

Revelation Book One

Jesus Christ
The
Resurrected King

B. R. Hicks

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Resurrected King

by B. R. Hicks

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**JESUS CHRIST
THE RESURRECTED KING**

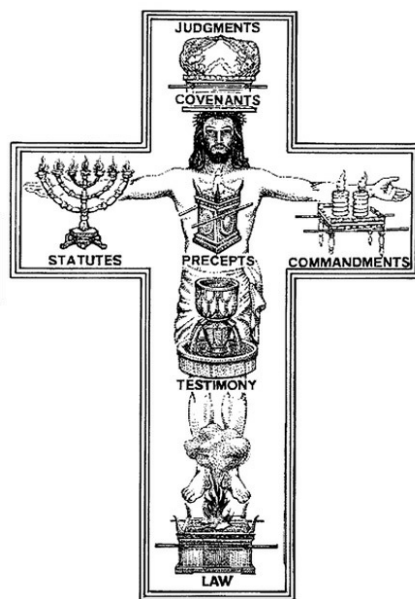
PREFACE

The Book of Revelation has served for years as the most popular of theological battle grounds. Some people recognize the entire Book of Revelation as nothing more than a figment of the imagination, something that the Apostle John dreamed up to pass away the long hours of exile on the isle of Patmos. Many others acknowledge the divine inspiration of the book, but spend hours trying to twist the passages to fit some particular doctrine which they favor. All carnal attempts at unraveling the mysteries of this book end in a frustrating tangle of confusion.

It takes the Spirit of God to unravel the snarled mass of conflicting thoughts and reveal Jesus Christ in all of His resurrected power, glory, and beauty. Revealing Christ is no new ministry for God. Through thousands of years He has exercised infinite patience in the unveiling of the stature of His Son to the world. In the Garden of Eden, God gave man an opportunity to eat of the spiritual Tree of Life, but Adam male and female ignored the Tree of Life and chose to partake of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

God mercifully provided a covering for sinful man, and for a time, man walked in this blessing and revelation of God's mercy. Later when the children of Israel needed a way of approach to and communion with a Holy God, the Lord called Moses up into the cloud and fire on the top of Mount Sinai where He provided the blueprints for the Old Testament Tabernacle.

The first Tabernacle, known as the Mosaic Tabernacle, was only a shadow of the stature and ministry of the second greater and more perfect Tabernacle, Jesus Christ. The seven pieces of furniture in the Mosaic Tabernacle were laid out in the form of a cross, each piece representing a portion of the fulness of the spiritual stature of Jesus Christ.



But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building (Hebrews 9:11).

God continued the revelation of His Son as the Holy Ghost overshadowed the virgin Mary. The body or tabernacle thus conceived was a new fabric, a new order of building infinitely superior to the earthly structure. The second Tabernacle appeared with such brightness and glory that He caused the shadows to flee away; the Living Truth stood revealed as the illuminating splendor of the noon day sun. However, since the Mosaic Tabernacle was a divine blueprint or outline of the stature of the Son of God, it becomes the guiding light to reveal the way to grow up

unto the measure of the fulness of Christ. "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:" (Ephesians 4:13). The stature of truth (portrayed in the four points of the cross) depicts the spiritual experiences that can be ours as we grow into spiritual maturity in Jesus Christ.

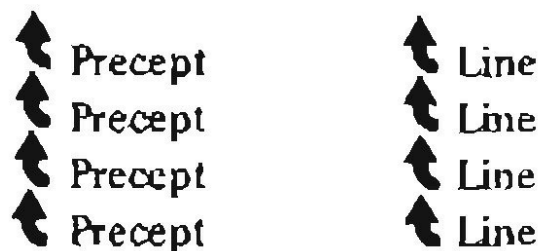
The Old Testament Tabernacle is a picture of the Son of God in whom is hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, it is also the key that unlocks the wisdom and knowledge of all other Scripture. The whole Bible is a beautiful revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ; therefore, God can properly say that ALL Scripture is profitable. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:16,17).

The Book of Revelation, the great prophetic book of the New Testament, uncovers the full stature of the resurrected, glorified Son of God, but failure to accept the truth that ALL Scripture is profitable has caused many to lose their way as they have studied this Book. We cannot deny one portion of God's Word and expect the Spirit of God to continue opening our minds to understand greater and higher realms of truth.

As we have prayerfully and humbly sought the Lord for greater understanding of the glorious mysteries hidden in the last book of God's Holy Word, He has revealed secrets taken from ALL Scripture that were like great keys in unlocking new planes of truth. The first key is found back in the Book of Isaiah.

FIRST KEY—The Revelation of ALL of God's Word is progressive.

Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little: (Isaiah 28:9,10).



Revelation comes as God gives precept upon precept, line upon line. This is how we learn; this is God's provision for the growth of His Word in our hearts. God reveals His Word by adding one layer of truth upon another layer of truth. This principle applies to God's Word of blessing, His Word of judgment, and also to His Word of prophecy. Head knowledge inflates the ego, whereas God's applied knowledge effects a change in the heart which enables us to progress in our spiritual growth. Maturity comes slowly but progressively, here a little and there a little as we assimilate what we have already received.

SECOND KEY—Book of Revelation tells of things not yet fulfilled at the time the revelation was given.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to *shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass*; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John; (Revelation 1:1).

...Come up hither, and *I will shew thee things which must be hereafter* (Revelation 4:1).

The key found in the very first verse of the first chapter and repeated in chapter four, enable us to rightly divide the Book of Revelation. God's last prophetic book pertains to future events—things which must be hereafter; it is not primarily concerned with historical events, thus ruling out many false interpretations of the Scripture. For example, many teach that the woman described in chapter twelve is the Virgin Mary and the man child to whom she gave birth is Jesus Christ. This interpretation cannot be true, however, because the birth of Jesus was a historical fact at the time John received the revelation on the isle of Patmos.

In order to avoid any possible confusion whereby some may claim that contradictions exist in the Word of God,

let us clarify Revelation 1:19 which reads:

Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;
(Revelation 1:19).

In this verse the angel commanded John to write: 1) Things which thou hast seen, 2) Things which are, and 3) Things which shall be hereafter. We find no contradictions because the beginning of the revelations starts in verse one; the first vision that John saw was the revelation of the exalted and resurrected Christ (“things which thou hast seen”). Immediately God gave John a revelation of the seven churches that existed in his day (“things which are”). Then the revelation proceeded to include things which God had in mind for the latter days (“things which shall be hereafter”). In obedience to the command in verse 19, John wrote that which he had seen from the beginning of the revelation, that which existed in his day, and that which was yet to come in the future.

THIRD KEY—The vision alternates between earth and heaven.

This key also eliminates much confusion. The Book of Revelation describes scenes on earth, scenes in heaven, and scenes under the earth. For example, the first vision pertaining to the *hereafter* describes the events which will take place on the earth during the tribulation period. We know already that revelation is progressive. However, since it does not necessarily follow in consecutive time sequence, it takes the Spirit and anointing of the Holy Ghost to pull back the veil from our eyes and let us see God’s calendar of events scheduled for the last days.

With these three keys of knowledge, let us begin to study this greatest of all revelations—the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Book of Revelation presents four pictures of Jesus: Jesus Christ as King, Jesus Christ as the Lamb, Jesus Christ on the White Cloud, and Jesus Christ on the White Horse. Since it would be impossible to cover all four pictures of Jesus presented throughout Revelation in one book, the present volume will be limited to the study of Jesus Christ as King. Subsequent volumes will include the other pictures of Jesus Christ in the Book of Revelation.

—The Author

Revelation Book One

Jesus Christ

The

Resurrected King

CHAPTER ONE

JOHN'S INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF REVELATION (Revelation 1:1-20)

No one word in human tongue is sufficient to describe the Saviour, God's Anointed One. No single picture is broad enough to encompass the fulness of the character, the attributes, and the nature of Christ. In the Garden of Eden, Adam male and female saw the Tree of Life, but failed to recognize its worth. Abraham looked through the eyes of faith and saw the Lamb of God afar off. Moses turned aside to see a burning bush that was not consumed; that revelation changed his whole life. God used this man to lead His people out of Egyptian bondage and later gave him a vision of the stature of Jesus Christ In the form of the Old Testament Tabernacle.

JESUS CHRIST
THE KING OF KINGS
AND
LORD OF LORDS
ON A WHITE HORSE



JESUS CHRIST
THE SLAIN LAMB

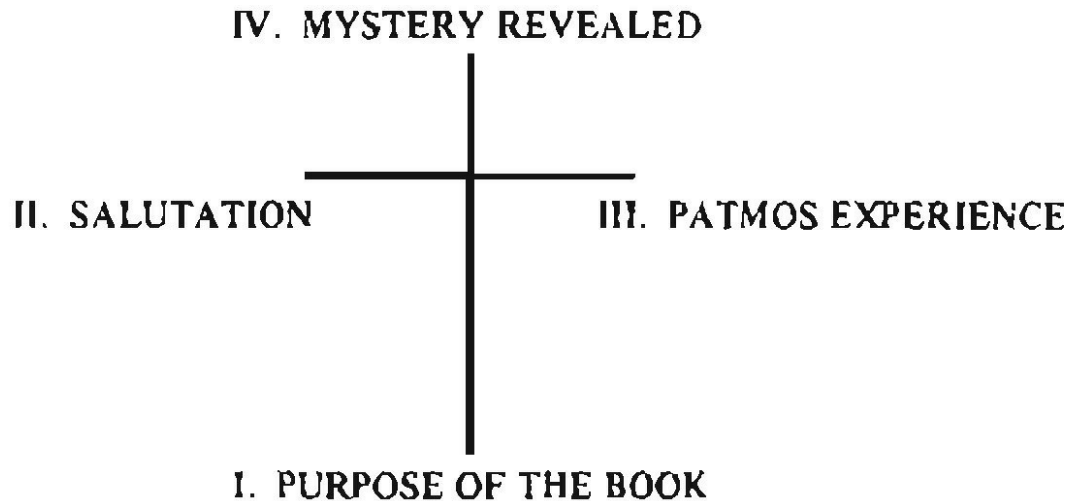


JESUS CHRIST
THE SON OF MAN ON A WHITE CLOUD



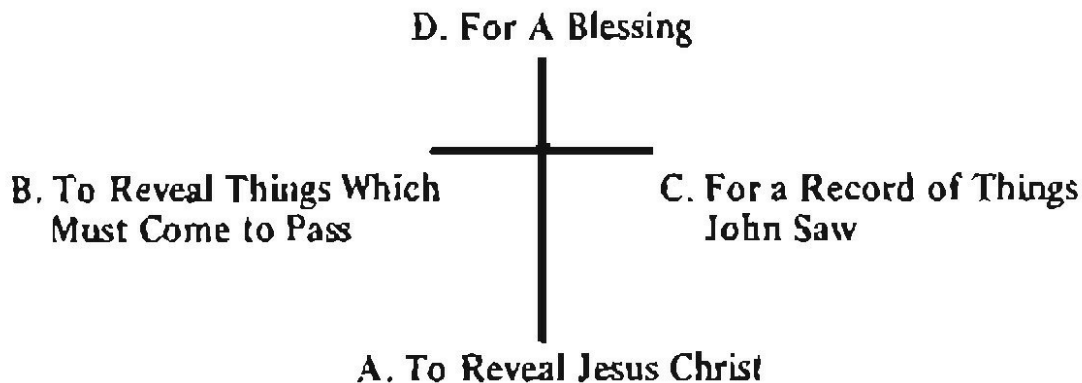
JESUS CHRIST
THE RESURRECTED KING

In the opening vision, John the Beloved saw Jesus Christ standing revealed as KING in the midst of the seven churches, thus confirming the truth that He is the King of the saints of God.



I. PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; ...(Revelation 1:1).



A fourfold purpose immediately launches us into the reason for the Book of Revelation. It is the prelude to the beginning of the spectacular drama to be unfolded before the Apostle John. The very opening words begin a climatic crescendo. Our hearts stand still with awe and wonder. This is THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST.

A. TO REVEAL JESUS CHRIST

The first purpose of the Book of Revelation is to reveal Jesus Christ, who is the subject and figure of the whole book. In this context, the revelation of Jesus Christ relates to His personal manifestation and appearing, not only to the church, but to the whole world at His second advent. This same Greek word, *Apocalypse*, is used in other New Testament passages which also bear this thought of the personal appearance of our Lord.

...waiting for the coming [Apocalypse] of our Lord Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 1:7).

...neither was I taught it, but by the revelation [Apocalypse] of Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:12).

...when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven [at the Apocalypse of the Lord], with his mighty angels

(II Thessalonians 1:7).

That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing [at the Apocalypse] of Jesus Christ (I Peter 1:7).

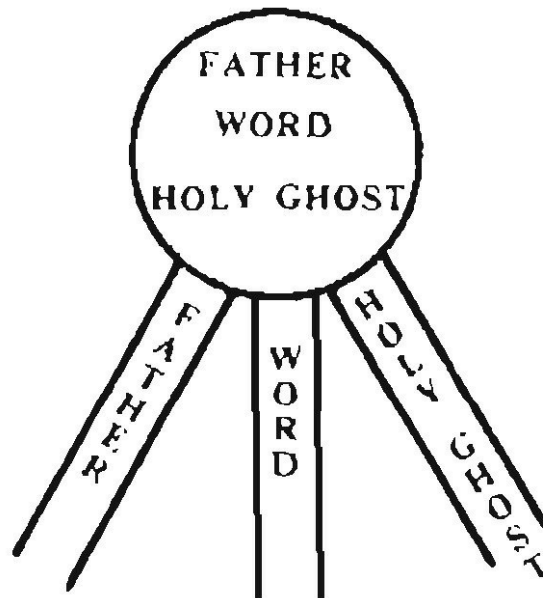
Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation [at the Apocalypse] of Jesus Christ; (I Peter 1:13).

Surely Jesus Christ has already been well revealed in the other 65 books of the Bible. We have seen Him revealed in His pre-incarnate state back in eternity. In the Old Testament dispensation we have frequent manifestations of Jesus Christ; for example. He is referred to as the Angel of Jehovah, the Messenger of the Covenant, and the Holy One of Israel. The New Testament record beautifully reveals the Lord Jesus Christ, but the revelation of the Book of Revelation carries a very singular and specific unveiling of our Lord Jesus Christ. This revelation pertains to His second coming at which time He will set in order all things for the final and perfect age. The meaning of the word *Apocalypse* as it is used here is clear; it is the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the revelation of Jesus Christ. The name *Jesus* refers to His humanity, while the name *Christ* speaks of the divine side. The man Jesus had a beginning, but the Christ has always existed, for He is God.

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

God is a uniplural noun (denoting plurality within the one God); so within the Godhead exists the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost. God is one, and yet He manifests Himself through these three streams of revelation—Father, Word and Holy Ghost.



The Word is Christ, the eternal Logos of the Godhead. The Christ is also called the Rock.

Moreover, brethren. I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in (the sea: And did all eat the same spiritual meal; And did all drink (the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that ROCK WAS CHRIST (I Corinthians 10:1-4).

The Rock that followed Israel in the wilderness was none other than Christ Himself, the Word of God. He was that spiritual Rock of which they did drink. Another conclusive Scripture is found in Deuteronomy 32. Here we see that the work of the Rock (the Christ) is perfect and He is called “a God of truth.”

Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a GOD OF TRUTH and without iniquity, just and right is he (Deuteronomy 32:1-4).

We conclude that Christ is the Word, for Christ is the Rock, who is a God of truth, and the Word is truth (John 17:17).

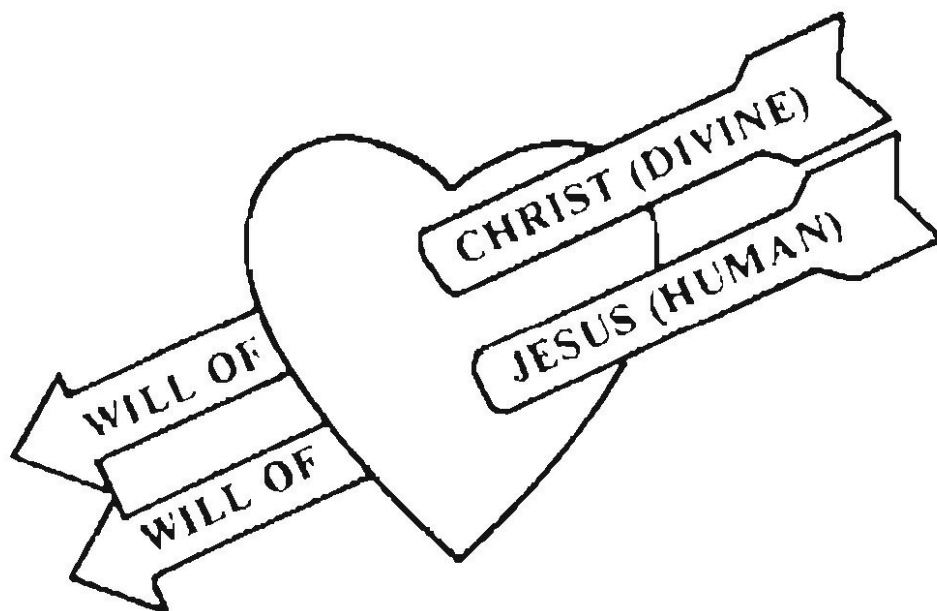
The name *Christ* relates to the part of Him that is divine, for the Christ is the eternal Word of God (the second person in the Godhead). He is the eternal Logos of God, the Word, the Rock, the God of Truth. He is perfect and just in all His ways, and worthy of worship, for He is God.

The name of *Christ* was coupled with the name of *Jesus*. Jesus has to do with the name of the man or His humanity side. A virgin maiden was overshadowed by the power of the Holy Ghost, and a supernatural conception took place.

And the angel said unto her. Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shall conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS...Then said Mary unto the angel. How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her. The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God (Luke 1:30-35).

But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins...Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us (Matthew 1:20-23).

This was the incarnation, for the Word became flesh. The Christ (the eternal Logos of God) entered into a body of flesh and joined Himself to the human race. We now have Emmanuel with us or God in flesh.



This explains how Jesus could be tempted to sin. Christ, who was God, could not be tempted. Although Jesus, the man, was sinless, He had his own human will with its accompanying prerogative of power of choice. Satan did not center his temptations upon Christ, but focused primarily upon Jesus, the man, for he knew that the Christ could not be tempted, while the man, Jesus, could.

Then was JESUS led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil (Matthew 4:1).

Three times the Devil tempted Jesus, each time with the challenge “IF thou be the Son of God...” In each case the man Jesus withstood the temptation, responding with the Word of God as His answer. Never once did Jesus divorce His human will from the Divine will of the Christ that was in Him. Jesus said, “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work” (John 4:34).

For verily he took not on him the nature of angels: but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted (Hebrews 2:16-18).

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities: but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15).

Although Jesus was tempted in all points as we, yet He was without sin. There was never a battle concerning the name, Jesus, but rather over the name Christ. No one denied the existence of the man Jesus; the rejection came, however, when Jesus claimed to be the Christ. The knowledge that Jesus was the Christ came only by revelation from the Father. It was given to the following:

1. To the Humble—the Shepherds

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is CHRIST the Lord (Luke 2:11).

2. To the Holy—Simeon, a just and devout man

And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord’s CHRIST (Luke 2:26).

3. To the Followers of the Lamb

a. Andrew

He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the CHRIST (John 1:41).

b. Martha

She saith unto him, Yea Lord: I believe that thou art the CHRIST, the Son of God, which should come into the world” (John 11:27).

c. Peter

And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the CHRIST, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven (Matthew 16:16,17).

