the midst of the outpouring of the plagues of God, there was not one single case of the children of God even being touched. What a miracle! What a manifestation of the great grace of God! In the middle of Egypt, the death angel went throughout the land and supernaturally passed over households without touching those who had the blood applied to the lintels of their doorposts. They were protected by the blood! We are now justified by the blood and are saved from the wrath to come. Praise God! If God did that supernaturally, who is to say He will not do the same in these last days?

### *The Seal of God*

In Revelation 7:2-3, John said he saw an angel with the seal of the living God who was given the commandment to not hurt the earth or any living thing until the servants of the Lord were sealed. If this is speaking of the natural Jews as many have indicated, and if the Lord can protect them, why can He not protect the church-age saints by sealing them in their forehead? Every point of view, whether pretrib, midtrib, or posttrib, generally agree there will be tribulational saints. If God can keep these tribulational saints regardless of who they are, can He not keep the church?

Ezekiel 9:6 records the account of one who had the inkhorn by his side to put a seal upon a group of people. They were not to be hurt by the plagues against the land. Revelation 14:1 tells about the 144,000 (regardless of who we think they are) who had their Father's name or nature in their foreheads. These are overcomers. Based on these Biblical accounts, should we be concerned about the mark of the beast? Not if we are believers and have the seal or mark of God.

God is a deliverer. He is interested in delivering His elect. *"Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivered him out of them all."* Let's find precedence in the Word of

## *"Kept From the Hour of Temptation"*

God for deliverance out of afflictions or tribulation.

### ***The Lion's Den***

We will begin with Daniel. The lion's den was tribulation! That was an extreme tribulation that many thought would be the end of Daniel. Daniel had made prior preparation for this experience of tribulation. He didn't wait until he got in a situation and then "prayed through." He had already made a commitment to the Lord to not bow a knee to the decree of flesh and human will. The decision had already been made. His day of preparation had been settled. When he went into the tribulation of the den of lions, the mouths of the lions were closed. He came forth out of the lion's den victorious and unscathed! He came through his tribulation triumphantly.

### ***The Fiery Furnace***

Consider the Three Hebrew Children, Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego. Is there a more beautiful account of deliverance from tribulation in the Word of God? This is not a type or shadow, but a real-to-life deliverance, which of course is typical of deliverance from the tribulation of Satan. This is not a fairy tale; it actually took place. Some has looked upon this story as one of fantasy. Others have declared it to be so far back in history that it is irrelevant to us today. The same faith and determination they had to demonstrate in order to come forth victorious out of the fire is the same that will bring us through anything we will ever be faced with. It will take a determination. We will have to be convinced that it is God's will to deliver us.

Some are of the opinion that these three young men took the stand that if the Lord wanted to deliver them was fine or if the Lord did not want to deliver them was fine, also. I believe they were thoroughly convinced the Lord was going to deliver them. There was no doubt in their mind that the Lord was going to move in their behalf. They declared, "*O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter...*" They did not have to have a conference or take a vote. They let him know from the beginning that if it be so...If what be so? If it be so that you will follow through with your threat and throw us into the fiery furnace, "*Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace...*" *"and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king."*

There was no wavering; they were emphatic. You go ahead and follow through with your threats, and if it be so that you do what you have said, let it be known that our God will deliver us. If it be not so--if you decide to change your mind--we still have our minds made up. We still will not serve your gods or worship the golden image. You can't buy us or bribe us. We will take the same stand either way.

### ***Then What Is Tribulation?***

Then what is tribulation? Was the lion's den really tribulation for Daniel? Sure the lions represented a real threat, but not one hair of Daniel's head was harmed (if he had hair!). He was not delivered out of the den, but was delivered in it.

Was the fiery furnace really tribulation for the Three Hebrew Boys? The fire was very real, and it was very hot! Yet, they were not burned nor even scorched. In fact, the only thing

### *"Kept From the Hour of Temptation"*

burned was the ropes which bound them! They were not delivered out of the fire, but they were delivered in the fire.

*"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" (Is. 43:2).*

### ***There Is Deliverance!***

What are we saying? There is a deliverance for the people of God. There is yet a deliverance man has never known. Hebrews 11 records the accounts of those who quenched the violence of fire, received their dead raised to life again, stopped the mouths of lions, and subdued kingdoms through faith. Sure, there were those who refused deliverance believing for a greater deliverance. They made a choice.

The time of the greater deliverance is here. Daniel spoke of a time of great deliverance, which most likely will be the greatest deliverance the world has ever known (Dan. 12:1). Here the devil has shot his best shot. He will fire it all. Every tribulation to this point will pale in comparison to the totality of his onslaught to be released because of the shortness of his time. His time is coming quickly to an end.

### ***The Secret Place of the Most High***

The message of the church is one of overcoming and victory--total victory--and there is a secret place of the Lord. *"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress; my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust; his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday" (Ps. 91:1-6).*

### ***It Shall Not Come Nigh Thee***

Now listen to this: *"A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee" (verse 7).*

Do you think God is able to deliver us right in the middle of chaos--right where there is destruction all around us? You can be right in the midst of the greatest earthquakes ever on the face of this earth and still come forth unharmed. A few years ago, a devastating earthquake hit Mexico City where thousands of people were trapped under the rubble and were either killed or maimed. Other disasters have hit or will yet hit this earth. I lived for many years on top of one of the worst earthquake faults in the United States--the New Madrid fault. Scientists are predicting perhaps the most devastating earthquake ever in this country to come at any time in this area.

Did you know that according to Psalm 91, death can be all around us, with pestilence and destruction lurking at every side, but it will not come nigh us? John Lake, a medical doctor who believed in the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which supersedes the law of sin and death, demonstrated that no plague could harm him. During a great outbreak of the bubonic plague,

### *"Kept From the Hour of Temptation"*

people were dying from this highly contagious disease all around him. He challenged scientists to test the live germ that came in contact with his skin. When the germs of the bubonic plague contacted his flesh, they (the germs) died immediately! They could not live in the presence of life!

The power of God was so strong in Smith Wigglesworth's life, that people could not die in his presence. He manifested the resurrection power of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is an account of a person who was brought back to life on numerous occasions in his presence, because he refused to let him die!

Where life is, death can not prevail. Where the glory of God is, the power of darkness can not prevail. Where there is victory, defeat can not remain. What we are sharing is that where there is destruction, even all around you, it does not mean it has to come nigh your dwelling.

### ***Real Life Situations***

On various occasions God has given me dreams of real life situations where His power of deliverance was manifested. One time a storm was rolling in. This was while we were living in the tornado alley of southern Missouri. People during the spring of the year lived with continual threats of tornado watches and warnings. Many of these people lived in such fear that they spent much of their time running and seeking for shelter. I determined in my heart one day I would not run. But the spirit of fear was so strong for many that it drove them to run when there was no real threat. Fear has to be dealt with.

The Lord comforted my heart one night in a dream when I saw a violent storm coming across the terrain headed right for our city. In this dream, I stood up and pointed toward the storm and commanded it to lift in the name of Jesus. This no doubt was symbolic of spiritual storms of tribulation and persecution, or of course, it could have referred to a literal storm.

Jesus spoke to the storms, and they were stilled. He rebuked the disciples for their lack of faith. He declared, "*O ye of little faith, how long will I be with you?*" Perhaps they one day would have to do the same as he did--speak to the storms themselves.

We have the power to speak to the elements. We have the power to speak to the forces of evil and destruction. As I began to speak to the storm in my dream, the storm lifted and went over our place of dwelling without one single harm being done! All around us was destruction, but our place of abode stood strong. Praise God!

This same geographical location of Southeast Missouri is right in the middle of the New Madrid earthquake fault. This fault is one of the most dangerous in the United States, being comparable to the San Andreas fault in California. At any moment, that fault could bring devastating destruction to the area along the Mississippi River between St. Louis and Memphis. Fear could be generated, and people could seek to run to find shelter. In fact, just last December (1990), a prominent prognosticator predicted that there would be an earthquake on a particular day. Schools closed, people stocked up on supplies, and many left the area.

### ***Where Can You Run?***

Where can you run from disaster? That could be like the man in the Bible who escaped the bear and the lion in the way only to come into the house and be bitten by the adder. Where

### *"Kept From the Hour of Temptation"*

do you run to escape? You can't run from plagues and destruction; you have to find a place in God. This is the secret place of the most high. The Lord is our refuge and strength. The Lord is saying, *"Come my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast"* (Is. 26:20).

The Lord gave my wife, Nancy, a vision a few years ago in which He gave her peace concerning how she would be protected during the time of satanic attack. In this vision, she saw a horde of creatures similar to what many would visualize and fantasize as being creatures from outer space. When this happened, she cried out to God, "Lord, what will we do?" All at once there appeared an invisible plastic bubble which encircled her. When these creatures came against her, they simply bounced off. That was God's way of ministering peace to her concerning the protection and provision of the Lord which He could provide during any trying time. *"When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will raise up a standard against him"* (Is. 59:19).

### ***Elijah's Provisions***

Elijah had a provision for 3 1/2 years. This 3 1/2 year period is significant and typical of tribulation. Ahab, the king of Israel, is typical of the political beast system of Revelation 13. Jezebel is a type of the religious beast of Revelation 13. Elijah is typical of the Body of Christ, who are overcomers, while the famine was typical of the Great Tribulation. What happened? God had a place of provision for Elijah. For 3 1/2 years, he was nourished by the hand of the Lord. That is one of the most beautiful types that I have found in the Word of God.

### ***Being Strong and Doing Exploits***

The Word says in Daniel that they who do know their God shall be strong and do exploits (Dan. 11:32). This is right in the midst of tribulation of the last days. They that understand among the people shall instruct many.

Yes, the church will be a light in a dark hour. We are more than conquerors through Jesus Christ our Lord. When is the time for preparation? It is now. Why is it important for you to submit yourself to the Word of God? Why is it important for you to submit yourself to the discipline of the Holy Spirit? Why is it important for you to understand what it means for you to die out to your fleshly desires?

When is your day of preparation? Daniel had already prepared himself for his tribulation before entering into it. Perhaps your greatest tribulation will be to deal with your flesh before the time of testing comes. Attitude is everything--how we face circumstances or tribulations. You must determine now what your response will be. When the time comes, it will not be tribulation, because you have already dealt with it.

God wants us to submit ourselves to him. Today is the day of visitation. Today if we would hear his voice, we could enter into his rest. Let us not fail to enter in because of unbelief.

## **CHAPTER 9**

### **THE GLORY OF THE LORD IS RISEN**

In order for us to properly understand the coming of the Lord, what takes place at His coming, and when it takes place, we must first understand what the purpose of God is in the earth. There is a will of God to be accomplished in this earth. The Body of Christ must defeat the devil and put him under feet just as much as Jesus the firstborn Son of God overcame him and made his power of no effect in this earth. *"For this purpose was the Son of God manifest; to destroy the works of the devil"* (I John 3:8).

#### ***A Light in a Dark Hour***

If the purpose of God is for the church to be a witness or a light during dark hours upon the earth, then it is evident there will be no removal of its presence or influence before these dark days.

#### ***Where I Am There You May Be***

The coming of the Lord will represent our gathering together unto Him. There will be a time when all things in heaven and in earth shall be brought together in Christ Jesus. *"So shall we ever be with the Lord."* When will this be? At the last trump. *"The trump shall sound, the dead in Christ shall rise first and we which are alive and remain shall be caught up to be with Him forever."* (I Thes. 4:16-17). We shall be in the presence of the Lord forever. Jesus said in John 14, *"I go to prepare a place for you that where I am you may be also."* We need to know where Jesus was when He said that. "Where I am" is present tense. The most important thing is that wherever the Lord is, there we will be, having been united with Him in a glorious union. Hallelujah!

#### ***The Resurrection***

What else takes place at the last trumpet? There is a resurrection. Thank God for the resurrection. One of the greatest heresies taught in the Word of God was that of Hymenaeus who preached that the resurrection was already passed. There was no hope for those who had already died.

I declare that He who has the power of the resurrection is in our midst. Jesus said, *"I am the resurrection and the life"* (John 11:25). That is present tense. Yet, there will be a future general resurrection for all those who have died. Daniel prophesied it. He said there would be a



## *"Inheriting the Eternal Kingdom"*

resurrection of the wicked and the just. Jesus said there would be a resurrection of the righteous and the unrighteous. Paul preached two resurrections which brought a division between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. John the revelator spoke of two resurrections separated by a 1000-year period.

Those who come forth in the first resurrection shall be kings and priests with Jesus Christ on this earth. The Word of God says that those who came out of the tribulation and were martyred for Christ came forth in the first resurrection. If the first resurrection was before tribulation, how could these who came out of tribulation come forth in the first resurrection? Of course, some teach two or three first resurrections, four or five judgments, and two second comings of the Lord. There is one first resurrection, and it will take place after tribulation. There is one coming of the Lord, and that will be after tribulation.

### ***My Reward Is with Me***

What about our rewards? Jesus said, *"Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me"* (Rev. 22:12). What about the judgments? Well, to begin with, you are being judged right now! You're being judged by the Spirit of God and the Word of God. When the Lord shall appear, you will have already been judged, for we will already be like Him. There will be a final judgment at the end of the 1000-year period, but that will not be for the saints of the Lord.

### ***Arise, Shine; Thy Light Is Come!***

I want to share with you something from the 60th chapter of Isaiah. I will show you that the time has come for the Body of Christ to arise. It's time we awaken out of sleep and slumber. We must realize that the glory of the Lord is risen upon us.

*"Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."* (Is. 60:1). When is this? Is this in the garden of Eden? In the days of the Lord Jesus Christ during his earthly ministry? Is this talking about the millennium? Is it speaking of heaven?

### ***Darkness Shall Cover the Earth***

It would be easy for our attention to be drawn to something over in gloryland and miss the manifestation of the glory of God now. When is this light come and the glory of the Lord risen? Take note in verse 2, *"For behold the darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people..."* That sounds like really dark days!

The darkest days upon the face of this earth will be when men alienate themselves from God. The light of the Lord is come for the Body of Christ. *"Darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people, but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. The Gentiles shall come to thy light and kings to the brightness of thy rising."*

This is not talking about the natural Jews and the Gentiles. We need to understand who the true Jews are and who the Gentiles are. The Gentiles are those who are outside the kingdom of God. The Gentiles are the unbelievers. There will be a great conversion of the Gentiles, because I believe with all my heart that we are standing on the threshold of the greatest outpouring of the Spirit of God we've ever known.

*"Inheriting the Eternal Kingdom"*

### ***A Greater Revelation of God***

In every move of God, the revelation of God has been stronger and clearer. It has brought us into a greater knowledge of God. There is now a greater knowledge of God than ever before. There is a progressive manifestation of the supernatural of God. At the turn of the century, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Azusa Street and the Welsh revival which had preceded it represented the greatest moves of God to that date the world had ever known. When the latter rain came (some didn't recognize this move of God during the late 1940s), that represented another phase of the unfolding glory of God. There was a great restoration of the five-fold ministry during this time. Prophetic utterances became real once again in the church.

### ***As the Waters Cover the Sea***

When the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; when it appears everything is falling apart around you; when it looks like the earth is going to "hell in a basket", then you can rest assured that there is a glory of God to be revealed! The Word says in Habakkuk 2:14, *"For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."*

### ***The Earth Filled with His Glory***

It is difficult to imagine the expanse of a great ocean. As far as you can see, you can't begin to see the end of it. That's symbolic of the glory of God! That's awesome! That speaks of the universality of the greatness and vastness of God. *"As surely as I live, saith the Lord, the earth shall be filled with my glory"* (Num. 14:21). Isaiah said, *"And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together"* (Is. 40:5).

What does it mean for the earth to be filled with the glory of God? Does it mean that in the atmosphere we'll see the glory of God? Sure, you can see the glory of God in the trees, the heavens, and in nature. You can see the glory of God in all His creation, but if that is all you see, then that is pantheism. People who take hallucinogenic drugs and have mind expanding experiences see the manifestation of God in nature (supposedly). It's wonderful to see God in the trees and in nature. But do you know where people need to begin to see the manifestation of the glory of God? In you and me! That's where the glory of God is going to be revealed.

### ***Glory in His House***

The glory of God will be revealed in the house of God. The Word of God says that the glory of the Lord so filled the house that Solomon built the ministers could not minister for the power of the glory of His presence. That temple was little more than a type or shadow, but there is a greater tabernacle. There is a house of God that is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Jesus Christ as the chief cornerstone!

### ***Glory in His Saints***

The Word says WE are the habitation and the house of God! That house will be filled

## *"Inheriting the Eternal Kingdom"*

with the glory of the Lord. People will be able to see the manifestation of God in the saints of God. The Lord will come to be glorified in His saints! The next appearing of the Lord will be the appearing in His saints. II Thessalonians 1:10 declares, "...when the Lord shall be revealed from heaven with his angels...when he shall come to be revealed in His saints..."

Do you remember the story of Moses, a man who had seen the miraculous and the supernatural in an unparalleled way? He had seen the greatest deliverances in the history of mankind--three million Jews delivered out of the land of bondage in Egypt. Provisions of God were made in the wilderness. Their shoes did not wear out, neither did they go hungry. God provided manna, meat, and water in a land of desolation. Their every need was supplied. The man of God who saw the parting of the Red Sea and saw the finger of God literally write the Ten Commandments upon the tables of stone had seen the acts of God. Yet, Psalms 103:7 declares, "*He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.*"

The world is looking for the acts, but there is a chosen people of God who is looking for the ways of God. They are looking to be conformed into His image and to partake of His nature. They are looking to reveal the glory of God.

So, Moses was a man who had seen the miraculous, but one day he cried, "God, I want to know you. I want to know your glory. Reveal yourself to me." The Word of God says God revealed himself to Moses, first of all in his presence. "*If your presence does not go with us, send us not up.*" God revealed His presence to Moses in a special way.

I say the same thing today. If we have lost or missed the presence of God, let's fold our tents and close shop. Let's shut the doors. If the purpose of the church is to come together to entertain one another once or twice a week, then let's shut down! The church is more than that! It is for the purpose of manifesting to the principalities and powers the manifold wisdom of God. The purpose of the church is to defeat the devil. The purpose of the church is to expel darkness. For darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people, but the Lord says our light is come and His glory is seen upon us!

There is a cry from deep within us to know Him. Paul cried, "*O that I might know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death*" (Phil. 3:10). That is also our cry.

When shall this be? "*When he shall come to be glorified in His saints; to be admired in all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed in that day*" (II Thes. 1:10).

### ***What Does It Mean to Reveal the Glory of God?***

What does it mean to reveal the glory of God? It means for you to manifest the power of God in your life which will help to bring the solutions to the needs of this world. The greatest need right now is for there to be a manifestation of the Christ, or to become a Christ ministry. The ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ was to set the captives free and to open the prison doors. "*The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised*" (Luke 4:18).

### ***What of the Darkness?***

What does it mean for the Lord to manifest His glory in a dark hour? First, it means that

## *"Inheriting the Eternal Kingdom"*

the people of God will see things in a different light. While everything around you is crumbling, we have hope and encouragement. The world is caught up in a spirit of despondency; it sees no hope. All it sees is the darkness. All it can see is the antichrist and the beast. To it, everything is darkness,

But, what of the darkness? "Watchman, what of the night?" What of the darkness? How dark is it? "THE MORNING COMETH!" (Is. 21:11-12). When you are reminded that light will always expel darkness, you will have a different perspective. Light will make manifest all things, and we are the children of light.

What about the day of the Lord which will come as a thief in the night? Good news! We are not of the night! I Thessalonians 5:5 states, "*Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness.*" We have understanding and discernment of the Spirit to know the times and the seasons.

We must know the day and hour we are living in so that day should not come upon us unawares or as a thief. So when people say there is no hope in the world or there is no way things can be salvaged, then rest assured that there is a need for the manifestation of the light of God.

### ***The Whole Creation Cries Out***

Romans 8 says it this way, "*The whole creation is crying out for a manifestation of the Sons of God.*" There must be a manifestation, and the whole creation is crying for it. There is a groaning, crying, and travailing in pain until this present time for this manifestation of deliverance by the whole creation of God.

Jesus said, "*A body thou hast prepared for me, O God*" (Heb. 10:5). I believe we as the Body of Christ are that body prepared for the Lord. The Body of Christ is being equipped by taking on the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are filled with the Spirit of God-- the very power of God.

### ***Christ in You, the Hope of Glory***

The Lord Jesus Christ is coming forth within us, which Paul described as the mystery of Christ in you the hope of glory (Col. 1:27). The hope of glory just speaks of something that is yet to come. The Christ in us is the hope of glory. As sure as there is a hope of glory, faith will bring the glory. Faith will bring the actuality of the glory, not just the hope of the glory. When Christ came within us, that was our hope of glory. The manifestation of the Christ within will be the glory.

### ***Light Expels Darkness***

Why must there be a manifestation of the antichrist before the coming of the Lord? That's very simple. II Thessalonians 2:8 says the Wicked shall be revealed so that the Lord may destroy him with the brightness of his coming. Darkness must come first so that the light might destroy it. Evil must be manifest so that the light of His glory might be revealed to destroy it.

Do you understand that? You are the light of the world! Your light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you! Light will always expel the darkness.

I challenge you to try this experiment. You can try it anywhere there is darkness. Now,

## *"Inheriting the Eternal Kingdom"*

I'm speaking of physical darkness. Go home after dark and turn off all the lights. Turn the switch on and the light and darkness sits there in a death and life struggle, right? There they are struggling. The light can't decide whether it will prevail or the darkness.

Is that the way it is? Of course not! Yet, that is precisely what Christians seem to think and practice when it comes to the manifestation of the works of darkness. When the light is switched on--when the power is put to it--there is no question as to which will prevail. The light will prevail every time! It will never fail. The light will always destroy the darkness. The darkness has to flee.

What about the darkness in the world? What about the dark hour that is upon us? The Lord wants to put the power to us. He wants us to flip the switch. Many may have the connection with the power, but they don't have the switch on. When you are connected to the power, and you turn the switch on, the darkness has to flee! Do you realize what will happen when the church begins to take its rightful place and turns on the light?

Can you imagine what is destined to happen in this earth? Can you imagine what will literally take place when the kingdom of God is fully manifest in this earth? The devil is standing on his last foot. He is having his last fling, and he is going about seeking whom he may devour. He knows his time is short. If the church does not realize that it is a powerful force in the earth, it will always be defeated.

How sad it is to see so many churches that have no concept of their calling. They just go through their religious duties, never coming to the realization of what their true purpose is in this earth. Thank God for every church in every community that is doing anything to help alleviate the suffering of humanity and getting people saved. But how much more glorious it is for the church to realize who it is.

If we only knew who we are, and what has been invested in us! If only we could discover what our purpose is in the earth and to recognize the power and authority in the name of Jesus! If we could only recognize that we have the power to overcome the enemy in all things and that we are more than conquerors. Can you imagine what will happen when we discover we are really the light of the world? The glory of the Lord is risen upon us. He has chosen us to manifest His glory.

### ***When Zion Is Built Up***

When will the Lord come? *"When the Lord shall build up Zion, then shall HE appear in His glory?"* (Ps. 102:16). He didn't say that he would appear over in glory land. He will appear in His glory. Where is Zion? You are Zion! Zion is the holy city of God. We have come unto Mt. Zion, the holy city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb. 12:22). The Zion of God is the church, the Body of Christ. When the Body of Christ is built up, then the Lord shall appear in His glory.

The Lord will appear in His glory when the Body of Christ comes into unity and into maturity. When we come into the full stature of the measure of the Lord Jesus Christ is when Zion is built up. The apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers have been given to the church for the work of the ministry that we may be brought into maturity (Eph. 4:11-13). When we are brought into the unity of the faith, the Lord will appear in His glory. HE will not appear in His glory until the Body of Christ comes to the place it has been called to, and that is to be a witness to all nations.

### ***The Greater Glory***

## *"Inheriting the Eternal Kingdom"*

The Bible speaks of the greater glory. It speaks of the glory of the latter house (Hag. 2:9). The glory of this latter house will far supersede the glory of the former. According to II Corinthians 3, we are experiencing a greater manifestation of glory through the ministry of spirit and life. There was a glory associated with the law. There was a glory associated with the ministration of death and condemnation. In fact, there was such a manifestation of the glory of God upon the face of Moses that he had to veil his face.

If the glory of God associated with the Old Covenant was so great, just think how much greater will be the glory of the New Covenant which is associated with spirit and life! That old glory was to be done away with. The glory of God that is now coming forth will last throughout eternity. Paul says, *"We are beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord and are being changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord"* (II Cor. 3:18).

What are we saying? The world needs a manifestation of the power and the glory of God. The world needs a manifestation of light and life. It needs the saints of the most High to arise in the power and the authority of the kingdom of God and to manifest the life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I am sharing with you a vision of hope to challenge and to motivate you. Hopefully, we can be shaken out of any state of lethargy and unconcernness. I'm here to declare that it is time for the Body of Christ to shake itself, awaken, and arise out of the state of sleep and to realize that there is a world that is perishing. People are crying out for a manifestation of the glory of God--for the power of God. The responsibility lies with us.

### ***The Lord Needs Ministers in Time of Darkness***

It is difficult to imagine anyone so selfish as to say, "Lord, come and get us and take us out of this mess." The Lord may need you to stay around. He needs you to minister to people who are in desperation. Can you imagine what it would be like for a disaster to take place and there not be good people around to help in a time of need? I've news for you. There is a witness in the earth, and there will be a witness to remain in this earth through the darkest hour. It will be the glory of the Lord through the church.

### **A PROPHECY**

Out of obscurity will come forth a light. Though you may feel you are small, the least of cities, there will come forth a beam of light that will spread far and near. The manifestation of that light will spread out in every direction without limitation. The manifestation of the glory of God in our cities will be well known in many circles among many people. Many people's lives will be touched. As the glory of God shines forth, many hearts and lives will be changed.