4. To the Thirsty

a. The Samaritan Woman at the Well

Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? (John 4:29).

b. The Samaritans

...for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the CHRIST, the Saviour of the world (John 4:42).

The union between Christ the Word and Jesus the man was not an eternal union until after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, at which time He was declared Lord.

Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36).

We see, then, from the opening words of the Book of Revelation that the first purpose of this book is to reveal Jesus Christ.

B. TO REVEAL THINGS WHICH MUST COME TO PASS

The second purpose of the Book of Revelation is to reveal “things which must shortly come to pass.” Since the Book of Revelation was given after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, it is not concerned with any of the historic events that were connected with His earthly life and death. Jesus had already been made Lord and Christ, had ascended into heaven, and was (and now is) seated at the right hand of God. This further revelation of Jesus Christ was given to John that he, in turn, might show to God’s servants the things that were shortly to come to pass.

C. FOR A RECORD OF THINGS JOHN SAW

Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw (Revelation 1:2).

John, a prisoner on the isle of Patmos, received the revelation, and immediately he began to see some things which he recorded and bore record of, bore witness of. He testified concerning the things which he himself saw as the revelation began to unfold before him. If we desire to understand the mysteries of this great prophetic book, let us follow the example of the Prophet Daniel who fasted and prayed, seeking God for the understanding of the seventy week captivity which he had revealed to the Prophet Jeremiah. As he waited on God, the “day star” of revelation arose in his heart, and Daniel received the revelation of the seventy weeks, Before God will entrust us with the “day star” of further revelation, we must humble ourselves to receive the revelation that He has already given to His other servants. If we receive John’s witness, then the “day star” will ascend in our hearts as well, giving us the understanding of the Book of Revelation. God adds further revelation by building upon what He has already given—line upon line, precept upon precept.

D. FOR A BLESSING

Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand (Revelation 1:3).

The revelation was also given as a blessing which means happiness, prosperity, and success. The promised blessing will be ours if we will do the following:

1. Read the Prophecy

Reading precedes understanding. As we read the Book of Revelation, the Spirit of God will be faithful to open

our understanding.

2. Hear the Words of the Prophecy

Man's understanding has been darkened by sin, but when the Holy Ghost takes up His abode in the heart. He will open the eyes of our spiritual understanding. Also, He will open our spiritual ears to hear what the Spirit says to the churches. There is a needful message here for each of us if we will hear it.

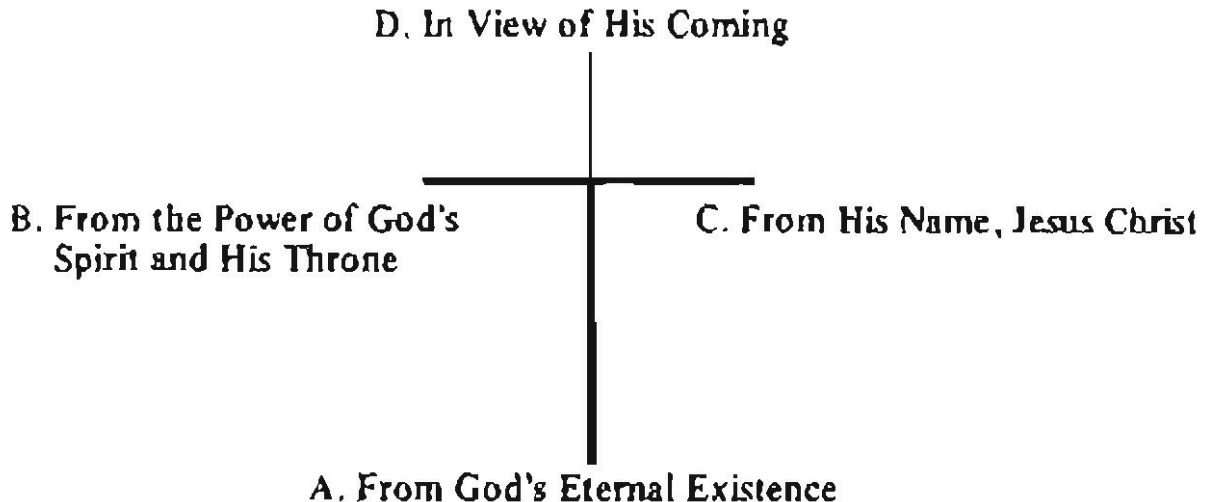
3. Keep the Things Which are Written in the Prophecy

The revelation has a twofold application—literal and spiritual. There were seven literal churches: there will also be a literal tribulation period as well as a literal appearing of Jesus Christ with His bridal army from heaven, and a literal judgment. In addition to the literal side of the Book of Revelation, we find the spiritual aspect. God declares that “ALL SCRIPTURE is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (II Timothy 3:16). Knowing that all Scripture is profitable, then we may anticipate finding many spiritual principles and valuable lessons which can be applied to our personal lives. Through the application of these truths of spiritual principles, we can keep sayings that are written in this book. Beloved, what a blessing is ours as we read, hear and keep the things which are written in the Book of Revelation.

We have studied the fourfold purpose of this book: A. To reveal Jesus Christ: B. To reveal things to come to pass: C. A record of what John saw: and D. For a blessing.

II. THE SALUTATION

“JOHN to the seven churches which are in Asia:...” (Revelation 1:4). The general introduction, which presented the purpose of this book, has been covered. John proceeds to affix his signature, as was the custom of the day, and then begins his greeting with this fourfold salutation.



A. FROM GOD'S ETERNAL EXISTENCE

John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; (Revelation 1:4).

Addressing the seven churches in Asia Minor, John greets them with grace and peace. Grace means the gracious influence of the divine and His favor, gift, joy, liberality, pleasure; it also includes the thought of gratitude. This was a joyful and happy salutation, a rejoicing that expressed John's gratitude to God because of His beneficence, and the salutation expresses the peaceableness and quietness of a soul that is at rest in God.

This was no ordinary grace or common peace, for these bestowments found their source and support in the eternally existent One. John acknowledges that this grace and peace is not from himself, but from Him which is, which was, and which is to come. In other words, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He is the great "I AM,"—the ever present, self-existent God.

B. FROM THE POWER OF GOD'S SPIRIT AND HIS THRONE

...and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne (Revelation 1:4).

This is God's revelation of Jesus Christ which He gave unto His servant. Therefore, the salutation comes from the Eternal Word, from the fullness of His Spirit, and from the authority of His throne.

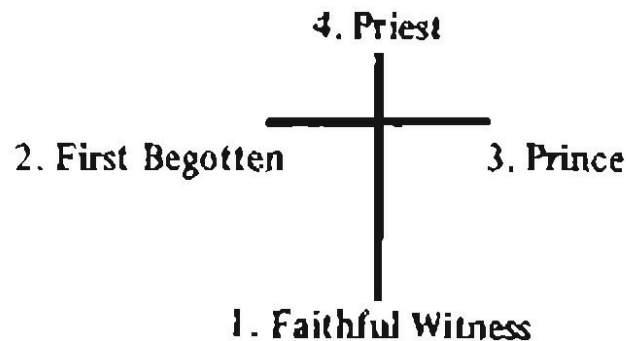
C. FROM HIS NAME—JESUS CHRIST

And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen (Revelation 1:5,6).

What a salutation! It comes from the eternally existent Word, from the complete sevenfold Spirit of God, from the Throne of God, and finally, from His very Name—the Name of Jesus Christ.

God has revealed Himself in various ways, one of which is through His Names. Here is an example of the progressive method of revelation that God employs. In the Old Testament, He revealed Himself as God (Elohim) relating to His creating power. Then He revealed Himself as LORD (JHVH—the secret tetragram Name hidden in the Ark of the Covenant) which has to do with His revealing power. He is Jehovah the Self-existent One who reveals Himself. He also revealed Himself through the Name Lord (Adonai) meaning master, husband, which relates to His possessing power.

The final revelation of His primary names is when He revealed Himself through the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Notice the tribute paid to this Name.



1. Faithful Witness

When Jesus Christ lived upon this earth He was a faithful witness. His life declared the Father, for he said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). He was a faithful witness in things pertaining to God, and He will be a faithful witness in our individual lives, praise His Name! He is interested in our growth and is faithful to witness to us concerning each new step which leads to spiritual maturity.

2. First Begotten

How powerful is this Name—He is the first begotten of the dead. It is impossible that Truth should be holden of death, although Jesus Christ died, yet He arose triumphant; the Truth could not be shackled by death.

3. Prince

Jesus Christ is the true Prince of the kings of the earth. No one can be compared with Him. He stands sovereign and supreme. Although we do not see that reign clearly manifested as yet, He is, nevertheless, the true Monarch of the earth.

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 (Hebrews 2:8).

4. Priest

Lastly, we see Jesus Christ as Priest, the one who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.

D. IN VIEW OF HIS COMING

Behold, he cometh with clouds: and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen (Revelation 1:7).

Wilkin his salutation, John includes a reminder of the advent of Christ. The greeting comes from the eternally existent One, from His Spirit, and His Throne, from the power of His Name, and also from the One who is coming back again.

After His resurrection, Jesus Christ showed Himself alive for a period of forty days. Concerning His ascension to the Father we read, “while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.” As the apostles stood looking with amazement toward heaven, they were suddenly aware of the presence of two angelic beings standing beside them. “Which also said, ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in Like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11). There is a common belief in our day that the rapture of the saints and the second coming of Jesus Christ are the same. However, the rapture is the secret coming of Jesus in the air to catch away the Bridal Party, which includes all overcoming believers. The Apostle Paul speaks of this event when he writes.

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words (I Thessalonians 4:16-18).

Christians are warned to take heed to themselves lest they be unprepared for His secret coming to catch away those who are ready. Jesus admonished His disciples to watch and be prepared for this great event: “Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man” (Luke 21:36). After the rapture of the overcoming believers, the great tribulation period begins on earth as the anti-Christ takes ascendancy.

The second coming of Jesus Christ will take place at the close of the tribulation period. This is His triumphal return to establish His millennial reign upon the earth. On this occasion He comes as KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. In this salutation John refers to the second coming of Jesus Christ.

1. He Comes with Clouds

“Behold, he cometh with clouds...” When Jesus Christ returns with His Bride at the end of the tribulation period, He will be clothed with the splendor and glory of exaltation; these clouds will not obscure the Christ, but they will be clouds of glory to reveal Him.

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture

dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean (Revelation 19:11-14).

The entire scene is one of triumphal glory. The King returns with His bridal army, riding on white horses (symbolic of the horse of faith). The armies are clothed in fine linen of the Bride, white and clean. The word *white* means full of glory and power, as a sunburst, bright, limpid, radiant, gorgeous, sumptuous, while the word *clean* speaks of purity and clearness. The Shekinah glory in which the King and His armies return will melt the elements with fervent heat. All the proud works of man will melt before the glory of the coming King and His Bride.

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up...Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? (II Peter 3:10-12).

2. Every Eye Shall See Him

“...and every eye shall see him...” John sends the greeting from the One who will come with clouds, and on this occasion, *every* eye shall see Him. This is not His secret coming at the rapture, but rather His second coming. Every eye in heaven, every eye on earth, and even the inhabitants of hell shall look upon Him for He comes as the KING OF KINGS AND THE LORD OF LORDS. At His second coming. Christ appears not as the Crucified Christ clothed with humiliation, but stands revealed as the resurrected, glorified Christ in all His splendid exaltation.

Every eye shall see Him in that day, but we are privileged now to behold Him in His precious Word through the eyes of faith. As we behold Him, we are changed: “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 Corinthians 3:18). Let us redeem the time well by gazing upon Him until we are changed from the ignoble creatures that we are, into His likeness.

3. They Who Pierced Him

“...and they also which pierced him:” Israel, as a nation, shall recognize Him as her King. After seeing Him and His nail prints, they shall ask, “...What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends” (Zechariah 13:6). Having rejected Him so long, they fail to associate the Glorified Christ with the Crucified Christ.

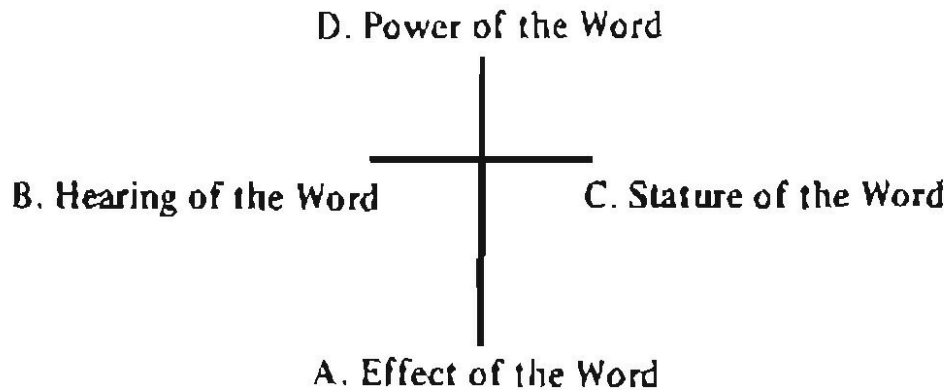
4. All Kindreds of the Earth

“...and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him...” The King comes forth to judge all things, and the earthly inhabitants wail because of their rejection of Him. The Jewish people still weep and wail before their wailing wall, begging for their Messiah to come.

The salutation ends with a touch of grandeur as Jesus Christ declares, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty” (Revelation 1:8). How can we lightly esteem the message of this book after being saluted by such a majestic and awe inspiring person?

III. PATMOS EXPERIENCE

John declares the purpose of the revelation and then gives a proper salutation. Next, he recounts his experience with the Word while on the isle of Patmos. We shall note four aspects of his experience.



I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ (Revelation 1:9).

Do you sense the humility of John the beloved as he writes? He could have claimed prominence and authority because of his remarkable experience with the Word on the isle of Patmos; but instead, he places himself on the same level with all Christians. He speaks as a “brother and companion in tribulation, a fellow member of the kingdom and patience of Jesus.” This is true greatness which sees no need for self-advancement or self-projection.

A. EFFECT OF THE WORD

John suffered loneliness and privation on the isle of Patmos because of the Word of God he had already received. The name *Patmos* means separation, and it was because of the Word of God and for his testimony of Jesus Christ that he was imprisoned there. Nevertheless, John was willing to suffer for the Word committed unto him and was even “in the Spirit” on that desolate island of the Aegean Sea. He was banished, isolated, but yet in the Spirit. “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day...” (Revelation 1: 10). Because of all this, he received more Word, even greater revelation.

We, too, must be willing to suffer for the Word and for our testimony. We also walk in experiences of exile and loneliness, but these are prerequisites to the reception of more revealed Word. The Apostle John witnessed that we can live in the Spirit regardless of our circumstances. Although many have suffered for the Word received, God always rewards the steadfast with the revelation of more truth.

B. HEARING OF THE WORD

I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, (Revelation 1:10).

In spite of the gloom of his circumstances, John was in the Spirit, sensitive and receptive to the voice of the Word. Suddenly, behind him, a GREAT VOICE trumpeted in his ears.

4. The Responsibility of the Word

2. The Fullness of the Word

3. The Command of the Word

1. The Sound of the Word

Why was the voice like a trumpet? We must not hurry past the little points of details, for they are all meaningful in the Word of God. Since the Word is its own interpreter, we can expect to find the explanation of the trumpet hidden in either the Old Testament type and shadow or in the New Testament anti-type. In this case, we find the Word sounding like a trumpet at mount Sinai.

d. The Trumpet Waxed Louder and Louder

b. The Trumpet Sounded Exceeding Loud

c. The Noise of the Trumpet

a. The Trumpet Soundeth Long

And thou shall set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or (ouch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount (Exodus 19:12,13).

Moses was invited to go up into mount Sinai for the LORD would speak with him there. The people had properly sanctified and prepared themselves to meet God. The sounding forth of the trumpet was the signal for their approach to the nether part of the mount. If they had come any closer they would have died.

The sounding of the trumpet symbolizes the Word or the voice of God speaking forth. It was Israel's call to draw nigh to the foot of the mountain, for God was about to give them His law. When God speaks to us, we, too, need to draw nigh, assuming the proper position of humility at His feet. Surely we cannot be presumptuous or proud, and push ourselves into His presence.

How important it is for us to be in the place where we can hear God's voice when He speaks. The din of this world with its many voices fills our ears, making it difficult to hear the voice of God. He is eager to speak, but we must give Him our ears if we want to hear the Word. Christians need a bit of solitude, a coming away from the hubbub and getting alone with Him, so that they, too, may hear His voice.

Let us glean another little thought. The trumpet sounded long, implying a protracted and extended sounding forth. How long suffering is our God. One wonders how many times He has spoken in this prolonged effort to captivate the ears of men.

b. The Trumpet Sounded Exceeding Loud

And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled (Exodus 19:16).

Thunders–lightnings–thick cloud—all manner of visible spectaculars, yet over and above it all, the voice of the trumpet sounded *exceeding loud*. No wonder they trembled, and so ought we. When the voice of our God trumpets forth exceeding loud, we should draw closer to Him with reverential fear and trembling lest we miss what He desires to speak. If we come presumptuously, we will be so filled with our own sense of importance that we may miss the import of what He is saying. But if we come in humility and with a sense of awe, our spiritual ears will be opened to hear Him speak.

Moses recounts the story again in Deuteronomy 4, saying, “Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live?” (Deuteronomy 4:33). How privileged was the nation of Israel. The voice of the trumpet waxed exceeding loud and the people came near with trembling. Their ears were open to hear, and they heard the Word speak that day.

c. The Noise of the Trumpet

And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the NOISE of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off (Exodus 20:18).

God was in their midst! They saw the noise of the trumpet, the thunderings, the lightnings, the smoking mountain; they drew back and stood afar off.

There are times that we have to back off from portions of God’s Word because it is a closed mystery. Perhaps we are wrongly motivated, seeking knowledge out of curiosity or for self-exaltation. Sometimes God sees the unwillingness of our hearts to take heed to the Word and permit it to correct the wrong that is operating in our lives. Then again, it may not be God’s time to unveil a particular area of truth.

There are times that we hear only the NOISE of the trumpet. This should cause us to humble ourselves and stand afar off lest we fall into spiritual death. We must stand afar off until the Holy Ghost teacher and revealer invites us to step again into that area of truth. Many times I have done just that. Later, after seasons of fasting and prayer (sometimes involving years of waiting and seeking), the Holy Ghost has invited me to look again into that portion of the Word, and there it stood fully revealed to my understanding. I am not speaking about reading the Word of God, for that we should do at all times, but referring to those times when we are seeking the revelation of a closed portion of the Word.

d. The Trumpet Waxed Louder and Louder

And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice (Exodus 19:19).

First the trumpet sounded long, bringing the children of Israel to the proper position of humility at the foot of the mount. Then the trumpet waxed exceeding loud, causing them to tremble and open their ears. Hearing the noise of the trumpet caused the people to move afar off in reverence and respect for the Word and wait for further directions. As the voice of the trumpet waxed louder and louder, Moses begins to enter into conversation with God.

How we need to hear the trumpet Word sounding louder and louder in our ears and hearts, until we hear His voice above all others. Awareness of His voice will cause all other voices to lose their effect, and then the Lord will loosen our tongues that we might better speak with Him. Then He invites us to come up higher, even as He did Moses that day. These mountain top experiences bring us into closer fellowship with Him and open the way for greater revelations of His Word.

We now understand why the Word of God came like a trumpet to John on the isle of Patmos. It was necessary for John to get into proper position of humility and reverential fear, which in turn would open his ears to hear the Word and loosen his tongue to speak. His experience with the trumpet Word not only turns him about, but he soon falls prostrate as a dead man before the feet of the exalted Christ. We have noted the purpose and results of John’s experience of hearing the SOUND of the Word like a trumpet. We study next the FULLNESS of the Word.

2. The Fullness of the Word

As Moses heard and obeyed the sound of the trumpet Word, he was brought into the fullness of the revelation of the Word.

And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, and on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses up to the top of the mount: and Moses went up (Exodus 19:20).

After hearing the sound of the trumpet, John, like Moses, was made to know the existence and the fullness of the Word.

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet. Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last...(Revelation 1:10,11).

Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet, as "A" is to the English. Omega is the ending of the alphabet, as "Z" is in the English language. Not only did John hear the sound of the Word, but he also received the revelation of the fullness of the Word. The Lord Jesus Christ declared unto John, "I am Alpha and Omega"—and all that goes in between. He is every letter, every word, the fullness of the expression of God; He is THE WORD.

3. The Command of the Word

...What thou seest, write in a book...(Revelation 1:11).

The distribution of the revelation was important. Although the Word was given to John, its intended destination was the seven churches in Asia Minor and, ultimately, the entire body of Christian believers. Therefore, it was essential that John record the revelation in a book, preserving every detail in accuracy and truth.

We should also preserve God's revelation to us. Do we bother to write down the things that are whispered to our hearts while in prayer? We should care enough to record the things that God speaks to us. It is so easy for the Devil's birds of doubt and unbelief to snatch away the seed thoughts that God drops in our minds. Jolting them down shows our appreciation and respect. If the Word commanded John to write what he saw and heard, surely we ought to do it also. As we gratefully treasure every little whispered thought and every little seed, the way is opened up for more truth.

4. The Responsibility of the Word

...and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea (Revelation 1:11).

Knowledge of the Word brings obligation, John was commanded to write and then given the responsibility of sending the message to its destination. We have a like trust. First we must hear the sound of the trumpet Word, preparatory to receiving a vision of the fullness of the Word, Jesus Christ. Writing the revelation gives us a stronger impression of it, encouraging meditation upon it, which in turn, directs us toward praying over it. This is how we keep His Word from slipping through our fingers. After assimilating it ourselves, we can then carry the Word to others. Write it—send it!

Let us review John's experience with hearing the Word on the isle of Patmos.

1. Heard the SOUND of the Word—like a trumpet.

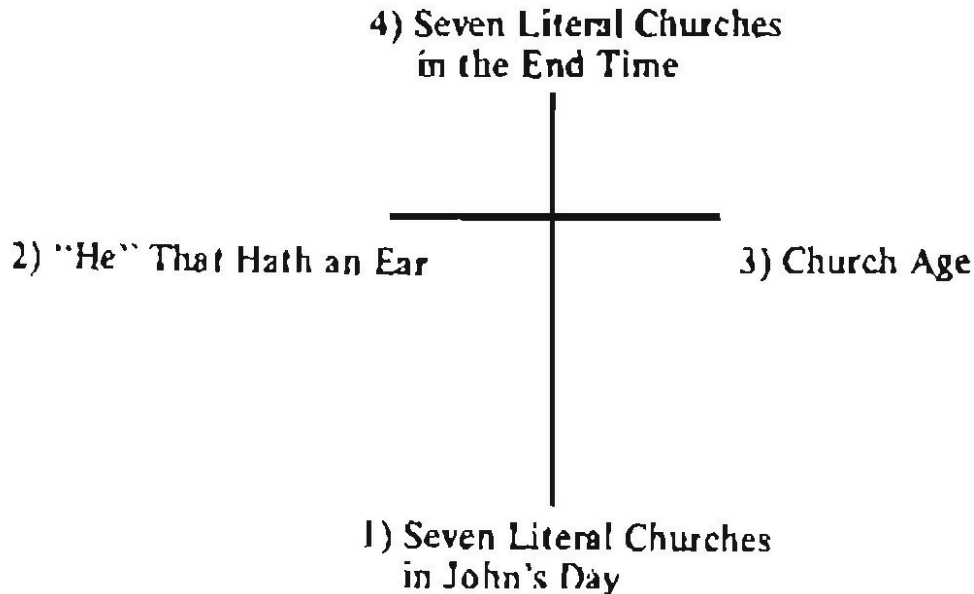
- a. Long—puts us in proper position, at His feet.**
- b. Exceeding Loud—opens our ears.**
- c. Noise—makes us fearful with reverence.**
- d. Louder and Louder—loosens tongue so we can speak.**

2. Heard the FULLNESS of the Word–Alpha and Omega.

3. Heard the COMMAND of the Word–write it.

4. Heard the RESPONSIBILITY of the Word–send it.

We also see a stature applicable to whom the revelation was to be sent.



1) Seven Literal Churches in John's Day

Jesus clearly specified to send it to the seven churches which are in Asia. Following the command, John sees a vision of seven golden candlesticks, representing the seven churches: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

2) "He" That Hath an Ear

The revelation was to be sent to seven individual churches existent in John's day, but it also bears a message applicable to "whosoever will." Each message closes with the statement of personal challenge: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches;" (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22).

These seven messages pertain to ALL believers. The seven churches present a beautiful visual description, giving us a pattern of how to grow up into spiritual maturity and the things we must overcome as we progress. Let us keep in mind that the revelation is sent to "He that hath an ear to hear," which includes you and me.

3) Church Age

Any Bible student can readily see that the seven churches represent the entire church age, beginning with the apostolic church and continuing to the end time.

The apostolic church (Ephesus) had the full stature of revealed truth. The saints of Ephesus had the truth of salvation through the shed Blood of Jesus Christ, the Baptism of the Holy Ghost with evidence of speaking in other tongues. They also practiced water baptism in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. This truth is clearly recorded in the Book of Acts. The apostles were exercised in prayer, with intercession and travail. They had the wisdom, knowledge, and understanding of the Word, as well as possessing the hidden manna of the mysteries of the Word. In writing to the church of Ephesus, Paul conveyed these mysteries and acknowledged the revelation of growing up "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Ephesians 4: 13).

But Ephesus lost her candlestick of truth, and the church entered into the dark ages, Commencing with the Philadelphia church period the church began to emerge from its darkness, and God began restoring the light of the full candlestick of truth to the church.

Although the full stature of truth was partially eclipsed for a time, every church period has possessed the foundational truths, and there have always been those few who have paid the price for their personal revelation of growing up into the full stature of Jesus Christ. As far as personal growth is concerned, it really matters little which church period one lives in. Today we are living in the Laodicean church age (the time of lukewarmness, apostasy, and iniquity abounding), but this does not hinder us personally from attaining spiritual maturity. The full candlestick of truth has been recorded in the Word of God. Since we must overcome the same spiritual enemies that the seven churches contended with, we, too, will receive a like reward. If we will hear what the Spirit has to say to the churches, the knowledge of the truth is sufficient to bring us all into the mature stature of Jesus Christ.

4) Seven Literal Churches in the End Time

We are living in the end time. The next event scheduled to take place will be the rapture, the secret catching away of all overcomers.

As we view the church scene today spiritually, we see these same seven churches. Segments of Christendom bear the characteristics of the church of Ephesus; some are like the Smyrna church, while others are like the church of Pergamos, and on down the line. Even though the general church climate indicates the Laodicean church age of which we are a part, yet we know that there is a Philadelphia church on the scene as well. The implication and import of this fact will be dealt with later in our study. Suffice it to say, although we are living in the end time, we see the seven different stages of spiritual growth in the church today represented by the seven literal churches of Asia Minor.

C. THE STATURE OF THE WORD

In John's experience on the isle of Patmos, we have seen the effect of the Word and the hearing of the Word. Thirdly, let us consider the stature of the Word.

The stage was set for John the beloved to receive the revelation of the FULL stature of the Word in the Person of the Resurrected and Glorified Christ. It is important that we have that same vision. Without a realization of the magnitude of the full mature stature of Jesus Christ that we are all called unto, we are too easily content and therefore settle for less. The provision has been made by Jesus Christ that we might all grow up in Him and attain His fullness. Without this vision, we become married to our doctrines which we have embraced in our own personal experience. As a result we come to a standstill, and with a dogmatic and critical spirit, we demand that all others stop there also.

For example, if our doctrine takes us only as far as salvation through the Blood of Jesus, we are prone to build a wall and try to enclose all others with us, because we think that this is all God has for us to experience. Others proceed a bit further in their spiritual journey, adding the baptism of the Holy Ghost to their doctrinal experience, and then they, too, build a wall. Spiritual pride causes us to build walls. We loathe admitting that someone else may have more than we. Once we profess to have all there is in Jesus Christ, we cease to grow. When we think that we have attained, boredom sets in, and our spiritual experience becomes a methodical plodding of dull repetition.

Praise the Lord! This need not happen if we have received the revelation of the full stature of the Word. Our experiences with the Blood, the Holy Ghost Baptism, and water baptism in His precious Name are wonderful; yet there is that pressing desire to KNOW HIM in even greater fullness. There is no stopping place in this earthly journey; there is no saturation point for a finite being to discover and know all about the Infinite One.

Having heard the voice of the Word speak, John is about to see the fully revealed stature of the Word of God—the Christ.

And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; (Revelation 1:12).

John turns to look upon the One speaking. Banished for his testimony's sake and for the Word's sake, John has already turned from his friends, relatives, and earthly comforts. Now he turns again in order to see the stature of the

Lord Jesus Christ.

“And being turned...” suggests that he was assisted in his turning. We cannot fully turn ourselves or change our ways, but the Lord attracts and draws us; our part is to cooperate and yield to His wooing. The Apostle Peter knew the meaning of this turning.

And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; But I have prayed for thee, (hat thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren (Luke 22:31,32).

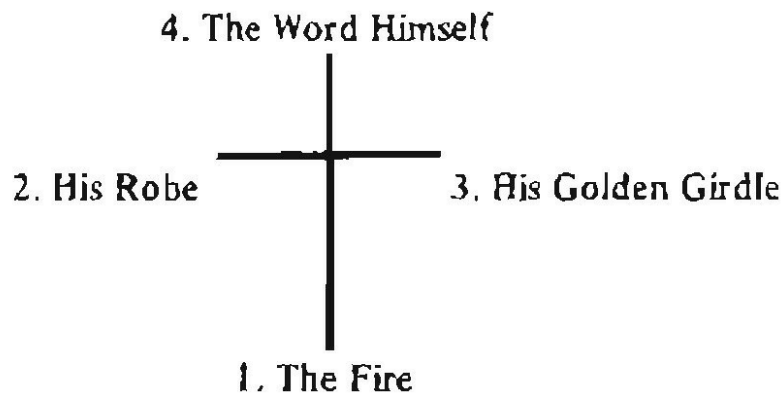
The word *converted* means to be turned again. In other words, “when thou hast turned again, thou shalt confirm (establish) thy brethren.” Each new experience of converting (turning) places us in position to see a greater revelation of the Lord.

John’s first impression was the seven golden candlesticks. Because a candlestick is a light bearer and because it is gold, representative of diety, we know these were light bearers holding forth the light of the Word of God, shining forth the wisdom, understanding, and knowledge of Jesus Christ. There were seven which speaks of completion. Here was the fullness of the wisdom, understanding, and knowledge of the Word.

For many of us this splendid vision would have been sufficient, but John continues to turn until he sees beyond the seven candlesticks.

And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one Like unto the Son of man...(Revelation 1:13).

Sufficiently turned, John realizes the presence of one standing in the midst of the seven candlesticks. He has the appearance of a man. Let us study the stature of the Revealed Word that John’s eyes looked upon that day.



1. The Fire

a. His Feet

And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace;...(Revelation 1:15).

His feet represent the foundation of the stature. In order to understand the full significance of Christ’s feet being like brass, we must go back to the Old Testament Tabernacle where brass was the predominant metal in the Courtyard, the place representative of the foundation. Brass overlaid wood in the great Brazen Altar, and the Laver was made wholly of brass. Brass speaks of judgment. At the Brazen Altar the judgment of sin, with its penalty of death and hell, was dealt with. God judges indwelling sins at the Brazen Laver, representing the death of Christ which makes the waters of His Name, Death, and Life available to us all.

Here stands the Resurrected Christ in all His splendor and glory. He stands with feet of polished brass, glowing as if they had just come from the heat of the furnace.

Although they are feet of fiery judgment, they are also resurrected feet. Not only do feet speak of the foundation, but they also have the power to tread upon, trample upon, to bring things under and into subjection. As we allow

Him to walk up and down the avenues of our heart, up and down the street of the City of Pride that rules in every carnal heart; He places His fiery judgment there. But remember, everywhere He judges, He also leaves His resurrection life, because His feet have power to bring things into subjection and under His rule. As He tramples under the old carnal nature, He leaves seeds of new resurrection life in each of His footprints. We find the same principle in the shadow and type of the Laver; we first experience His Name which opens up His death unto us, and then we enter into His resurrection life.

b. His Eyes

...and his eyes were as a flame of fire: (Revelation 1:14).

With eyes we see and discern. His are eyes of fiery discernment, able to penetrate and know the underlying motives of the seven churches.

These same eyes are also looking upon us. Sometimes they look at us through His Word; at other times, we see them through our own eyes of faith. We also have seen these precious eyes by heaven-sent vision. We need to stay in the Word and in the place of prayer, exposing ourselves to His eyes of discernment. He discerns between the wood, hay, and stubble of our carnal will and the gold, silver, and precious stones of God's will in our spiritual building. We should welcome His discernment while there is yet opportunity to repent and be converted. Lord, help us to welcome these eyes of discernment and judgment.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad (II Corinthians 5:10).

c. His Countenance

...and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength (Revelation 1:16).

His feet and His eyes were like fire; and thirdly we see fire in His countenance like the strength of the noonday sun. The sun is a ball of fire sending forth its lifegiving strength to all the earth. Those rays release the fragrance of all plant life, causing the flower to produce the nectar which the honeybee converts into honey. The fire from the sun gives the luster to the wings of the birds and the butterflies.

Even so, the fire of His countenance will draw out the fragrance of His nature in us which will produce the nectar and the luster, for in ourselves we have nothing like this. The sun is the center of our solar system, around which all the other planets orbit. Likewise Jesus Christ must be the center around which our lives orbit. When we get out of orbit, we have failed to look upon the face of the Sun of Righteousness and thus expose ourselves to the fiery light of His countenance. How smoothly things run when we take time to look into His face, permitting Him to be the center of our lives.

2. His Robe

And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot,...(Revelation 1:13).

Even as the Old Testament high priest was clothed with a robe down to his feet, so we see the Glorified Christ. His robe is a symbol of the garment of righteousness and mercy. The priest of the Old Testament dispensation wore white linen which speaks of righteousness (Revelation 19:8). The eight pieces of garments worn by the high priest symbolize with what the New Testament believer (also a priest) should be clothed. Colossians 3: 12 gives the meaning of the outer robe—bowels of mercy. "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies..."

Although His primary revelation is that of King, walking and discerning with all authority in the midst of the seven churches, yet we also see Him revealed as High Priest, What an encouragement! He not only judges, but as High Priest, He intercedes for us concerning those things which He has discerned with His eyes of fire.

3. His Golden Girdle

...and girt about the paps with a golden girdle (Revelation 1:13).

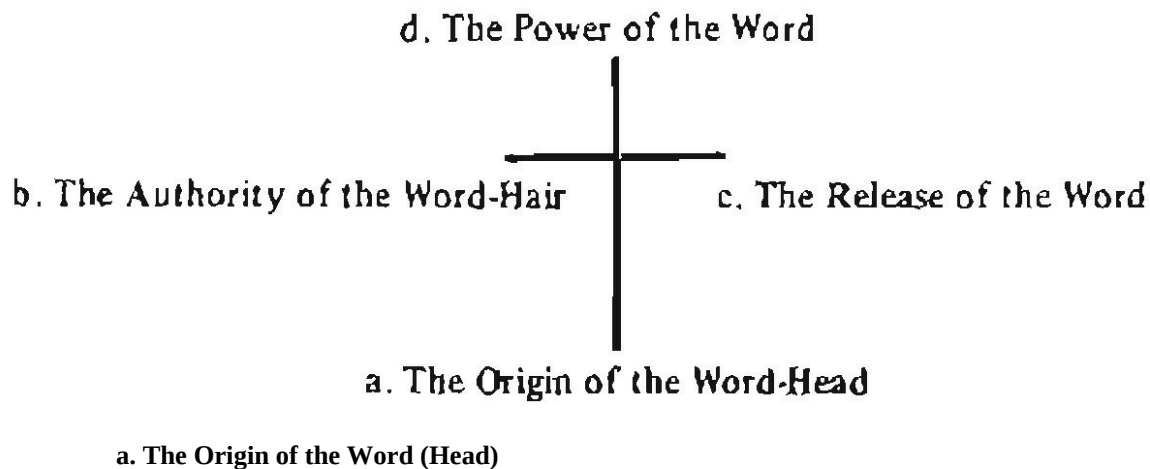
Although He judges as a King, yet He is clothed with righteousness in that judgment, for He is girded with a golden girdle to minister in divine love and intercession for us. A girdle speaks of subjection, for whatever is girded by the girdle is bound by subjection to the girdle; it also symbolizes ministry. This is a girdle of gold, speaking of its divine nature, with no intermingling of humanity.

This girdle is worn around the breast (paps) and not around the loins like the Old Testament priest. Figuratively speaking, the breasts speak of love and affection. The Resurrected Christ is girded for ministry, girded about in His love and affection with the girdle of deity. There is no fleshly compassion here, but divine love ministers and controls His high priestly intercession for us.

Great is the power of our High Priest to save us to the uttermost, to the head realm of spiritual growth. When we, as sinners, came to the living resurrected Blood of Jesus Christ, He saved us from the *penalty of sin*, which is death. As we grow spiritually and allow the waters of His Name, Death and Life to wash us, He saves us from the *power of indwelling sins*, from attitudes and dispositions that keep us from walking in the pathway of holiness. Furthermore, Jesus saves us from the *presence of sin* by lifting us up in the Spirit and setting us in heavenly places with Him. Lastly, He saves from the *purpose of sin*, which is separation from God. Sin breaks our union, our oneness with God. Jesus Christ, our High Priest, is able to save us to the uttermost because He ever lives to make intercession for us (Hebrews 7:25).*

4. The Word Himself

The LOGOS, the CHRIST, the WORD Himself stands revealed here. After His death and resurrection Jesus the man was joined eternally with the Christ. “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). Let us consider further the “one like unto the Son of man” that stood revealed before John the beloved.



“His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow;...” (Revelation 1:14). The Word of God originated in the Godhead just as natural words have their origin in the human mind. His head is pictured as white as wool and as white as snow, which indicates its purity. The wool also indicates warmth or the hot breath of God, and the snow indicates the cold breath of God. Thus we see the Head, which is the origin of the Word, filled with the hot breath of exaltation (the wool), and the cold breath of humility (the snow).

The nature of God’s head is pure; His Word is pure. His Word does not originate with corrupt and depraved man, but springs forth from the divine purity of God’s own nature.

How often do we belittle (blaspheme) God’s Word? When we murmur and complain about our circumstances, we are really accusing the purity of the Word. He is too pure and too holy to permit things to cross our pathway that will not work together for our good. Beloved, always remember the purity of God’s headship.

b. The Authority of the Word (Hair)

His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow;... (Revelation 1:14).