Don't be discouraged when people would speak all manner of evil against you. There will be a people who will not be afraid of what others say or think about them. There is a deliverance from the world and the spirit of the world. Don't be afraid of being different. Don't be afraid of being a peculiar people. You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and a glorious people. Satan will do everything in his power to shut your mouth. He will seek to make you ineffective. First, he will seek to steal the word of God out of your heart. Therefore, guard your heart against losing what the Lord has spoken.

There is a prophetic word which is going forth. It is a word that declares the destination

*"Inheriting the Eternal Kingdom"*

of the church and the purpose of God in the earth. The devil doesn't like it. There will be those who will even disfellowship themselves from you when you dare to stand up for the truth.

There will be false accusations which will declare you don't believe in the coming of the Lord. They will declare that you don't believe in heaven, or that you don't believe in Jesus. Be not afraid of them, but continue to do and to speak what I shall reveal unto you." (End of prophecy).

Most people act in ignorance because they don't have accurate information; they don't have the knowledge of the truth. I myself have been critical of things in the past, but I am slow to criticize now because I've discovered that the times I was critical was because of my ignorance. I didn't take the time to hear what was being said. Many were speaking the revelation truth of God, and I did not recognize it. When you begin to expose the purposes of the devil in the earth, he will do everything within his power to stop it, even through a critical attitude.

Do you appreciate a message of hope? Of power? Faith and overcoming? Victory? You'll never find it in the world. The devil and his works are represented by darkness, but your light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. Thanks be unto God for the revelation of His word in the kingdom of light!

## CHAPTER 10

### INHERITING THE ETERNAL KINGDOM

#### *The Present Reality of the Kingdom vs. the Eternal Kingdom*

Discussion of the kingdom of God would not be complete without talking about inheriting that eternal kingdom. We have previously discussed the present reality of the kingdom of God. This kingdom cometh not with observation but is within us. That is the present reality of the kingdom. It is a realm or domain of authority only over those who recognize it.

The scope or dominion of the kingdom is limited at this present time because of the limited number of those who are subject to it, but there is to be a universal manifestation of the kingdom which we will refer to as the eternal kingdom of God. Some refer to it as the ultimate kingdom. Others call it the visible kingdom of God in this earth.

This kingdom is in contrast to the kingdom of God which is within and comes not with observation and has been available now for almost two thousand years. This internal kingdom is invisible, while the eternal kingdom could be classified as visible. Everything in the invisible is to be ultimately made manifest in the visible. The invisible kingdom was born in the heavenlies but is being brought to the earth.

#### *Flesh and Blood Shall Not Inherit The Eternal Kingdom*

*"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God (eternal kingdom); neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 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'" (I Cor. 15:50-54).*

Here the prerequisite for entrance into the eternal kingdom is a change into incorruptibility and immortality since flesh and blood can not enter this kingdom. Only those who have been changed can inherit this kingdom. That is the key to this chapter; the change from mortality to immortality; from corruptibility to incorruptibility; from death unto life.

#### *An Everlasting Kingdom*

Keep in mind, what we are now speaking of is the eternal kingdom. Let's see what Daniel says about the this eternal, everlasting kingdom of God. *"In the days of these kings shall*



## *"Inheriting the Eternal Kingdom"*

*the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." (Dan. 2:44).* You must keep in mind that God is laying the foundation for this kingdom now, but there is yet to be a full revealing of this kingdom which shall rule all the nations. Though we yet must inherit this kingdom, we now have the earnest of our inheritance, which is the Holy Spirit.

Again in Daniel 7:27, *"And the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the most high, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and all dominions shall serve and obey him."* That's powerful! All dominions shall serve and obey him, which shows how universally encompassing it is.

### ***All Nations Shall Recognize King Jesus***

Now consider once again what is meant by the present-day reality of the kingdom of God. The present kingdom involves a realm of authority--a people who has recognized the kingship of Jesus Christ. It represents the realm of believers who has submitted itself to its king and has chosen to live by the laws of His kingdom.

So what would be meant by the eternal, everlasting, or ultimate kingdom? We are speaking of the kingdom of God which will encompass the whole earth. All nations of the earth will recognize Jesus as king. The whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into this kingdom.

When the seventh angel of Revelation sounds, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of the Lord and of his Christ," then all the world will understand the impact of this eternal kingdom of God. Jesus is Lord, and we are His Christ. We are the Christ of God. As the body has many members, so is Christ (I Cor. 12:12). Christ is a many-membered body. The kingdom which is to encompass the whole world has as its head Jesus Christ, who will reign jointly with the Body of Christ. We are inheritors or possessors of the kingdom as we are in union with Him. I believe this is what the scripture means concerning us being joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.

What is the essence of this message? I am going to again refer to the purpose of God in this earth. We as the Body of Christ have not fully understood the purpose of God for the Body. There has been a lack of understanding of the purpose of the church. The local church is not just some place to go on Sunday mornings. It is not something that draws attention to the accomplishments of the flesh. It is the extension of the hand of God. Its mission is to fulfill the purposes of God in the earth, and if any church exists for any other reason, it exists for the wrong reason. If that be the case, we must reevaluate our calling. God did not save us "just to hold on."

Did he save us so that we may somehow find a way to persevere and to be preserved until the day Jesus comes to take us out of this earth and to take us off somewhere beyond the blue? NO! When we speak of the purposes of God in this earth, we are speaking of more. We are speaking of the church as being the salt of the earth and a light to the world as we manifest God's glory.

*"Inheriting the Eternal Kingdom"*

### ***The Last Enemy to Be Defeated Is Death***

When we speak of the purposes of God in this earth, we are speaking of an overcoming victorious Body. We are talking about defeating every work of the devil, which includes the last enemy of the human race--physical death (I Cor. 15:26).

The time is coming when man will live out a thousand-year day. God said, *"In the day you eat of the forbidden fruit, you will die."* Even though man died that day spiritually, he continued to live in the flesh. No man has yet lived a thousand-year day (a day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as a day). The oldest man lived to be 969 years old! In the day man sinned, he died. Thank God for the blessed generation of which we are a part and which is on the threshold of living out that thousand-year day on this earth!

Some may never come to the realization that God wants a people to conquer physical death, but wasn't physical death a part of the fall? Doesn't God want to restore everything that has been lost? If we never experience a literal overcoming of physical death in this realm, there certainly is the resurrection for those who have died in Christ. Eventually, all will be joined together with those who are alive and remaining at the coming of the Lord.

It is the purpose of God that we do put Satan under our feet. It is the will of God, and we will have the power to defeat physical death. Everything which has been stolen from mankind is subject to be restored. That which existed before the fall is to be reinstated, and that includes life without death.

What were the conditions before the fall? Man was in perfect relationship and fellowship with God. He was able to live in the presence of God, and it was not until corruption entered the world that man was subject to physical death. He died spiritually before he died physically. God said, *"In the day you eat of the forbidden fruit you shall die."* Did Adam and Eve die physically that day? Of course not. Adam lived to be 930 years old. Was God wrong when he pronounced the death penalty? No. The day Adam ate, he died. His spirit died, which was separation and alienation from God. The body had no choice but to eventually die. Death and corruption was working in it.

When we are born again, our spirit is quickened or made alive once again. Physical death came as the result of the fall and was the fruit of disobedience. The curse of death passed upon all men. It became necessary that somebody somewhere in some period of time in some generation must come on the earth to defy the power of death. Jesus did. He is the firstfruit. He is waiting on the Body of Christ to defeat physical death and be alive to His coming.

### ***A Change Is Coming***

There must be a change. Creation is crying out for it. *"And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body"* (Rom. 8:23). Until there is a change, I don't want to live for 1000 years. I don't even desire to live 150 years, if all I have to look forward to is suffering and corruption of the flesh. But, thank God, there is a change coming!

### ***Why Has Jesus Delayed His Coming?***

There are two ways to explain why the Lord has not already come. One is to say there is an appointed time of the Father. Whether that is the end of a specific set time is yet to be

## *"Inheriting the Eternal Kingdom"*

determined. The other reason is that there is yet a purpose to be fulfilled.

Wonder why every generation thought they were the generation? Why have generations come and gone and the Lord has not returned? If the only reason the Lord is coming is to take us off to heaven somewhere, He could have done that when Jesus came up out of the grave. There were those who were dead but were seen walking the streets of Jerusalem when Jesus died.

Why were not all resurrected then? Why were not believers on earth not just taken on to heaven with the Lord right then? He had conquered the devil, hadn't He? The reason has to be that what Jesus did, we must do. Not that His price was not sufficient. What Jesus did was to give us the power to do what He did. Everything He overcame, we are to overcome. We must overcome the devil. Jesus was manifested for the purpose of destroying the works of the devil. He was not a failure. He accomplished what God the Father sent Him to do. Now, He is simply waiting on us.

### ***Jesus Emptied Himself***

Many feel this is impossible, since Jesus was deity and we as mortal men could never do what He did. Jesus accomplished what He did on this earth as a man. He emptied Himself, and came into the world in the form of a servant. He was obedient to the cross, after having faced the same temptations as you and I. If He overcame, then we can overcome. He has already prepared the way and given us the power to overcome.

Flesh and blood can not inherit the kingdom, for corruptibility can not enter. The responsibility to walk in life must rest upon us. The opinion of too many is there is no responsibility upon us because God is going to do it all. That is a cop-out. You can not say, "If God wants me to walk in divine health, He will give me divine health." You have to believe for divine health. You have to believe for healing, victory, life and overcoming power. This is the victory that overcomes the world even our faith. Faith says the responsibility is upon us. We enact victory by our faith.

Jesus will not return to this earth until the times of restitution of all things spoken by the prophets (Acts 3:21). I don't believe He will return until physical death is conquered by the Body of Christ. These will be those remaining alive to the coming of the Lord.

We will not be made like Jesus at His coming, but we will have already been made like Him as we continuously look into the perfect law of liberty in being conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. Being like Jesus means to be an overcomer as He was. Death will be put under the feet of the Body of Christ. You can count on that.

### ***But, It Has Never Happened Before***

So no one has done it before? Does that make it any less true or real? We are a peculiar people. We are a chosen generation. Of all people who has ever lived, we are the most blessed. All other generations previous to us have never done it. Their opportunity has passed, but ours is still before us. If we don't do it, God will raise up another generation to do it. If they don't do it, another and another will be raised up. Someone will do it. There will be a generation.

### ***The Origin of Death***

How did death come about anyway? It was because of the disobedience of our father

## *"Inheriting the Eternal Kingdom"*

Adam. He was given dominion over all things. That means he was in charge. How was he found guilty? Wasn't it Eve who was deceived? Adam was not deceived. He made a choice. Eve was deceived because she did not have adequate information. Adam had all the information, and it was his responsibility to communicate it to his wife Eve. He was given the responsibility to take care of the garden, and that included guarding the garden and keeping every alien out. But, Adam allowed the devil to come in and to deceive his helpmeet, and he then became a partaker with her in eating the forbidden fruit. He should have known better.

As a result of sin, death passed upon them, and not only upon them, but also upon all their descendants. Through Jesus Christ we have the provision to be restored to our right relationship with God. This provision was to demonstrate in this earth that the power of God was not only able to raise us from the dead, but to cause us to walk out life and to defy the powers of death.

If we have proper information, we will not be deceived, but we will have a choice just as Adam had. Inaccurate information leads to destruction, but accurate information will lead us to life. Thank God for the information of truth that is being revealed, which will bring us life.

### ***Three Principles in Overcoming Death***

There are three basic Old Testament principles which could give us some clues as to how to discover the secret of overcoming the works of the enemy. All scriptures are given by inspiration and are given for our examples. Egypt was a type of death and corruptibility. It represented oppression and enslavement to the devil. There was death on every hand; Egypt stood for death. The people of God were in bondage to this corruptibility, but God through the mighty hand of the prophet Moses brought the people out of enslavement. They were lead through the wilderness experience into the rest prepared for them. That's what Hebrews 4 refers to. "There is a rest remaining for the people of God."

#### ***The First Step Is the Actual Deliverance***

The first principle is that of deliverance. Coming out of the bondage of the death realm into life is much like the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt. First, there was the slaying of the passover lamb. Thank God for the passover lamb. It took faith to believe that God had spoken to Moses and told each head of every household to kill a lamb and apply the blood to the doorpost.

Someone could have said, "That's the silliest thing I've ever heard. Who would have ever believed that just taking the blood of a lamb and sticking it on the doorpost would save those households?" Brother, that took faith! It doesn't take any less faith today. Faith brings the miraculous deliverance of God through the blood of Jesus.

#### ***The Second Step Is Entering***

The second principle involves entering. Canaan was a type of entering into life. It was a type of entering into the rest of God where we cease from our labors. It is no longer us, but it is the manifestation of the life of Christ within us. Unbelief kept the people of the Lord out then, and it will keep us out today. They then did not mix the preaching of the word with faith. They died or perished in the wilderness.