The hair speaks of authority, and again we see the emphasis upon its purity—white like wool, white like snow. This simile, expressing the thoroughness of cleanliness and purity, is used also in connection with forgiven sin; “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isaiah 1:18).

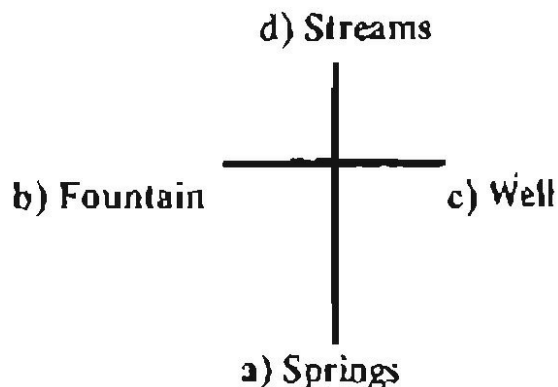
What a contrast is His headship to man’s carnal authority. Fleshly authority is permeated with pride, causing man to resort to all manner of sinful practices contrary to the will of God. On the other hand, the outflow of God’s will is pure, seeking to redeem and to satisfy man. This is the will of God expressed through the pure authority of the headship of Jesus Christ. Man’s authority has only self interest; authority without the purity of the nature of Jesus Christ is merciless. Carnal authority seeks its own prosperity for the exaltation of self. But Christ takes authority over us in order to redeem us. His motive is pure; He seeks to bless us.

c. The Release of the Word

...and his voice as the sound of many waters (Revelation 1:15).

The Spirit of God uses many metaphors to present the Word of God. The Word is pictured as a hammer, as bread, as milk, as seed, as fire, and here as the sound of many waters. Let us pause to consider this same simile found elsewhere in the Word of God.

1) The Word as Water



a) Springs

Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven (Psalm 85:11).

They shall not hunger nor thirst: neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them (Isaiah 49:10).

And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not (Isaiah 58:11).

The water of the Word is released in various ways in order to depict different aspects of the Word. Sometimes His Word comes as springs of truth. A spring is a bubbling forth of the freshest of waters so it becomes an apt picture of the freshness of the Word of God.

b) Fountain

The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death (Proverbs 14:27).

Sometimes God likens the water of the Word to a fountain. A fountain is for beauty more than for anything else, and in this verse we see a fountain aspect likened unto the fear of the Lord. Surely it is a beauty to see the fear of God in one's life.

c) Well

The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life:...(Proverbs 10:11).

A well speaks of the deep things of the Word. In order to have a well in the natural, one must dig through many layers of sand, clay and rock before reaching the flow of water. After the well is completed, delight fully fresh and cool water can be, by the means of a bucket, lifted up to the surface for one's enjoyment. The well, then, illustrates the depths of God's Word from which flows forth His refreshing life. Jesus said, "...The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14). We must dig down through the hard, stony layers of our carnal nature (our earth) to reach the depths of the well water in our new man. How refreshing in the natural is a glass of cool, well water; what a time of refreshing it is also in the spiritual when we are privileged to draw fresh water from the deep.

d) Streams

But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream (Amos 5:24).

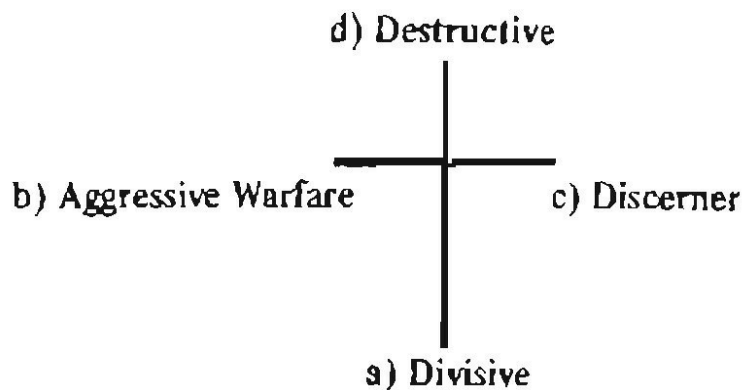
Then again, the Word is pictured as streams. A stream generally begins as a small trickle, but as it finds its way to the ocean, it gradually becomes a mighty flow—sometimes even a torrent. God has streams of righteousness which begin small, but are powerful in their continuation.

The voice of the Glorified Christ was like the sound of many waters. In other words, it carried the fullness of the sounds of water. A spring has one sound and a fountain another. The sound of a well of water is unique, and the streams sing their own song His voice sounded like the combination of them all. Here was the whole and undivided water of the Word speaking.

While we are on this subject, let us pursue it a bit further. In the Book of Revelation another metaphor of the Word is used, that of a sword. "...and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword:..." (Revelation 1:16).

Again, we have a fourfold description of the Sword Word to consider.

2) The Word as a Sword



a) Divisive

Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her

mother in law (Matthew 10:34,35).

Jesus, who knew full union with the Christ within him, declared the divisive ministry of the Word of God. The Word came not to bring peace upon the earth, but a sword. The Word of God, like a sharp sword, divides all human relationships, regardless of how close they may be. On the other hand, there is no stronger cohesive power than the Word when it is accepted, for it binds hearts together in an unbreakable union. Before we experience the binding power of the Word, we must recognize the dividing ministry of the Sword Word which cuts and severs irrespective of all human ties.

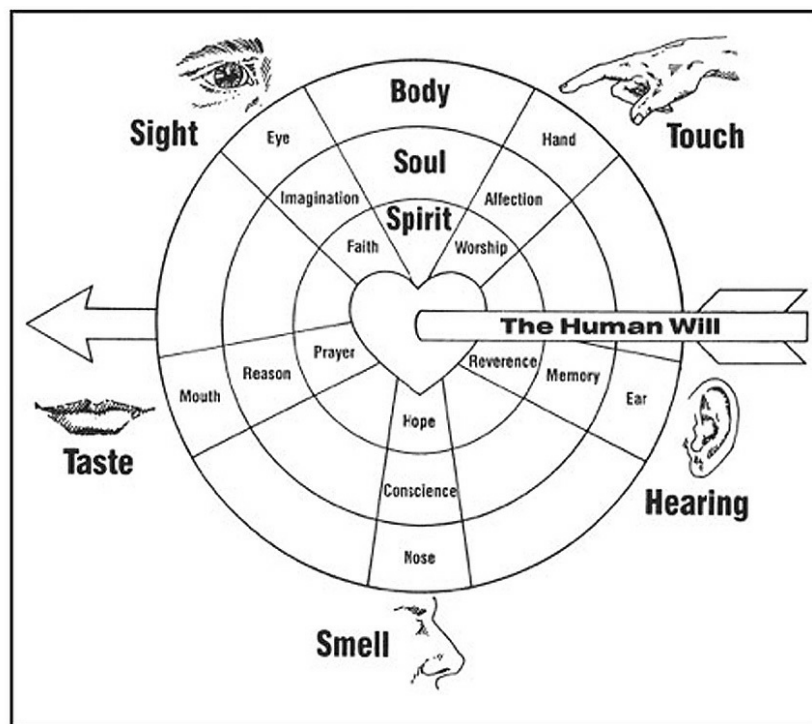
b) Aggressive Warfare

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: (Ephesians 6:17).

Repent: or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth (Revelation 2:16).

In Ephesians, the Apostle Paul lists the seven pieces of spiritual armor that the Christian soldier must possess, five for defensive warfare, and two for aggressive warfare. Each of these five is protection for one of the five channels of man's senses. When these senses are properly protected, the Devil cannot effectively attack us.

Man is made like a wheel; his heart is the hub, his will is the axle and his five senses are the spokes of the wheel.



Man's five senses in his physical body are sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch.* As the spoke of sight passes into the realm of the soul, it is known as imagination, and in the area of man's spirit it is called faith. The hearing (ear) of the soul is memory, and the ear of the spirit is reverence. As the spoke of taste passes into the soul realm, it is known as reasoning, and in the spirit it is called prayer. The nose of the soul is man's conscience, and in his spirit it is known as hope. The touch of man's soul is his affection, and in the realm of man's spirit it is known as worship.

To hold onto spiritual territory already gained is one thing, but to take the aggression and move into new territory is another. The sharp sword of the Word is for aggressive as well as defensive warfare, whether it be for ourselves or for others. Revelation 2:16 states that God would come against them with the sword of the Word if they failed to repent before Him. As long as we are pressing on for God, Jesus Christ will be our help in warfare, fighting on our

behalf with that sharp sword of the Word.

On the other hand, should we lose out with God and begin to turn back, it will not be long before the sword of His mouth will begin to cut off some of the territory we had formerly gained in Him. For example, if we have known intercession and travail, but accept the Devil's lie that it is too hard to go on any further, and begin to draw back from God's way, we may think that we can stop there and yet continue with the blessing of praying with intercession and travail. But this is not so. After God gives ample time to repent, the sharp sword cuts intercession and travail from us. Little for little we will find ourselves backing up from one experience after the other until the enemy has backed us all the way out of salvation. Turning back to the things of the world, we seek satisfaction in things we once hated. God does not permit us to experimentally keep His truths and blessings unless we are pressing on with Him.

How dreadful to have the sword of His mouth coming against us and separating us from the things of God. It is much better, beloved, to have the Word cut us off now from our sinful habits, worldly indulgences, and carnal affections. This is gain, whereas the other is loss.

c) Discerner

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Hebrews 4:12).

The sword of the Word of His mouth has the ability to discern (decisive, critical, discriminative—a judge) between spirit, soul, and flesh. It cuts right through to the very core of our being and judges the true motives of our hearts.

d) Destructive

And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God (Revelation 19:15).

And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh (Revelation 19:21).

This sword is destructive. The text relates to the second coming of Christ when He is going to destroy the anti-Christ and his army, after which the Lord will establish His millennial reign upon the earth.

How tremendous is the ministry of the Word of His mouth. John heard it as the sound of many waters, as it came forth in its fullness. We have also seen His Word coming as a sword; divisive, aggressive in warfare, discerning motives, and destructive in judgment. What a mighty Word is this!

We are still studying point III, John's Experience on the Isle of Patmos. We have seen the EFFECT of the Word, the HEARING of the Word, the STATUE of the Word, and we now progress to the closing point, the POWER of the Word.

D. POWER OF THE WORD

And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me. Fear not; I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death (Revelation 1:17,18).

After John heard the voice as of a trumpet, followed by the revelation of the stature of the Word Himself, he fell at the feet of the Christ as one dead. The power of the Revealed Word was so great that it thrust him low in humility before the mighty presence of the Christ.

A similar reaction of the Word and presence of God occurred at Mt. Sinai. When God's presence was displayed on top of the mount, the children of Israel fell prostrate, and drew back in fear and trembling, reverencing the presence of God and the reception of the Word that was being given unto them.

Falling at the feet of the Word was another expression of John's humility and sincerity of desire to know more of

Him. His obeisance demonstrated his gratitude for what had already been committed to him. The expression of appreciation opens the way for more revelation. This was true in John's experience, and will be our experience also.

Resting His right hand upon John, the Word continues to speak, "Fear not; I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." This relates to the power of the Resurrected Word. He lived before He came down to earth and took on flesh that He might die vicariously for our sins, and He rose again—never to die again. Furthermore, He has the keys of death and hell. He holds the power to unlock the gates of death and hell, and ultimately He will cast both death and hell into the lake of fire.

We have studied (I) The Purpose of the Book of Revelation, (II) The Salutation, and (III) John's Experience on the Isle of Patmos. We will progress to the fourth and final point: Mystery Revealed.

IV. MYSTERY REVEALED

Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter (Revelation 1:19).

Again John is commanded to write everything he had seen, and to record all that was about to be revealed unto him.

Then follows the revelation of the mystery concerning the seven stars and the seven golden candlesticks, which closes the introductory aspect of the first chapter of the Book of Revelation.

The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches (Revelation 1:20).

A. THE STARS

The stars are the angels that oversee the ministries of the churches. Every church has an angel who gives his special attention and care to the needs of that particular church.

B. THE CANDLESTICKS

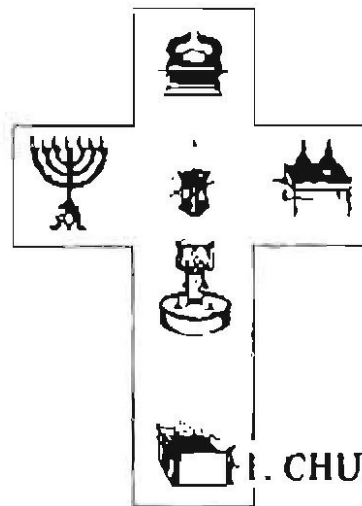
The candlesticks represent the seven churches themselves. How encouraging to note that these were candlesticks of gold, implying that they were God's lightbearers. These were not mere organizations of man's initiation, but were bona fide institutions of God. Although imperfect, they were still recognized as *golden* candlesticks—they were still the fruit of the work of God.

This completes the introduction to the Book of Revelation which includes (I) Its Purpose, (II) Salutation, (III) John's Experience in the Isle of Patmos, and (IV) The Mystery Revealed.

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- * B. R. Hicks, [*Precious Gem in the Tabernacle*](#), (Jeffersonville, Indiana, 1961).
 - * B. R. Hicks, *The Threefold Nature of Man*, (Jeffersonville, Indiana, 1969).

CHAPTER TWO

THE CHURCH OF EPHESUS (Revelation 2:1-7)



1. CHURCH OF EPHESUS

The first revelation is of Jesus Christ as He stands in the midst of the seven churches. The seven churches in Revelation and the studies of the seven pieces of furniture in the Mosaic Tabernacle present parallel lessons for our spiritual growth into the fullness of the stature of Jesus Christ. The application of the truths found in these lessons is the most important aspect of the messages, although there is much that we learn from them historically.

The seven pieces of furniture depict spiritual experiences in our growth in Christ, while the churches depict the overcoming power that we must lay hold of at each level of experience.

The study of the Tabernacle reveals the Brazen Altar (which stood in the courtyard) as a type of our experience of salvation. The sacrifice for sin was laid on the Brazen Altar. Then supernatural fire from God fell on the sacrifice consuming it. The Altar is a symbol of the place of repentance. We experience our first love for Jesus Christ as we come to an altar of repentance accepting His sacrifice for our sin. Then, if we do not lay hold of the lesson which the Church of Ephesus portrays to us, we will let our carnal zeal push us into accepting the lies of the Head of Deceit when it tells us that our works for the Lord are more important than our love relationship with Him. It is in this first new experience that we are also inclined to accept the authority of the Devil's priests only to find ourselves bound under the carnal headship of church leaders who do not desire to grow into the fullness of the stature of Jesus Christ.

The second piece of furniture, also in the courtyard, was the Brazen Laver. It symbolizes the death of Jesus Christ. The priests came to the Laver for an initial cleansing. However, that did not terminate the Laver's usefulness. After this, the priests returned daily for cleansing. It was on the cross that Jesus' Blood was shed for our sins, but His journey into death made more than His Blood available to us, it released the power of Jesus' Name (His nature, character, and authority), His Death, and His resurrection Life for our use. In order to gain the experience found at the Brazen Laver, we come once for water baptism, outwardly manifesting that we are willing to share in His death for the remission of our sins. That does not end our experience at the Laver. We must return to the waters of His Name. Death, and Life daily in order to make a fresh surrender to die out to our old self and accept the newness of Jesus' resurrection life. In this continuing experience we are cleansed daily as the priests were. When we are at this level of experience, we see the overcoming power which Jesus desires for us to have as depicted by the Smyrna

Church, She learned how to overcome the Heads of Blasphemy and Affliction, so that she could win the crown of life, thus escaping the second death which is the lake of fire.

After the Brazen Laver in the Tabernacle, we leave the courtyard and enter the Holy Place. The third piece of furniture, which is the Golden Altar of Incense, is located in this section. Our experience at the Golden Altar is one of prayer, typified by the offering up of incense by the priests. It is here that we enter new heights and depths in our prayer life as we experience intercessory prayer and travail.

The third church, Pergamos, is located at this place in the stature. The overcoming power we must acquire here is the ability to separate the truth from the adulterated teachings of Satan's followers. The pleasures of sin are presented in a particularly enticing manner by Lucifer's Head of Enchantment, and it is at the level attained by the Pergamos Church that we learn to overcome the allurements of the world as we press higher and deeper in prayer.

The fourth piece of furniture, which also stands in the Holy Place, is the Golden Candlestick. The light from the Candlestick represents the light of God's humble mind. After we have come through blood, fire, and water, and have offered up prayers of intercession and travail at the Golden Altar, we are ready to learn of God's wisdom as it shines out from the Golden Candlestick. The Candlestick is a beautiful picture of God's Word. The fourth church, which relates to the Candlestick, is Thyatira. The overcoming saints in this church had still greater depths of spiritual adultery and fornication to battle. These Christians learned to overcome the false doctrines being taught by Jezebel who had brought the church into a place of compromise with the world until there were some who had reached the depths of Satan. Through the golden light of truth that shines out of God's Word, we, too, can gain the wisdom, understanding, and knowledge that enable us to resist the deceitful light of carnal and immoral teachings which the overcomers at Thyatira had resisted.

Our next parallel is drawn between the Table of Shewbread, the fifth piece of furniture, and the fifth church, Sardis. It is at the Table of Shewbread that we receive God's governmental bread. The Church of Sardis had to overcome the Head of Death. When we begin to eat of God's governmental bread, we will receive strength to rule over spiritual death. Each experience gives us added weapons with which to fight the enemy. As our spiritual growth progresses, our spiritual warfare deepens; we have greater stature to overcome with, and more of the enemy's stature to overcome.

This brings us to the last two churches, Philadelphia and Laodicea. The last two pieces of furniture in the Tabernacle reside together in the Holy of Holies. The seventh piece, the Mercy Seat, is a covering for the sixth piece, the Ark of the Covenant.

Philadelphia held the position comparable to the Ark of the Covenant in the Old Testament Tabernacle. The Ark contained the golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the two tables upon which God had written His moral laws for the nation of Israel. The Ark represents God's headship which opened up the way for Israel to pass through the overflowing waters of Jordan and enter into Canaan's land, the land that God called Beulah land, or married land. In Canaan's land Israel assumed the spiritual position of surrender to the Lord's headship that a wife in the natural assumes when she places herself under the headship of her husband. This is the summit of our experience of growing into the fullness of the stature of Jesus Christ. When we reach the place of complete subjection to the headship of the Lord, of having our wills joined in marriage union with His, then we are His Bride, spiritually, just as Israel was naturally.

By learning to accept the headship of their spiritual Bridegroom, the overcomers in the Philadelphia Church gained the victory over fallen Lucifer's Head of Affliction and his Head of Blasphemy. This is the overcoming power we, too, must gain possession of at this level of our growth.

Finally, our studies of the churches end with the Church of Laodicea, identified with the Mercy Seat in the Tabernacle. It is here that we experience God's Mercy that covers us as we receive His words of judgment from the Ark of the Covenant. Without God's mercy, our transgressions and rebellion against His headship would place us under God's judgment. But because of His great love, we have access to His Mercy Seat where we receive cleansing from our inward sins.

Laodicea overcame Lucifer's Head of Ignorance and his Head of Rebellion. These heads had caused the church to be blind to her need for inward surrender as well as outward obedience. Laodicea rebelled against the Lord's headship which directed her toward further humility until, in His mercy, God chastened her into repentance. The overcomers in this church passed through God's mercy, through the Mercy Seat, as it were, and entered into complete marriage union with the will of their spiritual Bridegroom.

Overcoming our spiritual pride that tells us we have need of nothing will bring us to a surrendered place before God's Mercy Seat and cause us to recognize that without His love and guidance, we are wretched, miserable, and blind. But we can be overcomers! Because Jesus overcame, we can overcome. The messages to the churches are

ones of OVERCOMING POWER. Praise His Name!

Jesus Christ's role as King is given preeminence in relationship to these churches. However, we also see Him functioning as Priest and Prophet. Here, in the midst of the seven churches, stands the Resurrected King, the One with the sharp sword proceeding out of His mouth with which He can cut and sever wherever He wills. The order of ministry is the same to each of the churches: first the authority of the King, then that of the Priest, and finally the ministry of the Prophet.

I. HE MINISTERS AS KING

Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; (Revelation 2:1).

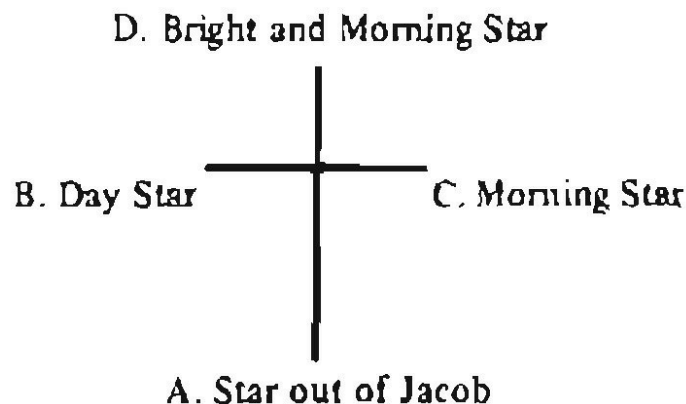
The identity of the seven stars and seven golden candlesticks has already been established. The message to the Church of Ephesus is directed to "the angel of the church of Ephesus" who has special guardianship and ministry in oversight of this particular church because he has already warred against and overcome fallen Lucifer on this realm. The angelic warfare occurred when the beautiful cherub attempted to set his throne above the throne of God. Although some of the angelic host succumbed to the temptation of Lucifer, others stood and warred for the truth that they knew. Through this warfare, the angels laid hold of the glory and power that the truth carries. Since each warred for a different portion of truth, each received a different degree of glory and power.

The Word declares that the angels are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation (Hebrews 1:14). As we progress through the various stages of spiritual growth, laying hold of the light which each church represents, we, as individuals, experience the faithful ministry of the very angels who have already gained the victory. What a blessing to know that on whatever realm we fight the enemy, there is an angel to help us overcome, even as he overcame Lucifer on that same realm.

The King holds the seven stars (angels) in His right hand, showing that He is ruling and reigning over them. He directs all their motions; He puts them into different orbits of activity; He fills them with light and power; He supports them, they are instruments in His hand, and His hand leads and guides them in ministry of good to the churches. This sceptre of power and authority was given to Jesus Christ after His death, burial and resurrection, after He entered into an eternal union with the living WORD, the Christ.

Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36).

In the Word of God we find four times where Jesus Christ is revealed as a star, thus confirming His power and authority to rule over the seven stars in His hand.



A. STAR OUT OF JACOB

I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: these shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smile the comers of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth

(Numbers 24:17).

The word *star* means to blaze, to shine, a prince, ruling and reigning. The Star out of Jacob is used to speak prophetically of the second coming of Christ; at this time He will establish His millennial reign over all enemies. I Corinthians 15:25 also refers to His second coming as a blazing, shining Star out of Jacob: "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." Jesus Christ is the Star out of Jacob that will rule and reign, even now, over all our enemies.

B. DAY STAR

We have also a more sure word of prophecy: whereunto ye do well that ye lake heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts (II Peter 1:19).

The next reference relates to the Day Star. In this case, the word *star* means to light, to give birth to light, to manifest by rays. A ray of light includes the tiniest ray to a tremendous beam of light. As Christians we sometimes sit in darkened areas of the Word of God; at first only a tiny ray of light breaks through, but as we follow that ray to the source of the light, suddenly we find ourselves standing in a great illumination of the Word of God. We find a living thrill in pressing on to know Jesus Christ. These experiences of the Day Star arising in our hearts to where the Word of God bursts forth with new light are indeed precious and cause all sacrifice to appear as nothing, praise His sweet Name.

C. MORNING STAR

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

The overcomers in the Church of Thyatira were promised the Morning Star, which means to rear up like a mountain, to lift up above, bursting like a sunrise, which refers to a greater degree of light. This promise, given to the overcomers of the Church of Thyatira pertains to that degree of glory which will be bestowed upon the kings and priests who will rule upon the new earth.

D. BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR

I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star (Revelation 22:16).

The Bright and Morning Star is none other than Jesus Christ described in His full sun glory. A somewhat similar description is used to indicate the Bride of Jesus Christ. Of the three groups of believers dressed in white in the Book of Revelation, only the Bride is clothed in linen. The linen dress of the Bride does not pertain to the initial acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour, for salvation is a gift of God. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). The linen belongs to her works, her righteousness or her right acts. The Bride's linen is clean, indicating clearness and purity, and her garments are white, meaning bright, limpid radiant, gorgeous, sumptuous, or the full sunburst of power and glory. It is interesting to note that the word for *bright* is the same in the Greek as *white*. The Bride of Christ will clothe herself with this garment. The sunburst of glory will be obtained through the Bright and Morning Star; she will attain in stature unto the highest realm of the Word, which is symbolically represented by the Bright and Morning Star.

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

And the armies [Bride] which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean (Revelation 19:14).

Returning to Revelation 2:1, we see the King holding the seven stars in His right hand—the sevenfold revelation of His authority, and as King, He walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. What constitutes a true Christian church? The King is in the midst: “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, [in His nature, character, and authority] there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20).

II. HE MINISTERS AS PRIEST

“I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience...” We have seen the King minister first, now comes the Priest. He declares, “I know thy works.” It was the responsibility of the Old Testament priest to inspect the sacrifice. The one who offered the sacrifice could inspect only the exterior of his sacrificial animal, but the priest slit it open to examine the inward parts. Only the priest could declare whether it was acceptable to God or not. If it were clean and perfect within and without, it was accepted upon God’s altar and offered as a sweet smelling savor unto the LORD.

So it is with our offerings today. Outwardly, our words may sound impressive and acceptable in prayer and praise and consecration before Him, but it all must be inspected by our High Priest, Jesus Christ. He inspects the underlying motives, the hidden thoughts, the secret purposes of our hearts. No sacrifice is acceptable to Him unless we bring a right heart and a right spirit with it.

We can all learn a lesson from the ministry of the High Priest. Notice how He first recognizes the good and then he recognizes the bad. This is good psychology to use in working with people, is it not? Reproof and correction are easier to take after commendation and appreciation are given.

A. RECOGNIZES THE GOOD

I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil; and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted (Revelation 2:2,3).

The Priest always recognized the good first. He says, “I know thy works.” He has inspected their works, separating the spiritual works from their fleshly works, and He begins to fellowship with that which is spiritual in them. A minister or counsellor needs spiritual discernment in working with people. It is not for us to fellowship others with fleshly flattery and insincere commendations, as this only worsens their dilemma and strengthens their carnality. If we are sincere, we can find something in each individual that will be worthy of appreciation and praise. A spiritual union between counselor and counselee establishes confidence and prepares the way for the necessary words of reproof and correction. Notice the imposing array of good works that the Priest acknowledges to the Church of Ephesus. He finds nothing wrong with their works.

B. RECOGNIZES THE BAD

The Priest (Jesus Christ) first recognized their works; He has already acknowledged what they had attained, but then proceeds to reveal what they must rid themselves of if they are to possess the fullness of the sevenfold brightness in His hand.

Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works;...(Revelation 2:4,5).

Interestingly enough, the very name *Ephesus* means to relax, and this is what He charged them with—a relaxing spirit. This is just what the Devil wants to cause us to do. When we relax, we begin to lose our grip, we tire, we drift. Ultimately, it produces a semi-conscious state which leads to spiritual death. Hebrews 12:3 refers to this: “For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.” To be wearied means to sicken and to tire, which state is expressed when we say, “Oh, what is the use anyhow?” Fainting is to relax, to lose consciousness. Why do we relax, become weary and faint? Because we fail to *consider*

Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself. We become disheartened and discouraged when someone contradicts us. How easy it is, then, to become weary and faint in the journey, and begin to relax and lose hold of the prize that is set before us. We must never lift our gaze from the Author and the Finisher of our faith, Jesus Christ. Because His eyes were fixed upon the prize set before Him, He endured the cross, despising the shame and is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Jesus is our example, for He suffered contradiction from the time of His birth to the cross, yet He fulfilled the Father's will in His life's journey. We must also learn to suffer contradiction, lest we sicken in our minds and begin to relax in our determination.

The Church of Ephesus had left her first love. With all her noble contendings, she had begun to sicken, tire, relax. First love means loving Jesus above all else. When He is our first love, then He is the source of our joy, our thrill, our delight. But it is so easy to let Jesus Christ move into second place in our hearts. How many times have we come to Him in prayer with our second best, for our earthly involvements have taken preeminence over Him.

We come before Him with a divided heart and a preoccupied mind. This certainly is not first love. It is of primary importance that we keep our souls clean before Him, and our hearts filled with first love. Surely we are not to regress from the freshness and fervency of our love which we experienced in the beginning of our relationship with Jesus Christ. Instead we should find a deepening and ever increasing love as each day passes. We should pray more, give more, serve more, love more. First love means that Jesus is FIRST!

In reality, the Church of Ephesus had fallen in love with her works and placed them above their love for the Bridegroom, Lucifer had thrust his head of Deceit at the Church of Ephesus, causing her to believe that working for God was more important than her love relationship with Him. We see this same problem demonstrated in the Song of Solomon in the relationship between the Bridegroom and His espoused Bride. In the beginning (chapter one, Song of Solomon) the Bridegroom disciplines and corrects the Bride from her pride of revelation which causes her to think that her works and service are of primary importance. He finally succeeds in drawing her out to Mount Bether (the place of separation which types the prayer closet) and there she begins to learn to put Him first in her life. Our beloved Bridegroom is a jealous bridegroom who demands first place in our hearts.

Of course Jesus is interested and pleased with our service and our good works for Him, but these works are to be the by-product of our love relationship with Him. The love of the Bridegroom must rule over our works.



The Old Testament Priest not only inspected the sacrifice, but also ministered in the shedding of blood for the forgiveness of the person's sin. So here, Jesus Christ pleads with the Church of Ephesus to repent. He has already personally shed His blood as a propitiation for her sins; He arose, victorious over death and hell and carried that blood offering to the Mercy Seat in heaven to make reconciliation with God. We have seen Him wearing the golden girdle of the divine priesthood. He calls them to repentance that they might return once again to their first love.

III. HE MINISTERS AS PROPHET

Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate (Revelation 2:5,6).

Now the Prophet begins to minister, "I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick..." He continues to prophesy of two aspects—judgment and blessing.

A. PROPHECIES JUDGMENT

1. To the Church of Ephesus:

“I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick...” As the Mosaic Tabernacle types the stature of Jesus Christ, the Golden Candlestick found in the Holy Place depicts Christ as the Light of the World. It was all gold, wholly divine light, representing the wisdom, the understanding, and the knowledge of the Christ. The Apostolic church age (Ephesus period) possessed that full candlestick of light and truth, but because she left her first love God removed the candlestick. Subsequent church history records the struggles of the church to reclaim the light of the Golden Candlestick.

2. To the Nicolaitans:

“...which I also hate.” Everything that God hates is doomed for destruction and judgment. The word *Nicolaitans* comes from the Greek word meaning priestly rule over laity, to conquer the laity, that is to ruin and absorb the people. This was the work of the Devil’s priests to usurp God’s position of power and authority over the people.

Before we consider the blessings pronounced by the Prophet, let us concern ourselves with the spiritual battle that confronted these seven churches. The full stature of fallen Lucifer* is revealed in Scripture as Satan, the Devil, the Serpent, and the Dragon. We are especially interested here in the seven heads of the Serpent and the Dragon realms of fallen Lucifer. God broke the heads of the Dragon and Leviathan in the Red Sea as the children of Israel fled from the Egyptians.

Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength: thou brakest the head of the dragons in the waters. Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces, and gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness (Psalm 74:13,14).

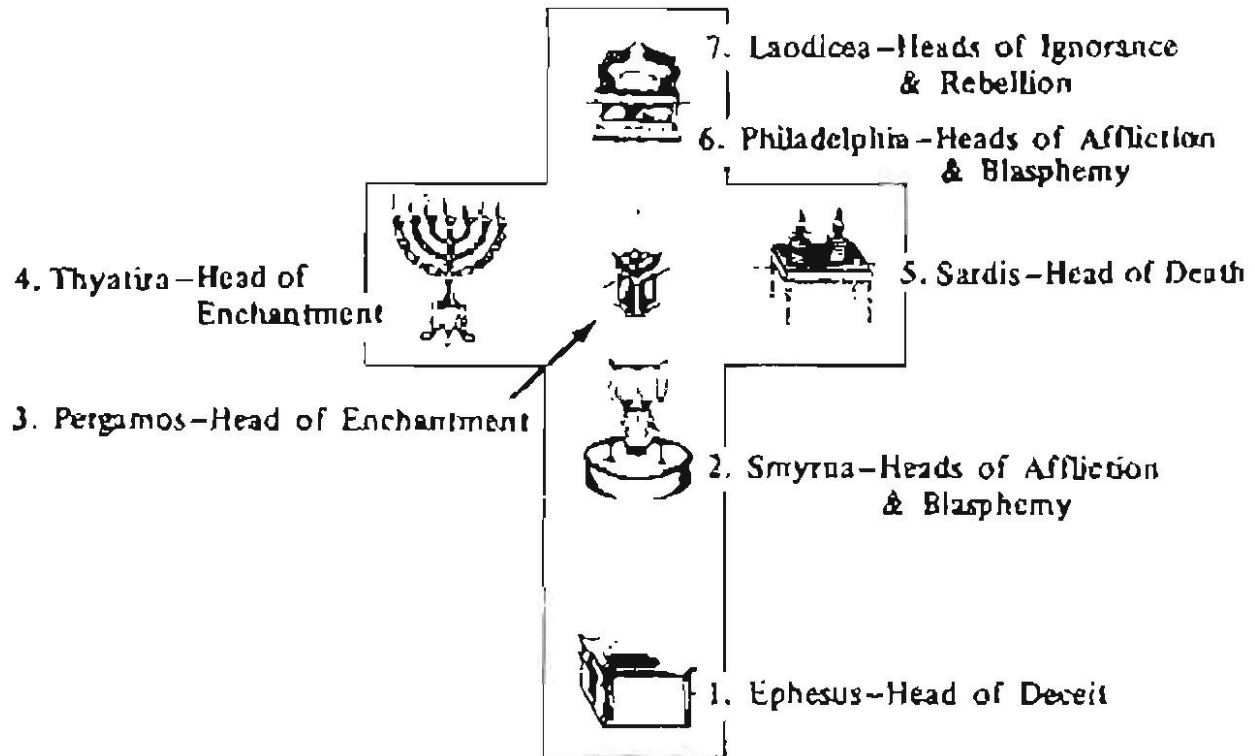
The seven heads of the Dragon are supplied from the seven heads of Leviathan, the Serpent nature of fallen Lucifer. The seven heads are upon long serpent necks, and the heads wear seven crowns which indicate ruling power. The Dragon, being the highest realm of satanic wickedness and evil, has power of rulership that supersedes that of Satan, the Devil, and the Serpent. Reference to the Dragon with his seven heads and ten horns is found in Revelation 12:3.

And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads (Revelation 12:3).

In the beginning Lucifer was in unity and harmony with God until pride exalted his mind. Because of his sin, his mind became corrupted and his wisdom became perverted. This corrupted, perverted, divisive mind of Lucifer worked against the seven churches of Asia Minor, and works today, as well, to confuse, divide, derange, and create a double mindedness in the minds of men.

As we progress in our study of the seven churches we shall note the warfare each church waged against the heads of the Dragon. The Church of Ephesus was attacked by the head of deceit. Although the early church had all the light of the Golden Candlestick, possessing the knowledge of the full stature of Jesus Christ and the prize of being His Bride, yet she began to relax, sicken, and become weary to the point of leaving her first love. Placing her works over and above her love relationship with the Bridegroom, she certainly was a deceived church.

Below is a diagram of the seven churches in stature form, and the head (or heads) of fallen Lucifer that each church battles.



Although a clear vision of the prize was set before the Church of Ephesus, the effects of the contradictions surrounding her began to take their toll. Then the satanic head of deceit moved in, clobbering the mind with such thoughts as, "It is not worth it...what's the use? I think I will quit...there is no such thing as the Bride." We must keep in mind that a truly relaxed state implies an unconscious slate. As long as we stay conscious, alert and aware, with our eyes open to see the truth, it is an easy matter to keep Jesus in first place. With open vision we are not easily deceived or sidetracked from the prize. But once we begin to close our eyes and relax, we have opened ourselves to the attack of the head of deceit. This is a powerful head, so beware!

Remember how Adam female (Genesis 5:2) was deceived. Although God warned her about eating from the forbidden tree of knowledge of good and evil, she was deceived by the Serpent and saw the tree as desirable and life-giving. This is how the head of deceit works. When under its influence, black becomes white and white becomes black, death can look like life, and life can look like death. The head of deceit destroys our vision of the prize, provoking us to think that we were deceived to even believe there was such a position to attain.

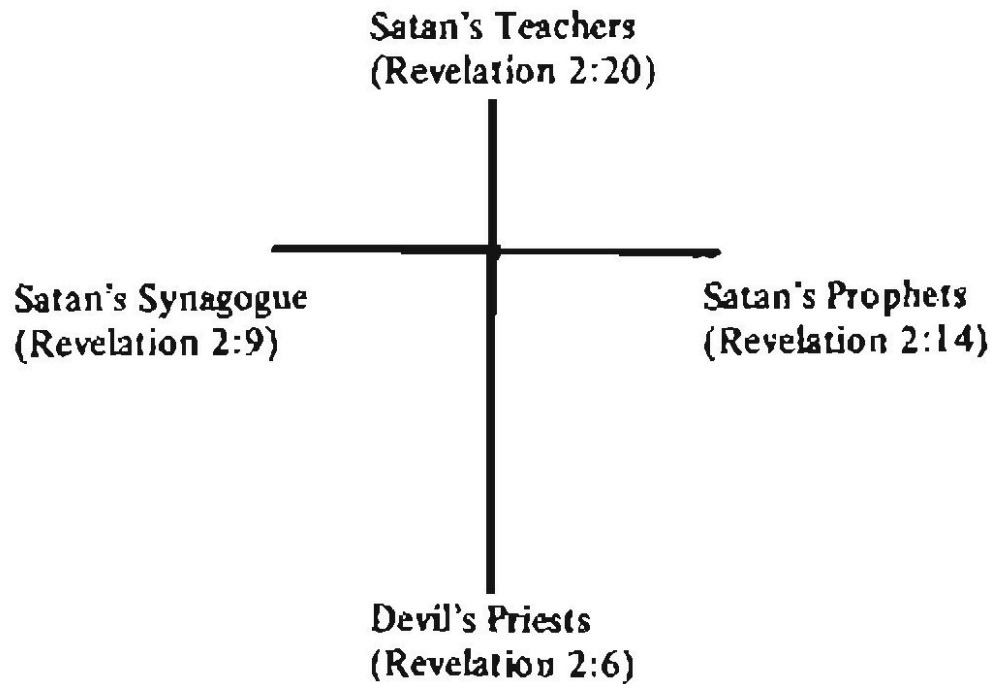
The Prophet encourages the Church of Ephesus to fight against the relaxing spirit that caused her to leave her first love, putting her works above her love; He exhorts her to war against the Dragon's head of deceit and to contend with the Devil's priests, the Nicolaitans.