## *"Inheriting the Eternal Kingdom"*

Take note of something. Here was Egypt, which represented the corruption of the flesh. It represented the powers of darkness and the devil. Then there was Canaan which represented a type of the Kingdom of God where the milk and honey flowed. It was not heaven over in the sweet by and by. It was the kingdom of God where there were very real enemies and opposition.

### ***The Third Step Involves Overcoming All Obstacles***

The third principle involves overcoming all obstacles between steps one and two. Between Egypt and Canaan was a great obstacle known as the Red Sea. That was a monumental obstacle. The Israelites were brought out of Egypt and were faced with the biggest hindrance to date. Fear gripped their hearts.

"We would to God we had stayed in Egypt," the people cried. "Here we are faced with the Red Sea with no apparent way of escape, and Pharaoh is coming up from behind us quickly."

Moses went before the Lord. The Lord said, "What do you have in your hand?" "A rod," Moses exclaimed.

He took the rod which represented the authority of God and pointed it to the Red Sea. The greatest miracle which had ever taken place happened--the parting of the Red Sea!

Some may have lagged behind. When the sea was opened up, it was the responsibility of the people to walk across. If some had stated, "I just don't know if this is real or not", they would have drowned. If they questioned whether it was God's will to leave Egypt or not, they would have still been in bondage and would have died as a slave. They had a choice, and we have a choice today.

### ***The Decision Is Yours***

You can decide to stay and eat the onions and make the bricks in captivity, or you can decide there is a prophetic voice and a deliverer that is being raised up to lead us to the land of life and freedom. The decision is ours. We can choose to hear the Word of the Lord, pick up our belongings, spoil the enemy, and leave the land of death, corruptibility, and oppression, or we can choose to stay in bondage. When you're faced with the Red Sea, the miraculous power of God will open it up so you can march through on dry ground!

### ***We Are the Firstfruits***

The Bible says every enemy will be destroyed. This will not be universally accomplished until the end of the thousand-year reign of Christ upon this earth. Satan, who has been incarcerated will be loosed for a short season at the end of this period, but it will not last very long. That demonstration of rebellion will be short-lived.

The time will come that we will say that death is not only defeated for the Body of Christ, but for all of mankind. Death will have to be defeated in the Body of Christ first. These represent the firstfruits. The Body of Christ must follow in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus Christ. It makes no difference what past history says, because regardless of what every other generation has done, there will have to be a generation who will be alive and remain to the coming of the Lord. For them, death will have already been conquered before it is conquered for all mankind.

The time will come that we will declare, "I choose to live and not die!" The Word says,

## *"Inheriting the Eternal Kingdom"*

"Behold this day I place before you life and death." You make the choice. The decision is yours, but the admonition of the Lord in Deuteronomy 30:19 is, "Choose life."

Many have been robbed of the most precious commodity offered the human race--life. Faith will bring us into a new dimension in God, while unbelief continues to hold people in the throes of death. Most people have a desire to live, and when a crisis arises, most of these same people begin to grasp for straws. The doctor says there is incurable cancer, and often panic results. Fear begins to take control, which destroys faith.

In fear, many Christians begin to confess scriptures, often with little consequence. It is not the matter of just quoting a few scriptures. The hour of preparation is now. We can believe God for anything, so by taking the limitations off, we can begin to behold the unfolding beauty of His glory.

### ***The Dead Praise Not the Lord***

Isaiah 38:18 states, *"For the grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee."* Psalm 115:17, *"The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence."* You can't glorify God in death; you glorify him in life and the power of the resurrection. The dead has no influence in this earth. They can not accomplish the purposes of God in the earth. Unless we take hold of life, we can rest assured that there is no other choice but death.

Just confessing life is not enough. You must take hold of life. You can confess all the scriptures out of desperation and fear that you choose, but not until the Word comes alive and becomes a part of us will it work for us. The Word must be in our heart and not just in our head. Claiming life and walking in life becomes a lifestyle.

### ***Satanic Glorification of Death***

There is a lot of attention being drawn to what is being taught in our public schools. Death education is one of those controversial subjects that must be recognized. In death education, so much attention is drawn to the subject of death that children are being programmed and desensitized to accept it as inevitable. Kids are inundated with this negative teaching.

This is not an area of teaching that belongs in the public schools. Children are even encouraged to write suicide notes. Satan wants this generation to be fed this lie of death, for he is the author of death. Meditation on the subject of death supposedly desensitizes children to the fear of death, but it is a tool of Satan to further his cause by glorifying death. Death is glorified in Satanic rituals and hard rock concerts. Satan wants people to become preoccupied with the subject of death. This preoccupation of death is playing into the hands of the humanists whose views on death include euthanasia, infanticide, and suicide. They declare that everyone should have the choice, Isn't that what the Word of God declares? You have a choice, but the alternative of life has been presented, so why should not the church be preoccupied with life?

### ***Preach Life!***

The responsibility of the Body of Christ is to preach life. Jesus is life, and He wants us to manifest that life in our mortal flesh. The Humanist Manifesto states that every person has the right to death including mercy killing, suicide, and abortion. This is a well laid scheme of Satan to plant in the minds of people that there is glorification in death. The Bible identifies death as

## *"Inheriting the Eternal Kingdom"*

an enemy, and the last enemy to be destroyed is death. The only death that is justifiable is death to the "old self", which allows the life of God to come forth.

If a medical doctor told an unbeliever that he was going to die, the normal reaction would be denial. That is the first stage of dying, according to the psychology of death. Finally, he accepts that as his destination. For the believer, faith in the Word of God says, "It makes no difference what man says. It makes no difference what the senses say. The Word of God says I can choose life. The Word of God says that by the stripes of Jesus I am healed. The Word says we can be overcomers." If we can get this deep in our spirit, we can be afflicted with distressing diseases but still come forth triumphant as a testimony to the world that Jesus is a giver of life.

### ***Defying Death***

Some will spit in the face of death. Some will literally defy the powers of darkness. Our declaration is, "I will live and not die." This type of faith and action could very well bring forth the generation which will bring Jesus Christ back to this earth.

### ***Breaking the Appointment with Death***

There is a scripture that becomes richer every time it is quoted. *"This shall be written for the generation to come; and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord"* (Ps. 102:18). This might give us a clue. The dead praise not the Lord. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. The generation that is being raised up shall praise the Lord, and we are a part of that generation which is beginning to praise Him. *"He hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary from heaven did the Lord behold the earth TO HEAR THE GROANING OF THE PRISONER..."* (Ps. 102:19-20). The Lord said to Moses, "I have heard the cry of my people. The cry of their oppression has come before me. I want you to go and lead my people out of the land of bondage (death and corruptibility)." (Paraphrase). Likewise, in these latter days, God has heard the groaning of creation, which has all its lifetime been subject to bondage.

What about the scripture, *"As it is appointed unto man once to die..."* (Heb. 9:27-28). Isn't everyone supposed to die? Doesn't every man have an appointment with death? First, let's see exactly what Hebrews is saying. "As it is appointed unto man ONCE to die, so Christ died ONCE." That simply says that Jesus had to die one time. His sacrifice was good once and for all. Man has one appointment, but what if someone took that appointment for him?

The Lord looked down from his sanctuary and saw the GROANING OF THE PRISONER. He loosed THOSE WHO WERE APPOINTED TO DEATH (Ps. 102). The whole creation awaits the REDEMPTION OF THE BODY (Rom. 8:23). We SHALL NOT ALL SLEEP (I Cor. 15:51). There will be a generation that will be alive and remaining to the coming of the Lord. Therefore, the appointment with death is broken!

The name of the Lord is being declared in Zion. When shall this be? *"When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms to serve the Lord"* (Ps. 102:22). What are we talking about in this message? We are speaking about entering or inheriting that eternal kingdom. This is a kingdom of life. There must be a change, for flesh and blood cannot inherit this great kingdom.

### ***There Must Be a Generation***

## *"Inheriting the Eternal Kingdom"*

There must be a generation. If this is not the generation, we will go the way of all others. We will go into the dust, and like all other generations, await the resurrection. If this is the generation who will stand up and defy the devil, conquer death, and walk in the fullness of the kingdom of God, then this is the generation who will bring Jesus back to this earth. If we as the Christ Body follow Jesus the head, we will defeat the devil even in physical death. There will be a people who will be alive and remain to the coming of the Lord. Hallelujah! That is the word!

### *Marching to a Different Drummer*

Someone's going to discover the secret and find the key. Someone will unlock the door. It's going to take a prophetic voice. You can't be a reflection of what everybody else is saying. You may not understand this statement, but, "A genuine leader in the kingdom of God can not march to the same beat of the same drummer that the rest of the world does." The prophetic voice of God can not be fearful of what the world is going to think about what it has to say. You can't even be concerned with what the religious world thinks about what you preach concerning life.

### *Man's Desire to Live*

Whether we accept it or not, few want to die. Go to a hospital and see what most do to stay here. There are those who are READY to die, and we need to be ready. But, there is something within us that longs to live. Something within will do everything in its power to take hold of life, because that is the nature of God within us. That is not the nature of man. God put that desire for life there. Life is His nature. Sure, there is a desire to want to be with Jesus, but we have a purpose in this earth.

### *All Else Rests Upon this Generation*

In the days of these kings--in the days of afflictions, trouble, tribulation, persecution, and darkness--shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed. It is an everlasting, eternal kingdom. It shall have all dominion and all authority.

Isn't that what God gave Adam in the beginning? We are restorers of many generations; in fact, for every generation from Adam (Is. 58:12). This generation is necessary in order that all who died in the faith might be made perfect (Heb. 11:40). They without us cannot be made perfect. We have a unique calling and responsibility for this period of time in the end days. We are inheritors of that great eternal kingdom, and we are being changed from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord.



# CHAPTER 11

## LIFE IN THE ETERNAL KINGDOM

### *The Present Manifestation of the Kingdom of God*

When ministering on life in the kingdom, confusion arises concerning the present reality or the future state of the kingdom. I am convinced that the kingdom of God is a present reality. There are principles of the kingdom of God by which we are now functioning. We are pressing our way into the kingdom of God and are beginning to live according to its laws and principles. Only then will the blessings of the Lord be upon our lives.

We think of this present kingdom in terms of the realm of the invisible. Because it is in the realm of the invisible does not make it any less real. In fact, the Bible declares that those things which are not seen are eternal. Those things which are seen are only temporal or temporary (II Cor. 4:18). What we look upon in the flesh as being reality is only temporary and is to pass away. Those things we see not with the natural eye are really the things which represent permanency; they represent constancy and reality. The kingdom of God is very real. It is the only thing that will last. Everything else will perish.

The kingdom of God is just as real today as it will ever be. The only difference is in its scope. The kingdom of God presently is limited to those who recognize its authority and submit themselves to it. Jesus said unless you are born again, you can't even see the kingdom of God. You can't see it much less inherit it.

### *Inheritors of the Eternal Kingdom*

There will be those who will be subjects of the future kingdom of God without being inheritors. These will be those who survive tribulation and enter the kingdom as subjects of that kingdom. There will be those born of these subjects who will not necessarily be inheritors of the kingdom. The inheritors are those who in this age have been born again and have experienced the change or translation, and they enter the kingdom as rulers with Christ. The message of the hour is to preach the present-day reality of the kingdom. At the same time, we are being prepared for the future manifestation of the kingdom. This future revealing of the kingdom will find the kings of the earth bringing their glory into it. They will recognize Jesus as the only king.

### *The Universal Rule of the Kingdom of God*

There will come a time when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of the Lord and his Christ. The rule of God will be universal. His dominion will be all encompassing. There will be a day when the reign of peace shall be supreme in this earth. Life will be prolonged. This is in reference to what we call the eternal kingdom of God, in contrast to the present-day reality of the kingdom of God.

### ***In the Days of These Kings***

Daniel 2:44 speaks of the establishment of this eternal kingdom. Daniel has already given the interpretation of the dream Nebuchadnezzar had. It was concerning the great image representing the four major world empires. These included the Babylonian empire, the Medes and Persian empire, the Grecian empire, and finally the Roman empire. In verse 44, Daniel said, *"In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom..."* Take note--in the days of these kings.

While these kings, or the extension of these kingdoms, are still yet in power, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom. That is precisely what is now taking place. God is establishing his kingdom, and positioning people throughout the earth in strategic positions. Likewise, God is positioning spiritual lighthouses which will radiate the glory of God far and wide throughout the earth.

This kingdom *"shall never be destroyed and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and it shall stand forever and ever."* So if you are wondering how long the duration of the kingdom of God is, take note. It is forever. It is an everlasting kingdom; it is an eternal kingdom. It is not one of temporary duration which then vanishes away. That's the way the kingdoms of this world have gone.

### ***Governments of Men Have Failed***

Everything man has been involved in has failed and floundered. Man has fouled up everything to which he has put his hands. With all his greatness of ability, including modern inventions of technology, he has not solved the problems of the world. Instead of solving the problems, he has complicated matters. He has made a mess of the ecology. He has made a disaster out of politics, government, and education. God is beginning to show us that it is time for His people to become leaders in these areas.