Let us digress further in order to establish another truth which substantiates the spiritual warfare laid out in the seven churches of the Book of Revelation. The principle of spiritual warfare is taught in the parable of the Wheat and the Tares. This parable gives special instructions concerning the Kingdom of Heaven (the Bride and Bridegroom relationship seen during the Millennial reign of Christ). We cannot escape the fact of spiritual warfare; both the Scriptures and experience attest to this fact.

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

This parable illustrates the battle of survival between the wheat and the tares, each struggling to possess the substance of the ground. The ground represents the Word of God which provides the nourishing substance for all spiritual growth. Both the good and bad seeds are permitted to grow together until time for harvest. The good seed must overcome the bad seed that surrounds it, lest the bad seed take the ground and misuse it. Tares (the seeds of the Devil) always warp, twist, mar, and pervert the Word of God, whereas wheat (the good seed of Christians) grows and flourishes thereby.

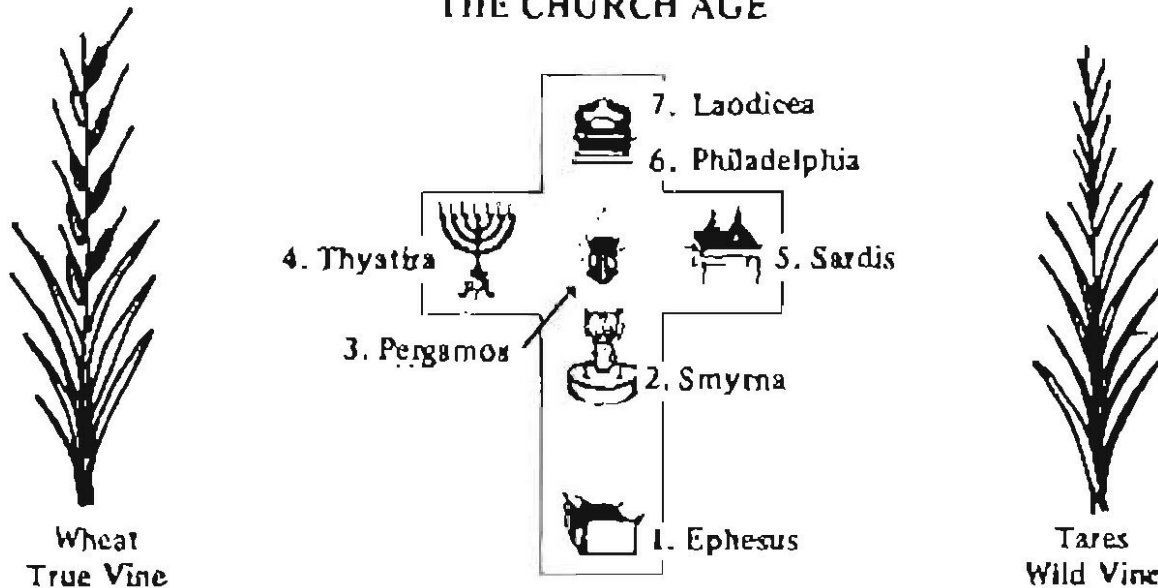
The wheat in this parable pictures the true church of Jesus Christ, whereas the tares represent the apostate church. The principle of encountering spiritual separation from Satan's influence as we progress upward in stature is also illustrated in the parable of the true vine and the wild vine (Isaiah 5). These two vines abide together in the church just as the wheat and tares grew side by side. Each level of spiritual growth presents a new attack from the enemy within. Let us look at the stature of these enemies.



The Devil's priests are identified by the name *Nicolaitans*. These are men who use their office to usurp God's rightful authority over the lives of others. Satan's synagogue refers to those who profess a degree of spirituality that they do not possess. Balaam is a fit picture of Satan's prophets, for he mixed error with truth. His false doctrine caused God's people to forsake their life of separation and consecration to God. Satan's teachers follow the example of Jezebel. By teaching the church to commit fornication and eat things sacrificed to idols, she continued to promote Balaam's defiling message.

The seven churches of Asia Minor depict the Church Age, setting before us the constant spiritual struggle between the good and the bad seed which abide together in the church. Another similar metaphor is used, that of the True Vine (Jesus Christ) and the Wild Vine (apostate Israel). Each vine can also represent the two elements that are growing together in the vineyard of the Lord. True believers, in union with Jesus the True Vine, are represented by the true vine, and rebellious, uncontrollable, strange hypocrites in the church are seen as the wild vine. Keep in mind that these grow side by side, but the wheat, the true vine, must overcome the tares and the wild vine.

THE CHURCH AGE



The Prophet spoke and prophesied against the deeds of the Nicolaitans, the Devil's priests. The ministry of the heavenly Priest exposes the wrong and the ministry of the Prophet speaks judgment if they failed to repent, or blessing if they repented and overcame.

B. PROPHECIES BLESSING

To overcome means to subdue, to prevail, to conquer. A special blessing was promised to those who would overcome the head of deceit and the Devil's priests.

Sometimes the Devil's priests come to us through other human beings who deny the headship of the Lord in our lives by telling us that it is not necessary to be separated from the world or deny ourselves in order to go on for God. If we overcome those who would try to usurp God's authority in our lives, we will be blessed indeed.

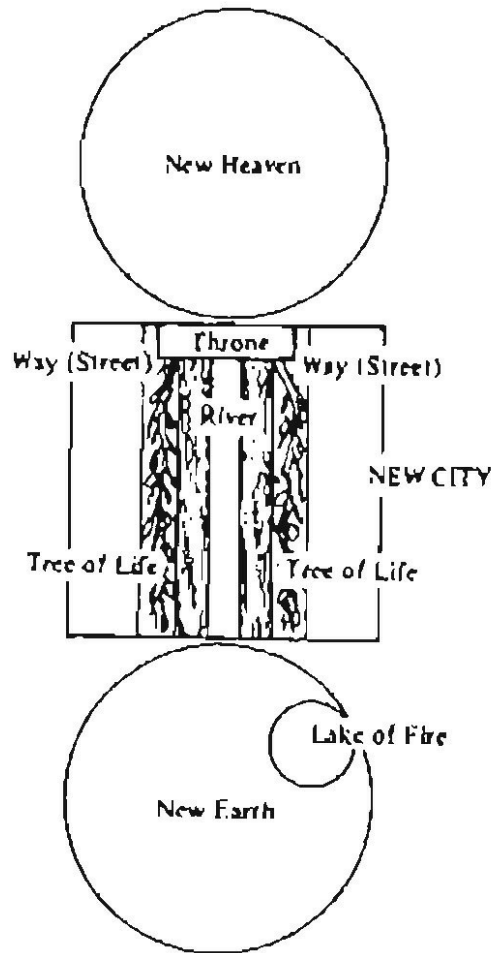
He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God (Revelation 2:7).

"He that hath an ear...to him that overcometh" will be awarded the privilege to eat of the tree of Life which stands in the midst of God's paradise. Chapters 21 and 22 of Revelation give us details of the New City, the New Jerusalem, the Holy City, the eternal paradise of God.

And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations (Revelation 22:1,2).

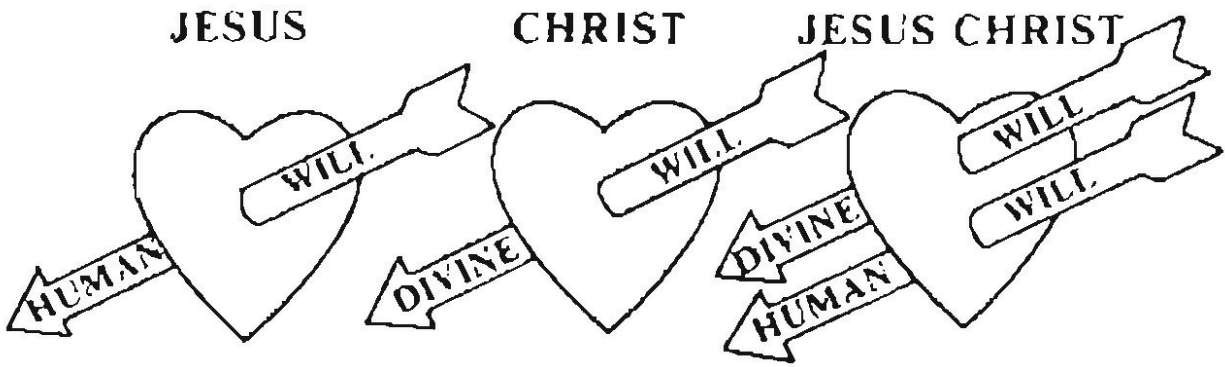
In the New City we see a street with the River of Life flowing through the center of it. In the midst of the street of the river and on either side of the river stands the Tree of Life, whose fruit shall provide meat and whose leaves shall provide healing for the nations that dwell upon the New Earth.

All mankind shall spend eternity in one of four places:



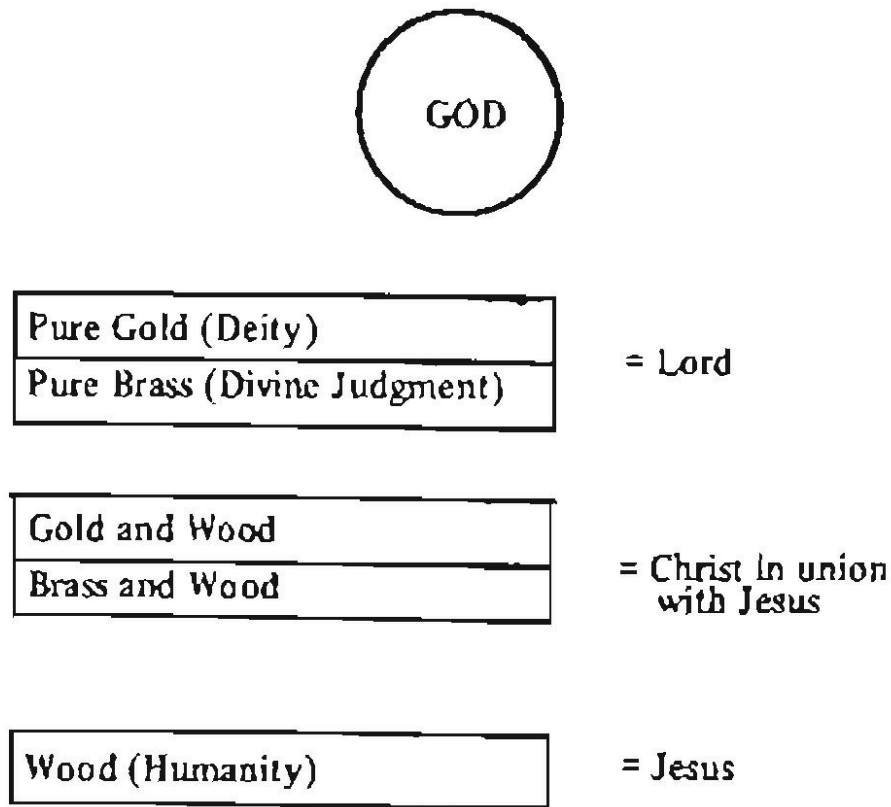
Notice, those believers that attain spiritual growth comparable with the Brazen Altar (Mosaic Tabernacle), as represented by the Church of Ephesus which was the foundational church of the entire Church Age, do not enter INTO Paradise. This is not their dwelling place, for they have not attained to that degree of glory. But they are promised the right to EAT of the Tree of Life which stands in God's Paradise—the New City. There will be an outflow of blessedness and beneficence to all believers that dwell on the New Earth and in the New Heaven. In this dispensation of grace we are privileged to eat and drink of our Lord Jesus Christ; God supplies His blessings, His life, His grace and mercy. His love, His innumerable benefits now through His Son, Jesus Christ. In the Perfect Age, God and the Lamb will release the meat and the drink through the Bride of Christ—the wife of the Lamb. The source of the water and the fruit of life will be none other than the Christ that indwells the Bride: she is the agency through which He will work and bless throughout all eternity.

Perhaps we need to pause here for a bit of explanation about the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the name of the man who had a human will like all of us. With this will he had the power of choice, even as we. But the difference between Hun and us is that Jesus was indwelt by the Christ (the Word, the Logos). Jesus had the power of choice, but at all times He kept His human will under subjection to the divine will that was in Him.



Jesus was the “only begotten of the Father”; there was no one like Him; He was the only one of His kind. We need to go one step further and realize that He was also *Lord*, which speaks of the glory aspect of the Father, This can best be illustrated by the type found in the Old Testament Tabernacle. The Book of Hebrews clearly established the fact that the first tabernacle was a shadow and a picture of the second Tabernacle. Jesus Christ, Each detail, dimension, material, purpose, illustrates truth concerning Jesus Christ. The various pieces of furniture were made of wood (Jesus–humanity), brass (Christ–Divine Judgment), gold (Christ–Deity). In some cases, the wood and brass were joined together, and in others we see the wood and gold joined. On the other hand some pieces of brass and gold were never combined with any wood. In the Brazen Altar we see the union between the humanity of Jesus and the divinity of the Christ to accomplish the work of redemption (wood and the brass of divine judgment). The Laver was made wholly of brass (no wood of humanity seen in this implement of judgment). The Golden Altar, representing prayer, was a combination of wood overlaid with gold. The Golden Candlestick, made of pure gold, depicted the divine light of Christ. The Table of Shewbread was made of gold overlaying the wood (the joining of the humanity with the deity of the Christ to provide the Bread of Life). The Ark of the Covenant was made of wood overlaid with pure gold (gold in and out), representing the throne of Jesus Christ and His headship. The Mercy Seat which rested upon the Ark was of pure gold (Christ’s divine mercy).

We see, then, that in some cases the humanity of Jesus blended together with the deity of the Christ. But there was also some brass and some gold that never was touched by the human aspect. With this pure divine side, Jesus Christ was able to reach up and touch God on our behalf. And with the gold and brass that was joined to the wood of the man Jesus, He could reach down and touch sinful mankind. This is why Jesus Christ could be our mediator. There is no one else who was so equipped by nature to be a mediator as our precious Lord Jesus Christ.



Since His death and resurrection, Jesus, the man, has known an eternal union with Christ the Word, and with the glory of the Father.

Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36).

At all times, the man Jesus kept His human will under subjection to the will of God in Hun. If He had failed to do so, He would have lost this oneness of relationship with God, Jesus, the man, never did one thing without complying with the guidance and direction of the Father's will that was in Him. He "was in all points tempted Like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). Beloved, He passed the test, and the union between God and man is now eternal. This man Jesus has been made one with God.

Our Lord Jesus Christ has not only opened up the way, but has also demonstrated how a human heart can be brought into a oneness of relationship with God. Through a process of progressive crucifixion and sanctification, a believer can learn to bring his will under and keep it under the will of God, even as Jesus kept His human will under the Christ that was in Him. As we crucify our carnal, fleshly nature we can take on the nature of Christ—the Word. And as we crucify our human will, a new measure of the will of God will take its place in our hearts. Continuing in this process, a believer will grow up into the full stature of Jesus Christ, unto His head.

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love (Ephesians 4:12-16).

As the human will knows union with the will of the Christ within, marriage union, a oneness of relationship, takes place with Jesus Christ; this is called the Bride and Bridegroom relationship. Only then does that believer take on the glory of the Lord (Master-Husband). Just as Jesus kept His human will in union and in subjection to the will of the Father throughout His earthly journey, then was filled with the glory of the Father and made both Lord and Christ upon His resurrection, so will the Bride of Christ be resurrected into a position of eternal union and glory with her heavenly Bridegroom on resurrection morning.

What a prize! No wonder the Devil tries to talk us out of it. In the Perfect Age, God and the Lamb, through the Bride, will minister to the believers in the New Heaven and the New Earth. The Apostle Paul knew about the prize. Although he was a believer who had served his master faithfully, Paul still announced "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14). He counted no cost too great.

But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ. And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before (Philippians 3:7-13).

This closes the ministry of Jesus Christ to the Church of Ephesus, His first ministry was that of King with His right hand filled with the glory of the seven stars (angels). He holds within His hand the sevenfold revelation of His glory—that of the Bright and Morning Star. His kingly authority is based upon the Word of God, and later we see Him revealed as the One who has the sharp sword of the Word proceeding out of His mouth. Then He ministers as Priest, commending them for their good works, but rebuking them for their bad. They must repent and do the first works over again. They must overcome the spirit of relaxation, regain their first love, war against the head of deceit, and overcome the Nicolaitans. Lastly, He ministers as Prophet and declares the coming judgment if they fail to repent, and the blessing of reward that will be theirs if they overcome.

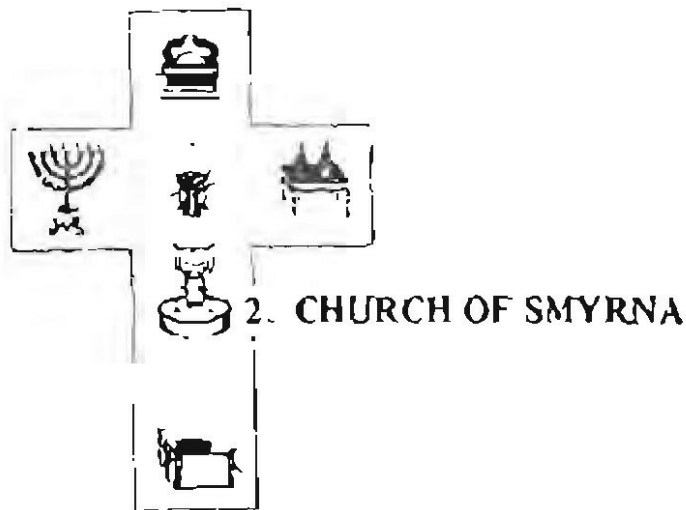
This message and ministry was given to the Ephesian Church, and it was also given to all believers and to us today as well. "He that hath an ear...to him that overcometh." It is at the Brazen Altar that we begin our spiritual journey with Jesus Christ. How fervent and ardent is our love in the beginning. May we take heed to the message sent to the Church of Ephesus, overcome the spiritual forces that contend with us there, and press on to the next level of spiritual growth as represented by the Church of Smyrna.

* B. R. Hicks, [*Lucifer*](#), (Jeffersonville, Indiana, 1970).

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CHAPTER THREE

THE CHURCH OF SMYRNA (Revelation 2:8-11)



The seven churches, with their various spiritual battles and subsequent degrees of overcoming, present a pattern of personal growth in Jesus Christ. At the Church of Ephesus we learn to overcome a relaxing spirit (a fleshly desire to place works above our first love), the head of deceit, and the Devil's priests. With this overcoming we are promised the privilege to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. Although the fullness of this privilege will be realized in the perfect age, we may now experience the blessing of being lifted by the Spirit of God into God's heavenly paradise and partake of the tree of life. These precious times of fellowshiping Jesus in such an intimate manner move the soul into greater union with Him. If these times fill us with such glory and delight Just imagine eternity when the *fullness* of fellowship and union will be experienced by the Bride of Jesus Christ. What a goal to press toward!