We must become leaders in education, music, and inventions. It is time for God's people to begin to invent things of significance. The world does not need to continue getting the recognition for all these things. I don't believe the world has the capability to come up with the ingenuity to do the things that need to be done, especially in finding solutions to problems.

We are not speaking of the world getting better and better through the education of men and inventions. I am speaking of an intervention of God through His people. We are speaking of a manifestation of the supernatural. We are not speaking of a gradual progression of the goodness of man. Unregenerated man is getting progressively worse. The light of God is getting progressively brighter. The glory of God is getting stronger. People of God are getting stronger. The people of God are becoming enlightened, and that is the way God designed it.

### ***Subduing the Earth***

We were created in the likeness and image of God. Adam was a very intelligent being. The commandment of God to him was to take dominion over the earth. He was to subdue the earth, multiply, and replenish the earth. God is bringing us back to this state of restored power and dominion over the earth.

What is taking place? Here's what happens at the sound of the seventh trump in Revelation 11:15: *"And the seventh angel sounded and there were great voices in heaven saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of the Lord and of his Christ and he shall reign forever and ever."* This is not just for 1000 years, but forever.

### ***Reigning by the Lord and His Christ***

Concerning the double reference of the Lord and his Christ, of whom is he speaking? First, the scripture says that God has made Jesus both Lord and Christ. I believe the double reference of the Lord and his Christ is to Jesus and his Body. The Word says, *"As the body has many members so is Christ"* (I Cor. 12:12). Christ is a many-membered body. As the physical natural body has many members, so is the Christ Body. The word Christ simply means the anointed one, and the Body is certainly anointed.

### ***The Two Witnesses***

The scriptures speak of the two witnesses in Revelation 11. Some say these are two literal men. Others say this is the witness of the Word and the Spirit. Still other opinions state this refers to the witness of the Jews and the Gentiles, or the witness of natural Israel and the Church. John said, *"These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth"* (Rev. 11:4).

Who are these candlesticks? Zechariah said he saw a candlestick of gold with a bowl and seven lamps on it. There, seven pipes to the seven lamps come from the two olive trees by it. These two olive trees are the source of the oil which is being funneled into the candlesticks. The oil is the anointing flowing out of the anointed ones into the lamp, which is the light of the world. The church is the light of the world. Then Zechariah identifies these two olive trees as the *"the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth"* (Zech. 4:14).

If Christ is the anointed one, and there are two anointed ones, who is the other? It sounds reasonable that it would be Jesus the Christ and the Body the Christ. Christ is the anointed one. The two witnesses represent an agreement or a union of Jesus the Head and us the Body. The Body of Christ will come into perfect harmony and union with its Head. This union, or marriage, is the joining together as one spirit, being made one with Him.

### ***Union of the Head and the Body***

The five-fold ministry has been given to the church to bring her into the unity of the Spirit that we may grow up into Him in all things, even the head (Eph. 4:15). It is time for us to realize who we are. We are the anointed ones of God! We have been anointed with the same spirit Jesus was anointed with. There is only one Holy Spirit. Jesus was anointed with the Holy Ghost, and He went about doing good, healing all that were oppressed of the devil (Acts 10:38). If there is one Holy Ghost, and Jesus was anointed with the Holy Ghost, and we are anointed with the Holy Ghost, then we are anointed with the same anointing. We are a part of the same vine. Jesus said that if we abide in Him and His words abide in us, we can ask what we will. This is a real union and a coming together into a relationship with Him. We are one with Him.

### ***Reigning as Kings and Priests***

The declaration at the sounding of the seventh angel is that the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of the Lord and His anointed one. He (the perfected man) shall rule forever and ever. To further verify this, look now in Revelation 5:10: *"And hast made us unto our God kings and priests and we shall reign on the earth."*

Revelation 12:5 speaks of the manchild who was brought forth to rule all nations with a rod of iron. This child is caught up to the throne of God. The woman who brought him forth is clothed with the sun (the greater glory) and the moon is under her feet (the lesser glory). Upon her head was a crown of twelve stars (representing divine governmental order). While she was with child and pained to be delivered, there appeared opposition in heaven. The dragon stood ready to devour the child as soon as he was born. This child was destined to rule all nations with a rod of iron (thus the catching up to the throne).

Someone declares, "Aha! Just what I thought. The rapture!" Not necessarily. We are destined for the throne. We are being caught up to the throne now! It is not off in heaven. It is the seat of God's authority and power. We are discovering where the throne of God is, and that is our seat of authority through Him.

Some will declare, "Well, the manchild is referring only to the Lord Jesus Christ." Well, let's see. Revelation 2:26 tells us precisely of whom it is speaking. *"And he that overcometh..."* We have been talking about overcoming and the will and purpose of God in this earth. *"To him that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations and he shall rule them with a rod, of iron..."* That sounds a lot like the same thing as in Revelation 12! Now isn't that interesting!

### ***Some Will Never Bow***

Revelation 20 speaks of a special period of time. There will be those who will never bow to the beast system. There are those who will never receive the mark of the beast. "How will they buy or sell?" you may ask. Who said we had to buy or sell? The children of Israel did not buy or sell in the wilderness. They didn't have charge accounts, credit cards, or welfare. There was no lack.

*"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 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. 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. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection" (Rev. 20:1-5).*

The statement, *"the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished"*, is a parenthetical statement, because the first resurrection is referring to those who came forth before the one thousand years and who rule and reign with Jesus Christ for that one thousand-year period. The second resurrection takes place at the end of this millennial period.

### ***Beheaded for the Witness of Jesus***

There were those who were beheaded for the witness of Jesus. This needs to be addressed. You might declare, "Dear Lord, you mean we have to lose our head?" We must be willing to lose our head. If you don't lose your physical head, you will lose your figurative head (or mind). We have to lose our mind to take on the mind of Christ.

Of course this is spiritualizing, and it does not take away from the fact there will be those who will be martyred. Yes, there will be martyrs. The death of a martyr may be the most honorable death there is, but a person who goes by the way of martyrdom has not been a total overcomer. The devil has prevailed partially in removing that witness from the earth for a period of time.

The last enemy to be conquered is death. Total overcomers will defy the spirit of physical death. Will there be martyrs? Yes. Does that mean we all have to be martyrs? No. The Word of God does say that we are not to love our lives unto the death (Rev. 12:11). We do count all things but loss to win Christ.

There is a death that every man, woman, boy, and girl must go through. That is basically a death to the self-life. When you die to the self-life and understand the power of the crucifixion and the working of the cross in us, we will not be concerned about our flesh. This is a very real death, perhaps even more so than physical death. There are those who would gladly choose physical death over death to the self-life, if they had the choice. Physical death is the easy way out for some. As we die to the self-life, our desires will be toward the kingdom of God. As we seek first the kingdom of God, all other things will be added.

Daniel had experienced his death or tribulation before the lion's den. The Three Hebrew Children had already had their mind made up beforehand. Their decision had been made, and they were determined to be delivered. There was no question whether they would come out or not. They were convinced God was going to manifest his supernatural power. By faith, they quenched the violence of fire. For others, by faith, kingdoms were subdued. By faith, many wrought righteousness and received their dead raised to life again. By faith, Abraham had already received his son resurrected from the dead when he offered him through obedience. He knew God was able to raise him from the dead, and he did receive him in a figure (Heb. 11).

There have been martyrs throughout the centuries, so is there little wonder there will be some in the last troublesome days? We should be willing to lay it all on the line. You talk about a commitment. People may not like to think about commitment or talk about faithfulness. There has been a type of charismatic humanism where everyone who does his own thing is a law unto himself. Humanism says to do your own thing. If it feels good, do it.

### ***And They Reigned with Christ***

How did these who died as martyrs during the reign of the beast system reign with Christ for 1000 years if they did not come forth in the first resurrection? How could they have come forth in the first resurrection if the first resurrection was before tribulation? The first resurrection had to be after tribulation. They died during tribulation, and they came forth in the first resurrection to rule and reign with Jesus upon this earth. A prerequisite to rule and reign is to be a part of the first resurrection. Flesh and blood cannot inherit this kingdom. This corruptible must put on incorruption. This mortal must put on immortality. Then shall be brought to pass the saying that death is swallowed up in victory. Death will be conquered by a people before the

thousand-year reign upon this earth. Death will not be totally conquered for all of creation until the end of the thousand years, after every enemy is destroyed, following the final conquest and incarceration of Satan.

There will be a firstfruits unto God, which means a foretaste or sample of a lot more which is coming later. The earnest of the Spirit is a portion or a guarantee of a whole lot more of the same that is to follow. It is the will of God that there be firstfruit partakers of the glory of God who literally conquer physical death in this earth. That will be before the thousand years and includes those who are alive and remain to the coming of the Lord.

### ***Purpose of 1000-year Reign***

What is the purpose of this thousand-year period? I Cor. 15:24-26 states that "*Christ shall rule and reign (Jesus the Christ and His Christ Body in union) until every enemy is put under foot.*" Not just put under foot for the Body of Christ, because that has already been accomplished before this thousand-year period. But every enemy is to be put under foot for all creation. Then shall the kingdom be offered up to the Father, and this is when the final judgment is held before the new heavens and the new earth come on the scene.

At this time, all rebellion has been put down. Satan, who has been bound for 1000 years, is loosed for a season to go out to bring together a group of rebels who will offer one final confrontation or resistance against the armies of the living God. Satan is smitten and cast into the lake of fire. Rebellion is forever conquered in the earth, and the final enemy of death is conquered.

This victory over death is not for something a thousand years off. God is looking for someone to do it now--to be a firstfruit company. He is looking for someone to put every enemy under foot now and to begin ruling with Him. When the change comes, we will be numbered among those who will be changed from corruptibility to incorruptibility; from mortality to immortality. We will be the group who will rule upon this earth in righteousness.

### ***Then Shall the Earth Learn Righteousness***

Daniel speaks of this everlasting kingdom that shall never be destroyed but shall be forever and ever. This is the time when the judgments of the Lord will continuously unfold and will teach the inhabitants of the earth righteousness. "*When the judgments of the Lord are in the earth, then will the inhabitants learn righteousness*" (Is. 26:9). We will understand what righteous rule is. We will know what it means to come under the authority of the eternal kingdom of God.

### ***Life Conditions in the Kingdom***

#### ***Universal Peace***

What are the conditions of this period of time? First, there will be universal peace. Isaiah 2:4 says, "*Neither shall they learn war any more.*" Isaiah 11:5-9 declares further, "*Neither shall they hurt nor destroy in my holy mountain saith the Lord.*" This is the time when the ferociousness and fierceness of the beast nature will be brought under subjection to and

dominion of the kingdom of God. This will be the time when the lion will eat straw like an ox. A little child shall lie down beside a lion.

### ***Dominion***

There is a story that the late William Branham purportedly shared concerning the power of the world to come. He understood the principles of the eternal kingdom of God in this present age. He believed man had the power and dominion over the creation of God. One day a raging wild bull was pressing down on him in an open pasture. Being a soft-spoken man, he calmly declared, "You are God's creation, and I have authority over you. I command you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to be at peace with me." The charging bull fell over like a meek kitten at his feet.

Sure, this may sound far out, but I believe this is a simple demonstration of the kingdom of God. This is exercising the power of the world to come, which is simply restoration to the conditions in the beginning before the fall when man had total dominion over the creation of God.

This is no more than speaking to the winds and waves of the stormy sea. Jesus implied that we ourselves should have the faith to speak to the storms in the same manner as He. He declared, "O ye of little faith. How long will I be with you?" In other words, what are you going to do when I'm not with you any longer? You need to begin exercising dominion now." Jesus simply stood up in the ship to rebuke the winds, and they obeyed Him.

Under the old covenant, Joshua spoke to the sun and moon to stand still, and they obeyed his voice. God used a mere man to part the Red Sea. Human flesh was used to part the Jordan River so the people could walk across on dry ground. That is exercising the dominion of the eternal kingdom of God.

If you can believe it, God will allow you to reach over into the power of the world to come, or the eternal kingdom of God. Hallelujah! There is no limitation to God and to His kingdom. There is no limitation to what we can have and what we can exercise.

### ***Freedom from the Curse***

The eternal kingdom of God represents a freedom from the curse. Psalms 67:6 declares, "*Then shall the earth yield her increase.*" Isaiah 55:13 says, "*Instead of the thorn the fir tree shall come forth.*" In Isaiah 35:1, "*The desert shall blossom as the rose.*" Again, Isaiah 51:3, "*The wilderness shall be as Eden and the desert like the garden of God.*"

### ***Prolongation of Human Life***

In the eternal kingdom of God, there shall be a prolongation of human life. For those who pass on into this period of time without having been a part of the firstfruit company (who have become immortal and incorruptible) physical death will still be a possibility. There will be sinners who will live a hundred years and be accursed. A person who lives 100 years will still be considered a child. There will be no more an infant of days nor an old man that hath not filled his days (Is. 65:20).

After Christ rules and reigns, every enemy is put totally under foot, including physical

death. The kingdom will then be offered up to the Father, afterwards in which the new heavens and the new earth shall appear.

To me, this is exciting. It is exciting enough to take hold of life. I want to be a part of the firstfruit group. I desire the fulness of the blessings of His kingdom which is mine now! I have the power to rebuke the powers of evil, and everything they represent.

We can be victorious as an overcomer in all things. The promises of God are to the overcomers. We are not speaking of something a long ways removed, but we are speaking of what is right at hand. Praise the name of the Lord!







## CHAPTER 12

### THE KINGDOM AGE---A DAY OF COMPLETION

We will be discussing the Kingdom Age as a day of completion. Many things discussed earlier have dealt with very practical facts concerning the coming of the Lord, tribulation, the end of the age, and the kingdom of God. It has required very little revelation, but a lot of understanding. Understanding comes through a desire and open heart before the Lord.

#### *The Need for a Spirit of Revelation*

Paul speaks of the need for the spirit of revelation in Ephesians chapter one. One of the greatest mysteries from the foundation of the world was the truth of Christ in you the hope of glory, but it is now revealed. In fact, every mystery of God is to be completed and revealed. There is nothing that has ever been hidden that will not be made manifest. Even the secrets of your heart will be manifest.

Everything that has been shrouded in mysteries concerning the kingdom of God will be revealed. God is not a mysterious God; He is a God who is willing to reveal Himself. *"The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us"* (Deut. 29:29).

God is revealing Himself, and what He is revealing belongs to us. *"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power..."* (Eph. 1:17-19).

We need to understand the greatness of the power of God; not just the greatness of God out there somewhere, but the greatness of the power of God toward us. This is wrought by the resurrection of Christ from the dead and his ascension to the right hand of power in heavenly places. These heavenly places are far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. And hath put all things under his feet..." (Eph. 1:17-22).

Aren't you glad that all things are put under his feet? The purpose of God is that we the church, with the Lord Jesus Christ as the head, might bring all things under our feet. That means every enemy, every power, and every dominion. The last enemy is the enemy of death. It is now time for the Body of Christ to recognize that we need to put sickness under our feet. We need to put troublesome pestilences and circumstances under our feet.

Thank God for every move of God. There have been several during this century. There was the pentecostal outpouring, the latter rain outpouring, the charismatic move, the word

movement, and the faith movement. If there is another move of God (and there will be), it might be categorized as the move of the gospel of the kingdom. The gospel of this kingdom must be preached in all the world as a witness. This witness testifies to the world--the principalities and the powers in heavenly places--that Jesus Christ is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. We as the Body of Christ are victorious and that will be a witness to the world.

### ***Parables Require Spiritual Revelation***

Why did Jesus speak in parables? Many people think Jesus spoke in parables because people were so simple-minded that he had to break it down in simple everyday illustrations such as parables in order to help them understand through their weak and puny carnal minds. I've got news for you. Parables were not spoken for the simple-minded. They were for the purpose of shrouding the mysteries of God so the carnal mind could not understand them. They were to be understood only through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, not through intellectual reasoning.

Jesus spoke parables to the multitudes. Then he drew his disciples aside to explain to them what he meant. That is typical of the Holy Spirit revealing to us what is being spoken in mysteries not intended for the world. The truth of God is only foolishness to the world. The mysteries of God may appear to be foolishness, but the Holy Spirit is able to make sense out of them.

Jesus said he spoke in parables because it was only for the children of the kingdom to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God. The spirit of revelation is important that we might know the greatness of His power toward us who believe, and that spirit is only available to the believers.

### ***Caution Required in Types and Shadows***

There is revelation truth in types and shadows, but they must be approached with caution. Instead of taking the scripture at face value, comparing scripture with scripture, we seek to find something deep and profound. Often we miss the simplicity of the truth of God in doing so. There are some things we don't need to find some hidden meaning in. Furthermore, there is the danger of making a type and shadow say what we want it to say in order to fit our doctrines.

God doesn't want to make things complicated. We can have the witness of what is of God and what is not of God. When we are diverted from real issues by following after some far-out dream or revelation, then it is time to put things in the proper perspective by the Word of God.

Types and shadows must be interpreted consistently by principles of interpretation and revelation. There must be patterns developed to discover true revelations in types and shadows. This trend of consistency is found throughout the Word of God. A true type or shadow is something God has given in the natural which is made from a pattern of that which is in the heavenlies.

### ***The Day of Completion***

Everything we are talking about is leading up to the kingdom of God, which is the Day of the Lord, or a perfect day. It is a day of completion. God is a God of completeness. He desires

## *"The Kingdom Age--A Day of Completion"*

to bring us to perfection or completion.

We need to make a distinction between the Day of Christ and the Day of the Lord. The day of the Lord often refers to the Sabbath day, or ultimately, the sabbath of millenniums, or the day of rest. This day of rest is the day in which we rest from our labors. The day of Christ usually refers to the revealing of the power and glory of the Lord in His day of revelation. The day of Christ is related to the coming of the Lord, and the day of the Lord is the period of time associated with the eternal kingdom of God.

Peter said a day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years is as a day (II Pet. 3:8). Prophetically, we can take as a rule of thumb that a day may be interpreted as 1000 years in Biblical interpretation.

### ***The End of Man's Day***

According to a pattern of prophetic events, the day of man is quickly coming to an end. We are nearing the end of the sixth day, or 6000 years from Adam. This can be verified by studying genealogies in the Word of God. Six is the number of man, and does not represent completion. Seven is completion. Seven is considered as a divine and complete number. If 6000 years have almost elapsed, that represents six prophetic days, or six one-thousand-year days. This is important to understand to open up a great revelation concerning the time we are living in.

On the sixth day of creation, man was created. Therefore, the sixth day has been called the day of man. On the seventh day, God rested. This was the Sabbath of God, or the Day of the Lord. This might give us a clue to what significance the number 666 has. It is not just symbolic of the mark of the beast, but it is the number of a man (Rev. 13:18). He that hath understanding, count the number.

### ***The Number of Man---666***

Six is representative of man, and it is short of perfection (which is seven). Six-six-six is the number represented by a group of three sixes, with three being a number of completion. Three sixes would indicate the completeness or the fullness or the ultimate of the manifestation of everything that is humanistic.

I personally believe that the spirit of humanism is the spirit of the antichrist. Humanism is the religion (it is a religion which has been recognized as such by the United States Supreme Court) of the antichrist. Humanism says, "We don't need God. Man is his own god. Man is complete within himself. He doesn't need revelation or anything that relates to the eternal kingdom of God. Man thinks he has all the solutions to his problems.

That basically is what the antichrist system will present to the world--solutions to their problems. It is the system of man which represents the full manifestation of man. It is man in his totality which has total sufficiency within himself. But thank God the day of man or flesh is quickly coming to a close and is ready to fall. We are on the threshold of the glorious day of the Lord.

***Jesus Is the King!***

The kingdom of God is at hand. In fact, by faith, we are living in the realm of the kingdom. It is a present-day reality. The kingdom of God is a realm or domain of power and authority. It is headed by a sovereignty or king. The king's name is Jesus! Jesus is the king! There is no other king but King Jesus. We give honor to Him and worship Him. That's the reason we bow before Him. We give glory to Him as we exalt and lift his name up.

### ***The Day of the Lord***

The end of the six thousand years brings us to the ultimate day or Sabbath of God. This is the time that Isaiah spoke concerning the cessation of war and when universal peace would prevail. The curse is lifted, and life is prolonged. It is right at the door. The kingdom of God must be preached in order that people can make preparations to enter into that kingdom.

### ***After 6 Days***

In Matthew 17:1, Jesus takes Peter, James, and John into a high mountain apart after six days. Wonder why the Word of God referred to six days? Why after six days? Six days from when? What is the significance of the six days? I believe there is a far greater spiritual interpretation than meets the eye.

"He that hath an ear let him hear." He that hath the spirit of revelation--the spirit of wisdom--the spirit of enlightenment-- let him understand.

### ***Why a Remnant?***

Wonder why Jesus did not take all twelve disciples to the top of the mountain? All twelve were chosen. Why just Peter, James, and John? Wonder why Paul referred to Peter, James and John as the pillars of the church at Jerusalem? Wonder why Jesus took Peter, James, and John into the house to pray for a person who was dead and left the others out?

Wonder why there is only a remnant in the church who says, "I'm going to press my way into the holy of holies; into the very presence of God. I'm going to sit at His feet and learn of His ways." These are the ones who will be taken aside and up into a high mountain apart. Also, there is a significance to the mountain. This will be further discussed at a later time.

### ***A Transfiguration at the Top of the Mount***

In the top of the mount, Jesus was transfigured, or transformed before them. What does it mean to be transfigured? Basically, it means to be changed. Do you begin to see the picture? After six days, there will be a pulling aside. There will be a calling together of everything that is in heaven and in earth in Christ Jesus.

At the last trump, there will be a gathering together unto the Lord. When is this? At the end of six days. The change or transfiguration takes place immediately before our entrance into the fullness or completion of the kingdom of God.

When the seventh angel sounded in Revelation, the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of the Lord and His Christ. At the end of, or at the close of the sixth day, Peter, James, and John, were taken aside and up into a high mountain apart to see something very significant.

*"The Kingdom Age--A Day of Completion"*

Jesus was transformed or transfigured before their very eyes. He was changed. He radiated the glory of the Father. His face shined as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

"The knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall fill all the earth." It is time for the church to enter the glory of God. There are times when we have entered into a portion of the glory of God in our praises. A special anointing and presence of the Lord is sensed. We experience a special closeness and intimate relationship that gives a special sense of the presence of the Lord.

That is just a taste of the glory of God. Thank God we are learning to enter that glory more fully. If we subject ourselves to the discipline of the Holy Spirit, every time we come into the house of God, we can begin to enter into that realm immediately.

***Living Totally in the Presence of the Lord***

The time is coming when people will walk and live in the presence of the Lord. It will not be the matter of putting on and taking off when we come together in the house of God. In other words, we don't just put on righteousness, holiness, praise, or glory when we step inside the doors of the church. We don't come to get spiritual. When we do come together, we are already ready, because we have been walking in the presence of the Lord all day long!

***In the Mount Shall It Be Seen***

John the revelator was taken up in the spirit into a mountain. He was caught up in the spirit. He wasn't raptured, unless being raptured meant being caught up in the spirit. The angel of the Lord took him to a high mountain apart to show him the Lamb's wife. You will never see the revelation of the Lamb's wife until you are caught up in the spirit, into the high mountain apart, for this wife was the heavenly Jerusalem descending to the earth. He was in the spirit with his feet flat on the ground.

*"The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains"* (Is. 2:2). A mountain is symbolic of a kingdom. The kingdom of God will be established far above all other kingdoms. The kingdom of God will be supreme and will prevail over all the earth. Every king of the earth will bring his glory into that kingdom. All nations shall flow unto it, and the Lord will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His ways. The law shall come forth out of Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (that one which is above).

***This Is My Beloved Son***

In the mount of transfiguration, the voice of God said, *"This is my beloved Son, hear ye him."* Jesus as the Son of God experienced a foretaste of that which will transpire at the end of the age in which the many sons of God shall participate. It was the will of God that Jesus bring many sons unto glory. It is God's will for many to be conformed into the image of the Son of God (Rom. 8:29). *"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."*

We are being changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord (II Cor. 3:18). It is from glory to glory, faith to faith, experience to experience; line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little.

Just as God the Father spoke on that day out of the heavens and said, "This is my beloved

Son", at the end of six days, there will be a change or transfiguration. A group of people will be caught up in the spirit to be taken to a high mountain apart.

When the sons return to the foot of the mountain, they will begin to minister to the needs of the multitudes. It was wonderful there in that heavenly spirit, but when they came down from the mountaintop, there was a creation that needed a manifestation of the power of God in their behalf.

There will be a lot to do in the kingdom. There is much to be brought under subjection. There must be a cleansing and purging of the earth and its elements. Every enemy must be dealt with and brought under the authority of the kingdom of God. The Christ must reign until every enemy is made his footstool.

### ***Then Shall the End Come***

Then the end shall come. The end of the world or the end of the age is the end of the seventh day. It takes seven to make completion. When the end shall come, the kingdom shall be delivered up to the Father. Afterwards, shall appear the new heavens and the new earth.

### ***Two Days Since Birth of Jesus and the Church***

Now, instead of talking about seven days, we're going to speak of three days. Instead of six days, we will consider two days. Three is also a complete number. How many days have there been since Adam? About six days, or six thousand years. How many days were there from Adam to Abraham? Approximately two days. There were about two days from Abraham to Jesus. From Jesus up to the present moment is about two days. Two thousand years have just about elapsed since the ministry of Jesus upon this earth. The Church age or the Holy Ghost dispensation has spanned two days. There is something significant to happen after those two days.

*"After two days will he revive us..."* (Hos. 6:2). Thank God for 2000 years of revival. The church has basically been in a decline spiritually from the early days of the Early Church. For a couple of centuries after the early church, there was a spiritual awakening. Somewhere during the fourth century, supposedly when the world had become Christianized, the church began a decline into spiritual dark ages. Constantine, who sought to Christianize the world, did little more than to give Paganism a Christian name. There was no real change or conversion among many of those who were brought into the church.