Overcoming at the Church of Ephesus brings us to the Church of Smyrna, located (spiritually speaking) at the Laver, or in the loin section of the stature of Jesus Christ.

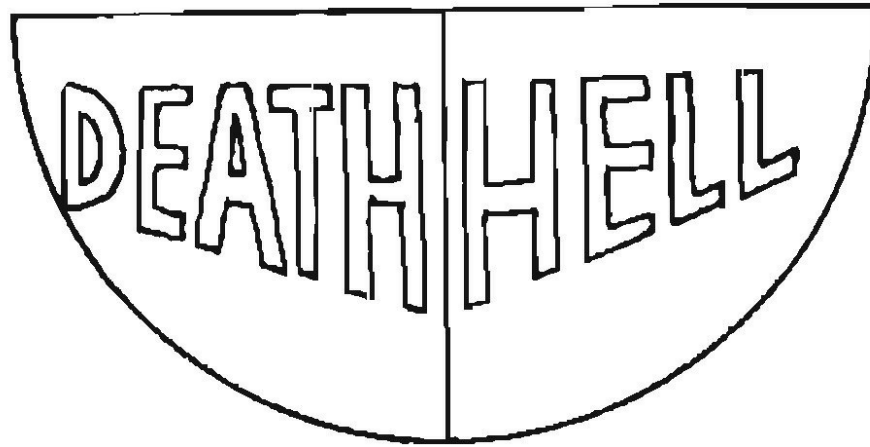
I. HE MINISTERS AS KING

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

Jesus Christ stands as King over death and hell, praise His sweet Name! In Psalm 24 we see His victory over death and hell vividly described.

...Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads. O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah. (Psalm 24:7-10).

Prior to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, fallen Lucifer held the keys of death and hell. Thus, the witch of Endor, through the power of the Devil who at that time possessed these keys, was able to bring the soul and spirit of Samuel up from paradise. In the Old Testament dispensation, Hades was divided into two compartments called death and hell.



The resurrected Blood of Jesus Christ had not yet been placed on the Mercy Seat in heaven; therefore, at death, Old Testament believers were retained in the compartment of death, also referred to as paradise and Abraham's bosom, while the unbeliever went to hell. Satan held the keys to these two places. However, when Jesus died on the cross, the Christ within Him, accompanied the soul of the man Jesus into hell. The above verses of Psalm 24 attest to this truth. Christ, the Creator of these very gates of hell commanded them to be lifted up. The word *lifted* is quite interesting, it carries the implication of "warfare and union." In other words, "Lift up your heads, be married to the will of God; God's will is for the King of glory to come in." Praise His Name! The Christ, the Creator, did not need a key, but spoke only the Word and marched into death and hell and took the keys from Lucifer. Now Jesus Christ boldly proclaims: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Revelation 1:18). No wonder we see Him standing as King over death and hell.

II. HE MINISTERS AS PRIEST

I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan (Revelation 2:9).

The Priest, whose ministry is to inspect the sacrifice, speaks, saying, "I know thy works." He knew their works even as He knows ours. Sometimes we are quite distressed because we receive little or no recognition for our Christian endeavors. At times we nurture a spirit of resentment and self-pity when our labors go unnoticed and unappreciated, but this reveals our motive for service. Do we serve God or man? If we possess a motive to serve God, then we continue faithful regardless of man's lack of commendation. Rest assured, however, that when God chooses to exalt us, we will be exalted, and no man can hinder. On the other hand, if we seek to exalt ourselves, God's Word promises only abasement: "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matthew 23:12).

However, there is also a negative side to our works. We sometimes become easily discouraged because we look upon ourselves with our carnal works, and wonder how anyone (including God) could ever endure us. People may become impatient with us, but He never wearies so long as we continue humbling ourselves, ever lifting our faces upward to Him. Oh, how full of mercy and love is He! He is confident that He is fully able to finish the good work He has begun in us. He is not only the author, but also the finisher of our faith, praise His sweet Name!

"I know thy works, and tribulation..." The Priest not only knows their works, but their sufferings and afflictions as well. The word *tribulation* means to throng, to crowd, pressure, anguish, persecution, narrow, trouble. When in the midst of battle, pressed on every side, the enemy crowding our minds with doubts and fears, and when persecuted and full of anguish, just let Him whisper, "I know thy tribulation; I understand your sufferings, for I, too, have walked this way." He left us an example that we should follow His steps (I Peter 2:21). When we share our

tribulations and troubles with others, their understanding of our sufferings are limited, but this is not so with Jesus, our precious High Priest.

For verily he took not on him the nature of angels: but he took on him the seed of Abraham [became a man]. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted (Hebrews 2:16-18).

Although divine, our Heavenly High Priest is also a man, thoroughly acquainted with humanity, having walked this life even as you and I. He was also tempted, yet never guilty of any sin. How comforting it is to remember that He knows the frailty of flesh, the anguish of the troubled mind, and the frustrations of the human spirit. When others fail to comprehend. He knows our tribulations. Better yet—He cares.

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it (I Corinthians 10:13).

Thank God! He will not put on us more than we are able to bear, but will make a way to escape, through the door of crucifixion, as we surrender to His headship and allow Him to put to death the area of our fleshly nature which He desires. God knows what heated trials and tribulations in which to place us in order to purify the gold and to remove the dross of the flesh. The inner confidence that He will not put upon us more than we can bear comforts and strengthens us in the hour of temptation, in time of suffering and afflictions, in the season of tribulations.

“I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty (but thou art rich). . .” In the eyes of the world, the Church of Smyrna appeared quite pathetic. Although infested with suffering, affliction, and poverty, she was rich in the eyes of God. Smyrna was the Laver church, living in the waters of His Name, Death, and Life. The Old Testament tabernacle was laid out in the form of the cross, as portrayed through its seven pieces of furniture. In the outer court (or the foot of the cross). God placed three provisions for sanctification. First was the Brazen Altar where the blood sacrifices were slain, a picture of the precious Blood of Jesus Christ. Also at this altar, fire came forth from God, lighting upon those blood sacrifices. The fire pictures the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire. The second piece of furniture in the outer court was the brazen Laver, located in the loin section of the stature of Jesus Christ. Here the priest bathed once outwardly, a picture of water baptism in Jesus’ Name. After this they returned daily to the Laver to wash their hands and feet. We, who have a desire to grow up into the full stature of Jesus Christ, must also bathe once outwardly in the baptismal waters of His Name, Death, and Life and return daily to wash our hands and feet.

God gave these three provisions for sanctification: the precious Blood of Jesus Christ, the fixer of the Holy Ghost pouring forth in intercession and travail, and the waters of His Name, Death, and Life. At the Laver, or in the waters of His Name, Death, and Life, we find cleansing and sanctification for the sins of our fleshly nature. When we accept Jesus as our personal Saviour, He delivers us from the penalty of sin, which is death and hell. However, we still possess the carnal nature which we inherited from Adam when he sinned in the Garden of Eden. At the Laver, we deal with the sins of our fleshly nature. “I know thy poverty.” Smyrna was poor because she had been stripped at the Laver. The Old Testament Laver, made of brass looking glasses of the women, is a picture of the Word of God. As we gaze into the mirror of the Word, we are able to see our riches of pride and deceit, the treasures of our own carnal will. As we bend low at the foot of the Laver, (His Word), He will judge, put His verdict, upon our riches. Then He will apply the waters of death, stripping us and leaving us poor, but rich in Him. When we become poor in pride, then we are rich in humility; when we are poor in our own strength, then we are rich in faith to trust Him. “I know thy poverty, but thou art rich.” How important is the Word of God in our lives; it contains stripping power, ability to make us poor so that we might become rich. The waters of God’s Word will cleanse and sanctify us so that we may be presented blameless before Him. “That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word. That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing: but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Ephesians 5:26,27).

It is interesting to note that the High Priest offered no accusation against the Church of Smyrna because she was living at the Laver, suffering for His Name’s sake, daily washing in the waters of His Name, Death, and Life. Although we have uncrucified flesh and unsanctified areas in our personal lives which God has not yet revealed to us. He has no accusation against us when He sees us washing daily at the Laver, cleansing ourselves from the filth of

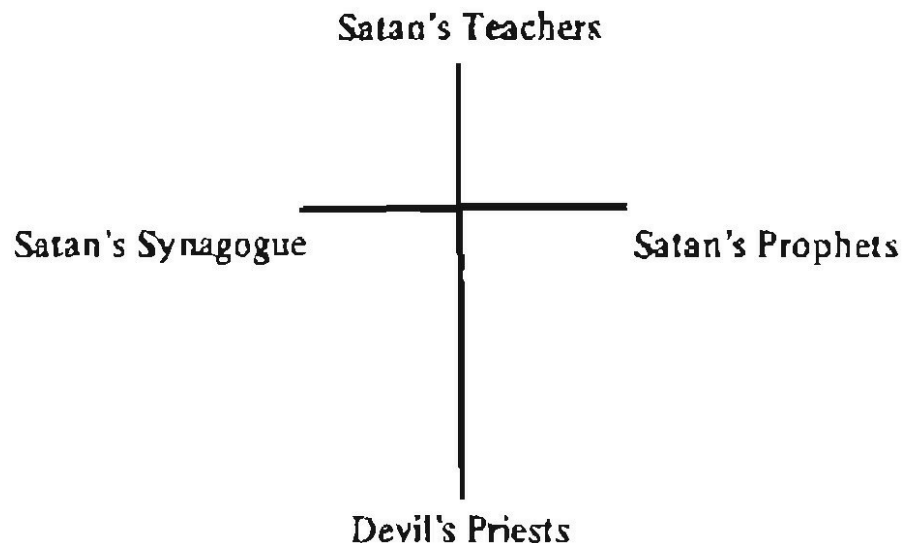
our carnal nature as He reveals it to us.*

People look at our outward circumstances, knowing very little about the invisible but true riches we possess. James recognizes this truth when he says, “Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?” (James 2:5).

It is common for Christians to experience ridicule and rejection because they are pressing on to know God. When a Christian determines to live according to the will of God, rather than the lusts of the flesh, he will suffer, because “...they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:” (I Peter 4:4). The higher we walk with God, the lonelier the pathway becomes. But who would trade the riches of those special experiences with the Lord, those precious prayer times of communion with Him, those seasons of revealed mysteries in the Word of God, for the dust and ashes of human approval and fleshly loyalty? True, there are times of tribulation when we suffer the loss of friendship, loyalties, reputation, when we feel estranged and lonely. Certainly we are also poverty stricken in appearance at times, but nevertheless, keep in mind—“Ye are rich.” Look away from your poverty. Fasten your eyes upon Him who is rich, “For it pleased the Father that in him [Jesus] should all fulness dwell;...To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:19,27).

I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan (Revelation 2:9).

The spiritual growth progresses, even as does the warfare. The message to the Church of Ephesus was to overcome the Devil’s priests; now the Smyrna Church must overcome the synagogue of Satan. The wheat and tares abide together in the visible church, so the warfare and struggle never ceases all the way up the stature of Jesus Christ. The following is what we must contend with:



There is a portion of Lucifer that we must overcome at every church level of spiritual growth. The Ephesus Church had to overcome the Devil’s priests, the Nicolaitans, or priests over laity (turning one’s spiritual life into the hands of another human being). Our responsibility is to search the Word of God for ourselves. If properly girded with the truth, we will not fall into error.

The High Priest, upon inspecting the Church of Smyrna, spoke no words of rebuke. She was suffering for His Name, living at the Laver, washing daily in the waters of death and experiencing new resurrection life. This principle applies to us, as well; Jesus, our High Priest, takes pleasure in us when we sanctify ourselves at the Laver of the Word, and allow the waters of death (as in Noah’s day) to cover our earth (fleshly nature), cleansing it of the defilement and corruption. What a challenge the Church of Smyrna presents.

III. HE MINISTERS AS PROPHET

The Prophet begins to prophesy judgment and blessing.

A. PROPHECIES JUDGMENT

Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried: and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death... (Revelation 2:10).

First He prophesies the judgment which Lucifer would bring against the Church of Smyrna through his heads of Blasphemy and Affliction.

1. The Head of Blasphemy

To blaspheme is to belittle, degrade, bring down, to render stupid, silly, foolish. The Head of Blasphemy works especially against the Word of God by trying to belittle it and render it stupid and foolish in our eyes. Have you ever had a precious experience or revelation in the Word, and in sharing it with others, find them amused over the seemingly insignificance of it? Sometimes they even openly reject it. This is the Head of Blasphemy coming against you, and if you fail to overcome it, that precious quickened truth will soon lay discarded in the trash heap.

The Church of Ephesus had to overcome the Devil's priests—the Nicolaitans, those who desired to usurp the power of authority of God. Jesus contended with those same so-called "priests of God" in His day. How zealous they were in keeping the Sabbath and maintaining their ceremonial laws. Jesus did not mince words; He openly declared "you are not the children of Abraham (the father of faith) but you are of your father the devil" (John 8:44). Their only concern was for their own greed of gain and reputation which they achieved by usurping the place of God with the people.

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

Smyrna had to overcome Satan's synagogue, who claimed to be spiritual Jews, but were merely outward professors and imitators. They pretended to live holy lives but knew nothing of true inner holiness of the heart. Jesus Christ desires to work His holiness within us; therefore He tests us in various situations, some of which we do not understand. This is the time to walk softly before God lest we become critical and faultfinding. If we begin to criticize, the next step is to belittle and degrade, which is blasphemy. Some fail to receive what God has for them because they belittle the vessel which God chooses to use. Others listen to the professing Jews of Satan's synagogue rather than receive the truth of the Word of God. We belittle and degrade God's clear instructions of separation and holiness, choosing man's opinion rather than God's Word. Or perhaps we resent the uncomfortable circumstance in which we find ourselves. Then it is easy, in the subconscious realm, to accuse God of being unjust in placing us in that particular circumstance. Soon we begin to speak lightly concerning spiritual matters, and before long we turn from those things which we once held sacred and dear. Once we begin to move down this road of blasphemy, we open the door for Lucifer to strike with his Head of Blasphemy.

2. The Head of Affliction

Smyrna was a suffering church, enduring the attack of the Head of Affliction as well as that of Blasphemy. She was tried for ten days. The term *days* is figurative of ten periods of persecution. It is interesting to note that church historians often divide the persecution period of the early church into ten segments or phases of persecutions under the various Roman emperors.

The number *ten* in the Word is God's legal number based upon the law. In other words, this was a legal testing that God permitted in the Head of Affliction coming against the Smyrna Church. How comforting to know that even though we are tempted and afflicted, God is still sovereign over all things; Jesus Christ is still the head over all things to the church, including the ten days of tribulation. The Lord has appointed a legal and rightful testing time in our lives for our spiritual purification and growth.

Why does God allow us to suffer the Head of Affliction? Why did the church of Smyrna have to suffer so? Why

does God permit the Head of Affliction from the Dragon to come against us?

If the Dragon cannot defeat us with His Head of Blasphemy, then he comes against us with affliction. Consider Job,² for example: God permitted Satan to touch Job's possessions, and at first, Job displayed a measure of personal crucifixion by saying, "...the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" (Job 1:21). Later God allowed Satan to afflict his body. Although Satan meant it for Job's destruction, God permitted and used it for his spiritual development and advancement "...the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before... So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning..." (Job 42:10-12). Even though fallen Lucifer is turned loose against us with his head of affliction, yet God, in His wonderful love and mercy, is able to bring us through victorious, with an increase of spiritual substance.

Israel's sojourn in the land of Egypt affords another fine example of God's legal testing of His people.

And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with, them (Exodus 1:7).

The children of Israel enjoyed many benefits while in the land of Egypt because of Joseph's exaltation to national rulership and his splendid relationship with the Pharaoh of his day. During this time the original seventy souls who migrated from Canaan's land to Egypt, flourished and multiplied into a mighty nation. The new Pharaoh was aware of what a threat such a nation of people posed.

Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land. Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities. Pithom and Raamses. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel. And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour: And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour (Exodus 1:8-54).

Although Israel was tested and afflicted, she was mightily blessed and prospered by God. The more the Egyptians afflicted the children of Israel, the more they multiplied and prospered. They "served with rigor" which was none other than the devilish workings of fallen Lucifer manifesting his Head of Affliction against the people of God through the agency of the Egyptian Pharaoh. But God has ordained, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28). No wonder the Priest reminded the Church of Smyrna saying, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer."

God has every legal right to test and try us also. As we press on in our spiritual journey, we will be tried by a measure of affliction, which exposes the reality of the spiritual substance we possess or the absence of it. The Smyrna church suffered the attack in the physical realm, but in these last days the attack is directed more toward the mental realm. Mental bondages and sufferings can be equally as painful as (or worse than) those in the physical realm. The Head of Affliction comes against us to break us down and hinder our spiritual development.

The Head of Affliction is a powerful one; the Dragon is seen in Revelation 12:3 as having ten horns upon its seven heads: "...Behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns." Horns speak of aggressive and defensive power. Since his fall, Lucifer has perverted the use of these horns for his own defense as well as aggressive warfare against the saints of God. Originally, Lucifer was clothed with a tenfold covering of beauty.

Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle and gold...(Ezekiel 28:13).

These stones of power and beauty are pictured in Revelation as the horns of power.³ The Head of Affliction carries the emerald stone, emerald meaning a breach, a break, a fracture. The head of the Dragon comes against the children of God with its power to inflict afflictions through the cutting, breaking, wounding implement of the emerald stone. When that stone was turned loose on Job, his wife said, "Just curse God and die," Job did not do this

although he murmured and complained much before the Lord and wished he had never been born.

God permits the Head of Affliction with its emerald stone to come against us, for its gouging will expose much of our fleshly nature. Suffering has a way of digging us out and revealing what we really are. Many, like the professing Jews of that day, profess to have entered into the covenant of faith (sons of Abraham), but they never allow God to put the knife of true circumcision on them inwardly.

In the time of Abraham, circumcision was twofold, inward and outward. The outward circumcision of the flesh was the outward seal which indicated that they had entered into the covenant of faith. Abraham was the father of the Kingdom of God, and any participant must have the outward seal giving evidence of their spiritual relationship to the covenant. Likewise, water baptism in the Name of Jesus Christ which circumcision types, (Colossians 2:11,12) is the Christian's outward seal that we have entered into the covenant of circumcision, thus expressing our desire to enter into the Kingdom of God. Possession of the outward seal was insufficient. A true child of Abraham also experienced the inward circumcision of the heart, the ears, the lips, and the flesh. Even so, we are to return daily to the waters of His Name, Death, and Life to die daily to our self life, and receive fresh cleansing and deliverance from the power of indwelling sins. Progressive sanctification takes place as we surrender ourselves to die (our old nature is crucified) and come forth resurrected to walk in the newness of His life.

Spiritual growth and maturity of stature comes only through suffering. It means crucifixion of the carnal nature, the laying off of the old man, and putting on the new man which is created after the likeness of Jesus Christ. There is no shortcut and no by-pass. There is a price to pay to grow up to be like our precious Lord Jesus Christ; therefore God allowed Smyrna, as well as us, to suffer the Head of Affliction.

B. PROPHECIES BLESSING

...Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death (Revelation 2:10,11).

After telling the Church of Smyrna prophetically of the things they were to suffer, the prophet tells them of the blessings that would follow the suffering. How different from the ways of the evil one. Seeking to entice men into his way, Satan presents glitter and gold and excitement first, interlacing it with the Head of Enchantment, camouflaging the end of the road with its horrible judgment and destruction. But God shows us the hardest and the worst of the journey first. He makes it very clear that we must deny the self and take up the cross in order to follow Him. Yes, we will experience suffering, obedience, surrender and humiliation in God's way, but how glorious is His reward. He offers a crown, a throne, a reward—glory incomprehensible!