God began to raise up reformists such as Martin Luther and John Wesley. This began an upswing spiritually which took on significant strides at the turn of the twentieth century when the Holy Spirit was poured out on Azusa Street and began to sweep the nation. Every revival has ushered us into a greater experience and closer relationship with God. This progressive move of God represented restoration. Everything that has ever been lost will be restored. The heavens will retain the Lord Jesus Christ until the times of restitution of all things spoken by the prophets (Acts 3:21).



*"The Kingdom Age--A Day of Completion"*

### ***After 2 Days He Will Raise Us Up***

So for two days, or two thousand years, we have experienced restoration or revival. But what happens after the two days of reviving? Hosea said that in the third day he would raise us up to live in his sight (Hos. 6:3). You talk about revival! There is no revival to compare to being raised up in the likeness of the Lord. There is nothing to compare with the glorious revelation and manifestation of the kingdom of God which is destined to be fully manifest after two days.

### ***Then Shall We Know If We Follow On***

*"Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord..."* Then shall we know when we get filled with the Holy Ghost and sit down to do nothing? If we dance and shout and sing about? NO! Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord. We are being challenged to press our way on in to know the Lord. When we hear the truth of God, we become responsible for what we do with what we have heard.

As we follow on to know the Lord, He shall come unto us as the former and the latter rain upon the earth, and that is the reward of it all. You talk about revival! You talk about the manifestation of the power and glory of God! The deluge of the outpouring of the rain of God can not be compared with past revivals. You might as well get ready for it, it is coming!

When we came out of denominational churches and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, there was a persecution that came that we did not know before. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is much more accepted today than ever before, and it does not carry the stigma it once did. However, it is time to move on to greater experiences at the expense of being further persecuted. There is no time to sit back and rest on our laurels of spiritual attainments and conquests.

Jesus was not crucified because He was the declared saviour of the world. He was crucified because of his declaration and promotion as a king. He represented a threat to the established kingdoms. He was a threat to Herod and a threat to Caesar.

As long as the church just declares a message of salvation and Jesus as Saviour, you will be relatively safe from persecution. That is basically what is expected of the church as far as the world is concerned. As long as you stay in your place, there is no trouble. Doing a few good deeds for the betterment of society will not upset the government, because they themselves do that through welfare programs. When the church begins to declare the kingdom of God, exalting Jesus as King, then it becomes a threat to the kingdoms of this world. For some reason, it even angers many religious leaders, especially when the church begins to declare that we have a place of authority in reigning with Him.

It is time for the Body of Christ to take its place and start shaking kingdoms. We are citizens of the highest order in the universe--the kingdom of God. We are recognizing who we are, for we are beginning to exercise the power and authority of the kingdom of God in this earth realm in preparation for a time of leadership in the eternal kingdom of God.

### ***Go Tell That Old Fox***

Jesus said, *"Go tell that old fox..."* This of course was the address to King Herod. That was a pretty strong declaration. Jesus had a reason for calling Herod a fox. His message to

him was, "*Today and tomorrow I do cures (that's two days), but the third day I will be perfected.*" Do you get the picture? What a revelation! Two days we do cures; two days we shall be revived. The third day we will be perfected and raised up in his sight. We are on the verge of the day of completion and perfection.

This is not just an idealistic revelation. It represents the most practical thing the world will ever know. The whole creation is waiting for the manifestation of the glory of God to be revealed in his chosen ones. The time is at hand, and the kingdom of God is here. The kingdoms of darkness are crumbling. Jesus is king in his kingdom, so let's lift His name on high.

## CHAPTER 12

### THE COMING GREAT OUTPOURING

In every age there have been major moves of God's Spirit in the earth. Some of the greatest manifestations of God's glory through His people in the Old Testament came after a period of a falling away followed by a time of national repentance. When it appeared that there was no communication between heaven and earth, there suddenly appeared the angels of God announcing the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ in this earth. This was a turning point in the history of mankind.

After Jesus' ascension into heaven, there was a great manifestation of the glory of God when the day of Pentecost was fully come, and the power of the Holy Spirit was poured out upon those who were waiting for the promise of the Father. There followed one of the greatest revivals the world ever knew as the apostles of the Lord went forth in the boldness of the Holy Spirit.

From the days of the early church, for a couple of centuries, there was a phenomenal growth of the Christian faith as the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ was declared with great power. Then for many centuries the earth was thrust into the Dark Ages.

#### *Progressive Revival and Restoration*

After a lengthy span of time God began to hear the cry of His people, and He began to raise up restorers. Martin Luther was responsible for the restoration of justification by faith. Others were raised up to restore the truths of sanctification and holiness unto the Lord.

At the turn of the twentieth century, there was a tremendous outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the earth which we have labeled as the Azusa Street Revival. From this revival sprang forth spirit-filled groups across this nation and earth. Some great pentecostal movements came out of this move of God. These pentecostal groups experienced phenomenal growth during the 1920s and 30s.

There was a mighty move of the Spirit of God in the late 1940s and early 1950s, as there was a wave of the anointing of God that swept this nation in Holy Ghost Revival that brought forth some of the greatest healing evangelists the world has ever known. There was a segment of people who was beginning to move in the restoration of the five-fold ministry with an emphasis on prophetic utterance. Many labeled this move of God the "Latter Rain Revival."

Approximately twenty years later saw another major move of God in what was later characterized as the Charismatic Renewal. Literally millions of people from denominational churches began receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This revival could have been nothing less than the fulfillment of God's will in bringing a manifestation of His glory to this earth.

Out of the charismatic outpouring, came forth a renewed emphasis on the Word of God.

Once again a premium was placed on the integrity of God's Word. Added emphasis was placed on the importance of faith. Through this move of God, millions of people were challenged into a new experience in God.

### ***What Now?***

The question now is being asked, "Where do we go from here?" What is the next step? What does God desire to do now? First, one must realize that all these revivals represented little more than what had been experienced hundreds of years ago, even back to the days of the Early New Testament Church. So it would be safe to say that basically we have seen little more than a restoration of that which had already been.

However, one must also recognize the fact that far more people have been reached in recent years than had ever been imagined. For example, according to some sources, there were only about 1,000,000 known spirit-filled (tongue talkers) in the world in the 1950s. I am sure there were more who were not identified. (You must recognize that it wasn't near as popular then as it is now!). Today, there reportedly are over 200,000,000 spirit-filled believers in the world!

A phenomenal revival of the Holy Spirit has swept third world nations. Right now there is one of the greatest revivals ever known that is sweeping the continent of Africa. In South America, the Holy Spirit is being poured out in unprecedented proportions. Great miracles of healing and deliverance are being reported.

The church in one sense of the word has been going through a lull for the past few years. I believe the time is ripe for another major move of the Spirit of God in this earth. Perhaps this will be the ultimate move which will usher in the fulness of the kingdom of God. It appears that there has been in this century a major move of God about every 20 years. So, according to this pattern, the time is now for such a revival. If there has been such an increase (over 20,000%) in the number of spirit-filled believers over the past 30 years, I wonder what the next major move of God will bring?

### ***We Are Living in the Earth's Finest Hour***

I believe that we are living in the day of great visitation. I declare that this is the greatest day of which mankind has ever been privileged to be a part. This is the day to which the prophets of old looked forward. Of course it is so easy for one to wish they had lived in a different day. Many long to have lived in the days of the prophets or the days of the Lord Jesus while he walked this earth.

But, there has never been a day like this day. All of creation is standing on tiptoes for this day to be fulfilled. All the great men of faith recorded in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews died not having received the promise, God having provided some better thing for us. Without us, they can not be perfected (Heb. 11:39-40).

### ***They Knew Not Their Day of Visitation***

As it was in the days of the Lord Jesus in His earthly ministry, many know not the day of their visitation (Lu. 19:44). *"If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things*

## *"The Kingdom Age--A Day of Completion"*

*which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes"* (Lu. 19:42). There are those today who say, "I don't see anything outstanding." There were those who had not the foggiest idea what was going on around them when Jesus was performing miracles all around them. In fact, they crucified Him. Many didn't recognize the move on Azusa Street. Proper honor and respect was not given to the healing revival as well as the charismatic revival of our day. When the next great move of God comes into full focus, there will still be those who will not receive it, but there will be those who will recognize and accept it.

### ***If the Windows of Heaven Were Opened...***

Some will declare that if the windows of heaven were opened (and they are), how can this thing be? As the prophet declared "it will happen but you'll only see it with your eyes" so shall it be now (II Kings 7:2). Many will simply stand afar off to see what will come of it (II Kings 2:7). God is calling a people who will commit themselves to the purposes of God. The blessings of His outpouring will come to those who anticipate it.

### ***A Double Portion***

This coming great outpouring of the Holy Spirit will represent the double portion anointing. It will be the outpouring of the former and latter rain of God together upon the earth. God promised to pour His spirit out upon all flesh (Joel 2:28). Of course this is what Peter referred to on the day of Pentecost, but wouldn't it be safe to say that only represented a partial fulfillment of Joel's prophecy? If those were the last days, these would have to be the last of the last days.

What can we expect in this outpouring of God? Joel said that old men would dream dreams, young men would see visions, the sons and daughters would prophesy, and the handmaidens and servants would receive of this anointing. As we will see a little later, any move of God in the past will not even be comparable with this latter day outpouring.

### ***Manifestation of the Supernatural***

This outpouring will be characterized by the supernatural. Signs, wonders, and miracles will follow those who believe. Sure, there was a wave of signs, wonders, and miracles in the revivals of the 50s and 60s. There were legitimate miracles. Yet, I believe that God is raising up vessels of honor with the nature of the Father who will usher in one of the greatest revivals of signs, wonders, and miracles the world has ever known.

Jesus' ministry was marked by the supernatural. Whatever reason this miracle ministry was justified then is still justifiable today. God still honors His word with signs, wonders, and miracles following. It is God's approval upon His servants (Acts 2:22). Jesus said if you can't believe me, just believe me for the work's sake.

The miraculous of God will bring the spirit of conviction which will lead to repentance. God's manifestation of grace through miracles reveals His goodness, and the goodness of God leads to repentance (Rom. 2:4).

Probably one of the greatest justifications of the manifestation of miracles is based on the fact that the creation of God needs the supernatural. People are hurting, needing the

manifestation of God's power and glory. The miraculous reveals the very nature of God, which is to bring life, healing, and deliverance.

Jesus' great love and compassion for suffering humanity motivated Him to perform miracles of healing in behalf of His people. I sincerely believe that soon we will see the beginning of a wave of healing across this nation and world which will reveal the compassion of the Lord Jesus Christ. With the increase of the fear of AIDS and other pestilences and plagues, God is going to intervene supernaturally in behalf of those who believe.

Of course there are those who say that the days of miracles disappeared with the apostles. I am confident that anyone who would be reading this book would not be of that opinion. My response to that charge is that God's glory and power never diminishes. If it has, then it is not God's fault, for that is not His plan. It is because we limit Him through unbelief. The plan and purpose of God always unfolds with greater revelation, clarity, and power. The unfolding of His purposes is progressive. As time progresses, His purposes never represent less manifestation of His power.

### ***The Latter Day Revival to Be Greater***

The latter day revival through the latter day church would have to be characterized by the word "greater." The glory of the latter house shall be greater than the glory of the former house (Hag. 2:9). Jesus said greater works than these shall you do (John 14:12). I have to believe that this latter day outpouring will represent greater miracles than we have experienced. The healing revivals of the past would have to be only a foretaste of that which is to come.

What was called the "latter rain" revival of the late 1940s and 50s was only the perception of those of that day. I don't believe that it represented the fulfillment of what the Word declares to be the genuine outpouring of the latter rain. Hosea says, "*Then shall be know, if we follow on to know the Lord; his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain upon the earth* (Hosea 6:3). Joel states, "*Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month*" (Joel 2:23). The following verse gives us a clue as to what we can expect spiritually. "*And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil.*" The next couple of verses talk about restoration and plenty. So we could characterize this great move of God by fullness, overflowing, restoration, and plenty.

### ***Rain in Due Season***

When a farmer plants a seed into the ground, he does so expecting a harvest. In order to receive this harvest, there must be rain in due season. The former rain is needed to bring the seed up out of the ground. Of course there is the need for rains throughout the growing season, but the next crucial rain is what is referred to as the latter rain. This is the rain that is needed right before the harvest which helps to bring the fruit into full maturity.

### ***Latter Rain to Bring Maturity of Harvest***

The latter rain outpouring of God's Spirit will bring the seed of God to maturity. Then

## *"The Kingdom Age--A Day of Completion"*

will come the greatest harvest the world has ever known. This will be the harvest of the end days.

Hosea states that Jesus will come as the former and latter rain upon the earth. It will be the manifestation of Jesus all the way. He is the focus of every revival and every move of God.

Joel says that the former and latter rain will be combined. This tells me that everything these two outpourings represented will be what this last day outpouring is. The former rain speaks of those who are born into the kingdom of God. There will always be a need for new birth. The days of salvation are not over (salvation of spirit, which in days gone by was referred to as the salvation of the soul). Jesus is still in the saving business. In fact, you will see more people born into the kingdom of God than you have ever even imagined would be possible.

Then there will be the move of the Spirit of God which will bring the Body of Christ into maturity. The church must be perfected and adorned as a Bride awaiting the coming of her groom. This maturing will come as the result of the effects of the latter rain.

### *Fulfillment of the Feasts of Israel*

One of the greatest revelations from the Word of God concerning this coming great outpouring can be found in the spiritual fulfillment of the three major feasts of Israel. The feasts are commonly referred to as the Feast of Passover, the Feast of Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles.

These natural feasts represent a pattern or figure of that which is in the heavenlies. The natural represents the visible representation of that which is spiritual. We will see that without a shadow of doubt the first two of these feasts have been fulfilled spiritually in the experiences of salvation through the blood of Jesus and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The fulfillment of these natural feasts gives us a little bit of an idea what can be expected in the next great move of God, especially by looking at the spiritual fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles.

#### *The Feast of Passover*

The celebration of the Feast of Passover was one of the most important events in the life of the Israelites. It was a reminder of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. On the evening before they were to have departed from Egypt, they were commanded of the Lord to kill the passover lamb. The blood was to be applied to the doorposts of their house. As a result, salvation from the death angel was realized. The Lord declared that when He saw the blood He would pass over them, thus the name, Passover. Also, this feast has been referred to as the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The leaven was left out because they did not have time for the leaven to work. They had to act quickly in preparing to leave Egypt.

Jesus was the lamb prepared from the foundation of the world to become the sacrifice which would deliver us from the bondage of sin. Jesus was crucified during Passover. He became the ultimate fulfillment of the Passover. He shed his blood once and for all for the sins of the world. It is very easy to see that our experience of salvation accomplished by the shed blood of the Lord Jesus is the spiritual fulfillment of the Feast of Passover.

#### *The Feast of Pentecost*

The scripture says in Acts 2, that when the day of pentecost was fully come, the Holy Ghost was poured out upon all those who assembled awaiting the promise of the Father. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost and spoke with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:1-4). The second definite spiritual experience, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, was the spiritual fulfillment of the natural Feast of Pentecost.

### ***The Feast of Tabernacles***

The first two fulfillments of the feasts of Israel gives us understanding as to what we could expect in the final fulfillment, the Feast of Tabernacles. The implication is certainly that we could expect a spiritual experience. Since the Feast of Pentecost represents the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is an earnest of our inheritance, we could carry an extension to the Feast of Tabernacle and see its fulfillment as the fullness of the inheritance, or the fullness of the Spirit. Pentecost represented the firstfruits, which says there is a greater fulfillment coming down the road.

I believe that we have received the Spirit by measure, but God wants to fill us with His fulness. Jesus possessed the Spirit without measure. *"For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him."* (John 3:34).

The fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles can be tied in with that which accompanies the latter rain outpouring of the Spirit of God. Everything of the endtime points toward fullness. God will pour His Spirit out without measure. There will be no spiritual lack or drought. There will be an overflowing of the corn, wine, and oil. Out of this anointing will flow the supernatural manifestation of the power and glory of God the world has never seen. It will mark restoration of everything the enemy has stolen and destroyed. To understand this concept more fully, let's look a little closer at the Feast of Pentecost, because that is a little bit more familiar to us. Hopefully, most everyone who is reading this is at least acquainted with the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

### ***The Baptism of the Holy Spirit Only the Firstfruit***

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the most glorious experience to date available to the Body of Christ. It is the enablement of God to grant us the power to do the works of the Lord Jesus Christ. With it comes the boldness of God to overcome the enemy. The key to understanding the coming great outpouring of God's Spirit, is that everything the baptism of the Holy Spirit represents is only the firstfruits of what we can expect to come. That is what the Feast of Pentecost represented, the firstfruits. The firstfruits represented only a portion of what was to follow a little later in all its fulness.

The Feast of Pentecost has also been referred to in the Word of God as the Feast of Weeks (Deut. 16:16) and the Feast of Harvest (Ex. 23:16). The Feast of Harvest is associated with the "firstfruits of thy labours" (Ex. 23:16; Lev. 23:17, 20). The Apostle Paul refers to us who have the "firstfruit of the Spirit" (Rom. 8:23; II Cor. 1:22; II Cor. 5:5).



### ***Feast of Tabernacles Great Ingathering***

The Feast of Tabernacles is also referred to as the Feast of Ingathering, which is in the end of the year, and will be when we will gather our labours out of the field (Ex. 23:16). This certainly is in line with the concept that this coming great outpouring is associated with a great harvest or ingathering. There is yet to be a move of God which will usher thousands and millions into the kingdom of God. The everlasting gospel will be preached as the sickle is put into the harvest.

### ***A Heavenly Vision Concerning the Endtimes***

I would like to share a portion of the experience my wife Nancy had in a vision that related to this move of God in the endtimes. This vision is recorded in a book entitled, *I Was Caught Up to the Third Heaven*. She states, "...all of a sudden I was translated again like the wink of an eye. Then I was on an island. On this island, I didn't know anyone there, and I felt alone. It appeared the people there were of a brown skin. Fear gripped my heart, not because of the color of their skin, but because I felt alone. Then looking to my left, I saw Jesus and realized that I was not alone. Knowing that Jesus was with me, I was empowered by the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues. I did not know their language and didn't know what I had spoken until thousands of people came and gave their heart to God. One universal word that I understood was "hallelujah." This multitude began to sing and praise God with Hallelujahs." Without knowing what was taking place, literally thousands had come to give their hearts to God. Then all at once I was translated to another place. I spoke in another language to another people with the same results as before with thousands giving their hearts to God with praises of "Hallelujah" (pp. 7-8).

I believe this is just one insight into what is to be expected during this coming great outpouring of God's Spirit upon this earth. The whole creation is groaning for the manifestation of the Sons of God. There will be a great response to the preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom of God with signs, wonders, and miracles following.

### ***Living Waters in Desert Places***

The desert (spiritually) will blossom like a rose (Is. 35:1). It will rejoice with joy and singing. The Lord states that when the poor and needy seek water, and find none, the Lord will hear them. He then promised He would open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys. He would make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water (Is. 41:17-18).

He said further that He would give waters in the wilderness and rivers in the desert to give drink to His people (Is. 43:20). *"For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring..."* (Is. 44:3).

### ***A Revival of Holiness***

I believe this coming great outpouring of God will bring with it a revival of holiness unto

the Lord. *"In that day (day when the Lord shall be worshipped in the Feast of Tabernacles) shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD..."* (Zech. 14:20).

*"Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap:...and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness"* (Mal. 3:1-3).

Jesus will present unto himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish (Eph. 5:27). Every man that has the hope of being like Jesus at His return purifies himself, even as Jesus is pure (I John 2-3).

### ***To Be Fulfilled on This Side of the Veil***

Many will concede that the first two feasts of Israel were fulfilled in the experiences of conversion and the infilling of the Holy Spirit, yet they believe that the next great move will be on the other side of the veil. I cannot believe that God will only fulfill 2/3 of His plan and purpose in this earth. The first two were fulfilled in this earth, and I believe the last third will be, also.

God desires to pour out the fulness of Himself upon this earth. He desires to bring forth a people in His likeness. All the will of God will be fulfilled in this earth, and I believe that will be realized in the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles.

### ***Behold, I Do a New Thing***

Every other move of God will pale in comparison with this latter day outpouring of God's Spirit. I would like to make an interesting observation. This outpouring will represent a "new thing." Every major move of God outside the spiritual fulfillment of the natural feasts of Israel (Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles) represented restoration of something that had previously been lost.

As has been previously stated, a few centuries after the birth of the Church, the world (including the Church) fell into the Dark Ages. Every move of God represented restoration, such as justification by faith, sanctification, water baptism, Holy Spirit baptism, the gifts of the Spirit, the Word of Faith, etc. When the Feast of Tabernacles is fulfilled, we will experience a move of God never known before. It will truly be a new thing. This is exciting!

### ***The Purposes of God Will Be Fulfilled***

All the plan and purpose of God will be fulfilled in this Feast of Tabernacles. God has always been ready for revival, but there is an outpouring unique to the endtime. This outpouring will bring multitudes into the kingdom of God. This represents the ingathering which will be marked by a manifestation of the supernatural. The church will come to fullness, perfection, or maturity. That which the whole creation of God has been waiting for will finally be realized. God will bring forth a people which He will gladly declare to the world that "these are my Sons, and I am well pleased with them." What a day of expectation, and no one will be disappointed.

*"The Kingdom Age--A Day of Completion"*

***The Time Is Ripe***

How long do we wait? I'm not sure when the precise time of this total fulfillment will come, but I will reiterate that the time is ripe. Now is the time for the people of God to humble themselves before Him in true repentance and intercede for revival in our land.

There is no reason not to believe that God is willing to begin moving by His supernatural power this year. Our expectation should be for a spiritual awakening in our nation. It will come as our hearts are turned toward the Lord. I would like to close this chapter with the words from a familiar chorus:

"God is moving, by His Spirit...moving o'er all the earth. Signs and wonders...as God moveth...move O Lord in Me." Amen and amen!

# CHAPTER 13

## EVEN SO COME QUICKLY

Many questions have been raised in this book. Hopefully, answers have been provided. What are some of the purposes of God in the earth? What is the mission of the church? Can we be like Jesus? What about the kingdom of God? So much is being said about it. What is it? Is it in the earth today? When will Jesus return to earth? Will it be before or after tribulation? Where does Israel fit into the plan of God? Can Satan be defeated? Will the people of God get stronger or weaker? Will the forces of darkness triumph? Can we expect a revival or a great falling away?

As we look around us, we find so many who are confronted with such a myriad of problems and difficulties. The threat of war looms over the horizon, even though it appears at the moment there is peace. Governments and politicians are being exposed everyday as corrupt. The economy is shaky. The fear of AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) and other pestilences and plagues are sweeping the nation. Humanism is on the rise. There appears to be less respect for the things of God among many than ever before. Sex-related sins including fornication, adultery, and homosexuality appear to be almost commonplace, as they are fueled by ungodly pornography. The sin of abortion is a curse upon our nation. Illegal drugs have become a blight upon our society. Social injustices abound. Our public schools are deteriorating as mention of the name of the Lord is prohibited. The textbooks are totally void of any references to God and morality. The spirit of greed and self-centeredness prevails across the land. We could go on and on. A bit depressing, isn't it?

What is the end result? Is there any hope? Yes, there is! Can these things be turned around? Yes, they can! There is hope in the lordship and kingship of Jesus Christ! The Kingdom of God holds the key as answers and solutions to all these dilemmas. God has called the church to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth. It is time for the people of God to shake themselves and to arise in the glory of His majesty and to demonstrate His power through the anointing of the Holy Ghost to a perishing world. Jesus has come to redeem his creation.

All of this may appear to be an insurmountable task. You may feel it is too late; things have gone too far. Remember this. God is never late. He is always on time. In the dispensation of the fullness of time, Jesus was born the first time as the saviour and redeemer of the world.

You can rest assured that God will hear the groaning of the prisoners and will come to release them from their bondage. You can expect a divine, supernatural, sovereign intervention of God Almighty. The earth is in store for a work of restoration. Every enemy will be defeated. The whole creation of God will lift its voice in glorious triumph as we prevail over every foe. What a day of excitement and rejoicing! The jubilee of all jubilees will be declared in all the earth!

What anticipation of hope and joy awaits the church! Revival is coming. The church will be a strong and viable force in the earth. Her voice will be heard. God is raising up trumpets or prophetic voices throughout the land. People will begin to respond from far and near

*"The Coming Great Outpouring"*

as God's sons will come from the North, South, East, and West.

When God's will and purpose prevails, the wickedness of this world will be of little consequence. The antichrist spirit must bow before the name which is above every name--the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Darkness has to flee as He comes forth to be revealed in the brightness of His glorious appearing. Sickness, disease, pain, suffering, heartache, and disappointment will have to flee. Isaiah saw the day when swords and spears would be beaten into plowshares, as universal peace will prevail.

Our cry is, "So come quickly, Lord Jesus!" Come forth in all your fulness, power, and glory. Be revealed through your people. Manifest your presence. Be real in the hearts of your people, because the world is tired of phoniness.

When Jesus comes, He will bring His rewards with Him to recompense those who have been faithful to His calling. The Spirit is calling. Will you hear? For those who are faithful over the small things, they will be rulers over much.

The scripture says we will reap if we faint not. The seed has been sown. The rains have come, and we anxiously await the latter rain that will bring full maturity to the fruit. Then comes the harvest. Everything we have labored for will be realized as we see the gathering together of the wheat, as the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of God.

The time is at hand. Look up, for your redemption draws nigh. The final work of redemption will be completed as our mortal bodies must give way to His immortal substance of incorruptibility. All of the sufferings of this present time will not even be counted worthy of that glory which shall be revealed in us.

I can hardly wait! Even so come quickly, Lord Jesus. What a glorious day--the day of His appearing. Amen.