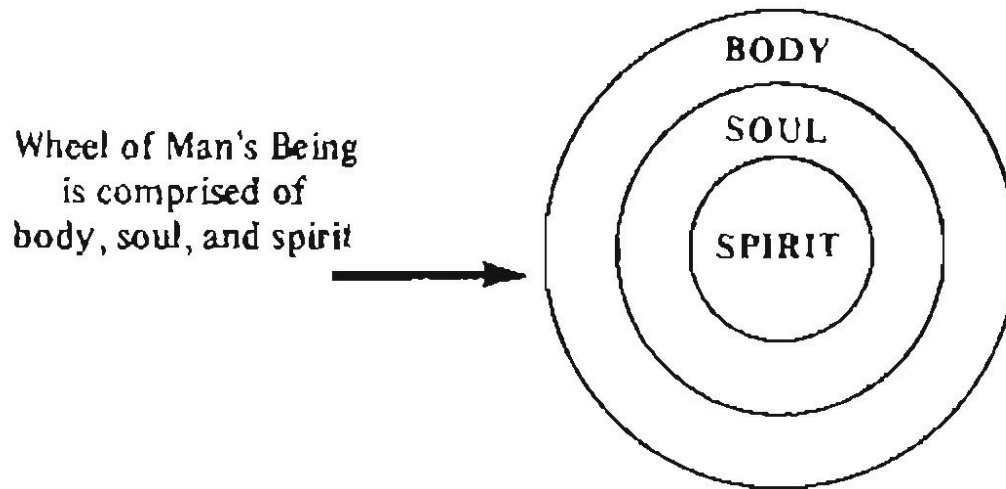
The Prophet exhorted the Smyrna church to be faithful unto death, There are two ways in which we can experience death. First, we may be called upon to give our lives literally for our testimony's sake. One is deeply stirred when reading accounts of the Christian martyrs of the past and our modern day martyrs as well. Some Christians have proved faithful unto death. The second way is to faithfully give our self life for death and crucifixion that we might come forth in His likeness and image. Suffering exposes the carnality of our hearts, so we must be faithful in surrendering ourselves for crucifixion until the fleshly nature dies and the spiritual man takes the ascendancy.

"Smyrna, be faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life." The Laver, (where Smyrna is positioned) represents the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and is where we receive ruling life as a reward for overcoming the Head of Blasphemy and the Head of Affliction. At the Laver, washing in the waters of His Name, Death, and Life, we learn to reign and rule over our carnal nature and begin to possess the linen and the jasper dress. The Bride of Jesus Christ will wear her linen dress of glory at the marriage supper of the Lamb, but throughout all eternity she will be clothed in her jasper dress of humility. At the Smyrna church period, the Bridegroom begins to give a taste of the linen dress and the jasper that will be the beauty and the glory of the Bride throughout the perfect age. Jesus gives life to the Bride in a twofold manner; jasper life which comes from the cold breath of God, meaning humility and crucifixion, and linen life which comes from the hot breath of God, meaning glory, brilliance, and exaltation. These pertain to the two sides of the life of God—His day and His night, His hot and His cold, His exaltation and His humiliation. We shall deal more with this truth as we progress in our study, but to those who overcome at the Smyrna church level of spiritual stature, He promises the crown of life.

The Prophet speaks of another reward, "...He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." The second death refers to the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:14), which is the eternal abode of all wicked and sinful creatures. If

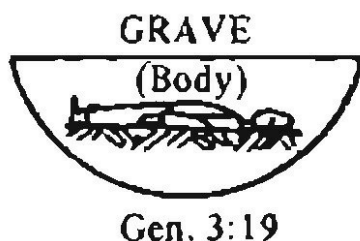
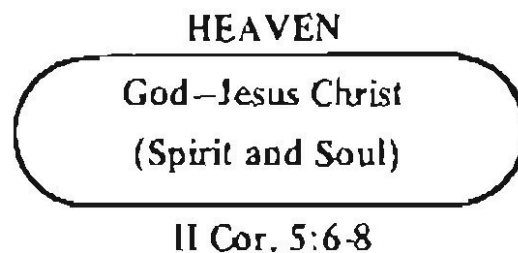
we overcome the heads of the Serpent now, in this life, we will not taste of this second death.

Let us consider the first death of the Christian and the sinner. All men die the first death (except those who are alive and caught up in the rapture when Jesus appears in the air). "...It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). We will see the separation of their threefold nature at the first death.



1. The Death of the Christian

The body is separated from the spirit and soul and goes to the grave, but the spirit and soul go to be with the Lord in heaven and wait there until the resurrection (I Thessalonians 4:16-18).

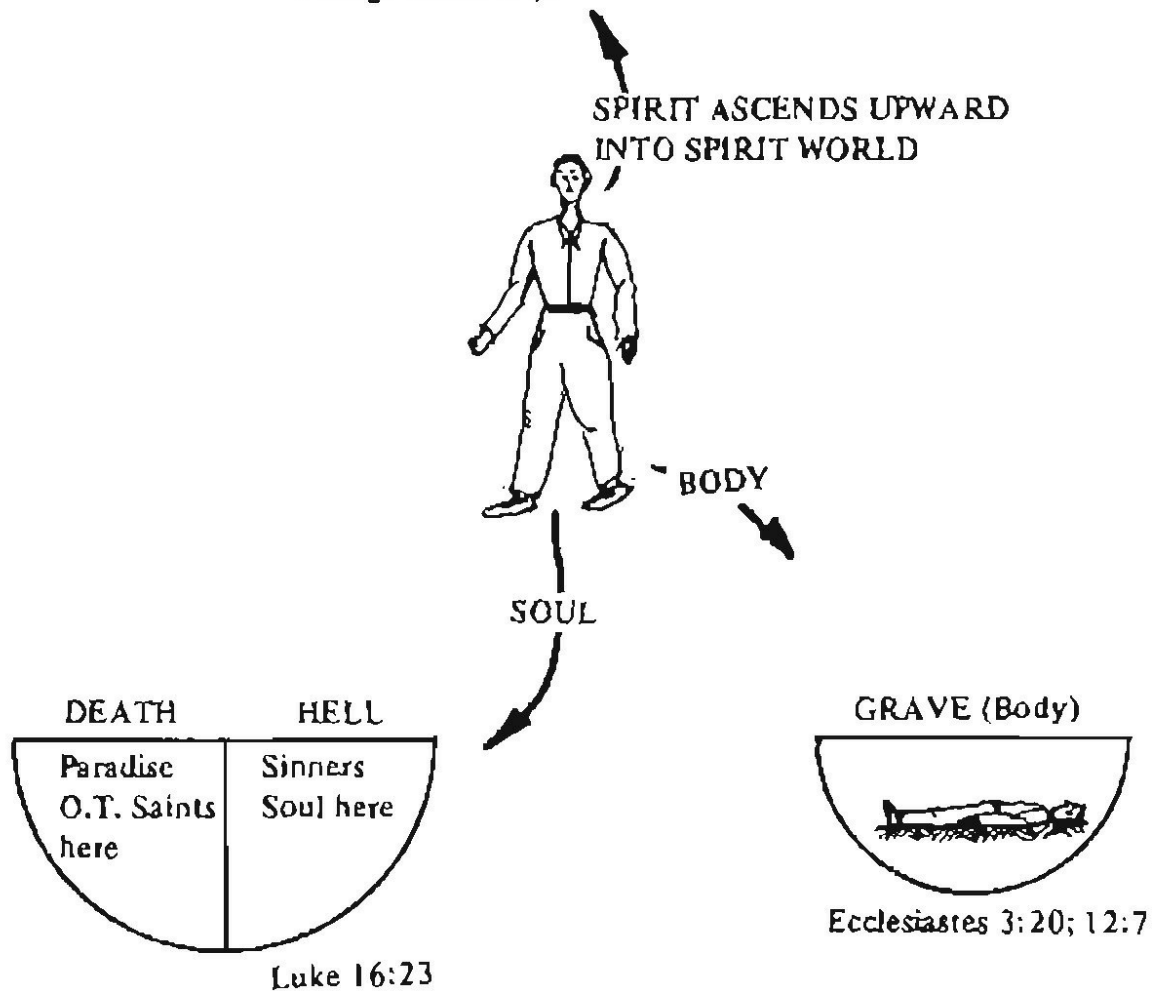


2. The First Death of the Sinner

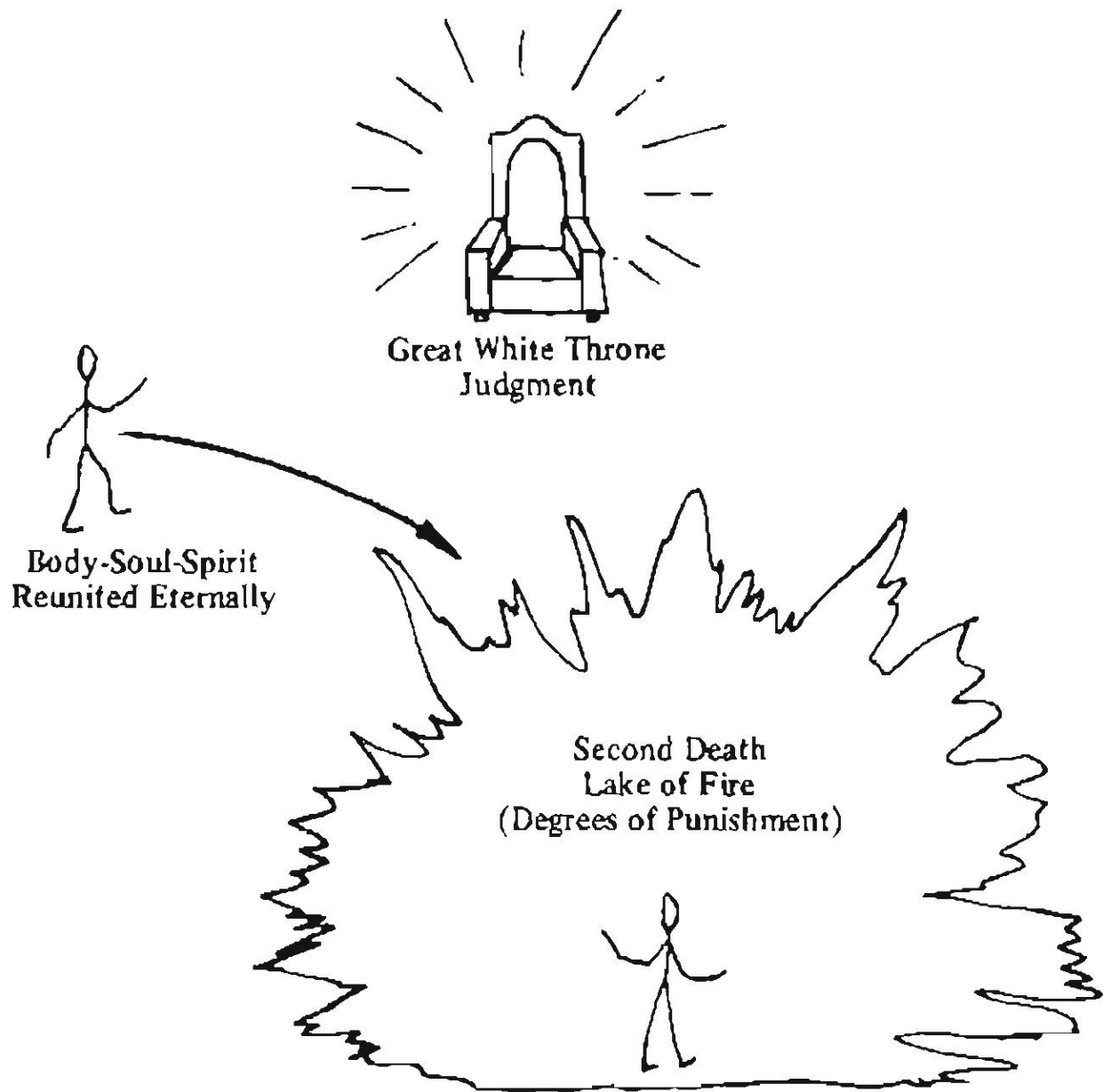
The threefold nature of the sinner is completely separated at the first death. The body goes to the grave, the soul goes to hell and the spirit is loosened to wander in the spirit world. When Jesus took the sinner's place at Calvary's

Cross, He experienced this threefold separation; his body went to the tomb (Matthew 27:57-61), his soul went to hell (Acts 2:25-31), his spirit went into the hands of His Father (Luke 23:46).

Spirits of sinners loosened to wander in
the spirit world (Ecclesiastes 3:21; 12:7;
1 Kings 22:20-22).



At the last and final resurrection all sinners will be raised from the dead, their spirits, souls and bodies being reunited, to stand before the great white throne judgment of God to receive their eternal verdict of condemnation to the Lake of Fire which is the second death (Revelation 20:11-15). Only sinners will experience the second death.



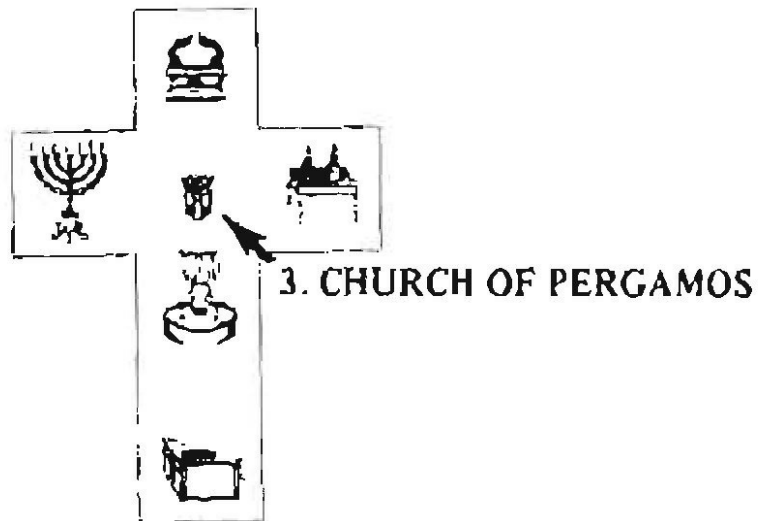
Death means separation, being cut off from the personal presence of God. There is a sense in which we taste death in this present life. Even as Christians, we have an occasional taste of this death of separation, and how utterly unbearable it is. Think then of those sinners and reprobates who walk all of their lives in complete isolation from the things of God. They know nothing of His peace, joy, strength, guidance, blessing, forgiveness. By choice, they walk in the desolation of their aloneness and will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire, forever separated from the personal presence of God.

This, then, was the Smyrna church—persecuted and afflicted, but promised a crown of life and escape from the second death if they overcame.

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- * B. R. Hicks, [*The Truth of Water Baptism*](#), (Jeffersonville, Indiana, 1968).
 - * B. R. Hicks, *The Blessings of Suffering*, (Jeffersonville, Indiana, 1971).
 - * B. R. Hicks, [*Lucifer*](#), (Jeffersonville, Indiana, 1970).

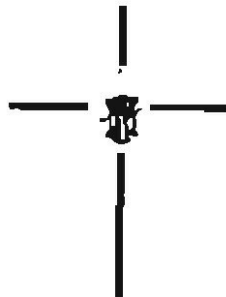
CHAPTER FOUR

THE CHURCH OF PERGAMOS (Revelation 2:12-17)



Possessing the Crown of Life with its ruling and reigning power, we are prepared to come higher in spiritual stature and experience, which brings us to the Church of Pergamos.

This church relates to the Golden Altar of Incense found in the Holy Place. This is the place of prayer and can be likened to the heart of the whole stature. It serves as a hinge, for it connects the vertical bar of the Cross with the horizontal bar.



The vertical bar speaks of the commanding and ruling will of God, which stands upright and sovereign. The horizontal bar lies in a prostrate position of surrender, humility, and is also the posture taken at death. When God's will stands upright in authority and the human will lies surrendered and yielded, we have the formation of the living cross in our life. This is the Crucified Way, the cross-life. The joining hinge is the Golden Altar where we fellowship and commune with the Lord in prayer.

I. HE MINISTERS AS KING

And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges (Revelation 2:12).

As with each church. Jesus Christ begins His ministry as King; He stands revealed to the Church of Pergamos as the One having the sharp sword with two cutting edges. This speaks both comfort and threat, depending upon our position.

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Hebrews 4:12).

The knowledge that our great Captain is equipped with this mighty sword of the Word gives us confidence and courage. On the other hand, what a tremendous threat it poses, for there is no escape. If we run to the right or to the left, that Sword has power to cut; if we run forward or backward, we will still meet the two cutting edges of His Word. There is no escaping the Sword of the Word, We must face up to the Word either in this life or in eternity.

II. HE MINISTERS AS PRIEST

I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seal is: and thou boldest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth (Revelation 2:13).

The significant words in this scripture are "where Satan dwelleth." They point out the insidious growth of the wild vine, the tares, that abide together in the church with true saints. The early Apostolic Church (Ephesus) had to war against the Devil's priests, the Nicolaitans, who believed in taking authority over the souls of the laity. Self-interested pretenders, they cared little for the souls of men or the glory of God's kingdom. Next, the true Church, represented by the Smyrna period, had to contend with an established organization, a full-fledged religious system—the synagogue of Satan. The advancement of sin continues. In the Pergamos Church, the Priest finds Satan's throne established right in the midst of the visible church of Jesus Christ. On one hand we see the spiritual seed, the true vine, the true church, coming up in greater spiritual stature, but on the other hand, we also see the power of Satan moving up as well. The Lord has promised that we will not be tempted (tested) above that which we are able to bear (I Corinthians 10:13). This principle is clearly seen in the Seven Churches, As spiritual strength and stature grows, we contend with greater forces from the adversary.

A. RECOGNIZES THE GOOD

The High Priest continues in the same pattern in His scrutiny of the Churches. First He commends the good that He finds in them, although His eyes are not closed to their faults. In spite of the fact that Satan dwells in their very midst, enthroned with power and might, still the Pergamos Church had gained some spiritual ground.

1. "Thou holdest fast my name"

The word *hold* means to obtain, to use, to seize, to retain; the Christians at Pergamos had succeeded in doing this. The possession and use of His Name (nature) is essential in our prayer life at the Altar of Incense. Jesus is the great High Priest who has entered the Holy of Holies in heaven to make intercession for us. He is the Altar...He is the Incense...He is the All in All There is no other incense that can be offered to God that will be pleasing in His sight except the incense of the Name of Jesus.

And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it (John 14:13,14).

Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 5:20).

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him (Colossians 3:17).

Here, in the place of prayer, God desires to teach us the power and the attributes of the Name of Jesus. Here He wishes to take our spirits, which are the heart or the core of our beings, and make them one with the heart and Name of Jesus Christ.

That Pergamos still retained that mighty Name of Jesus was to their credit; they still used it and clung to it.

2. “And hast not denied my faith”

Faith is defined as persuasion, credence, conviction, reliance upon Christ, constancy of profession, truth itself. The High Priest, our Lord Jesus Christ, discerns another good fact. The saints at Pergamos have not forsaken the true faith but are standing firm in their reliance upon Christ and are still professing the truth. “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong” is Paul’s caution in I Corinthians 16:13, to all Christians.

As far as we have come in the High Priest’s investigation, things seem quite well and commendable, but as He progresses farther in His ministry, He begins to expose what He has against them.

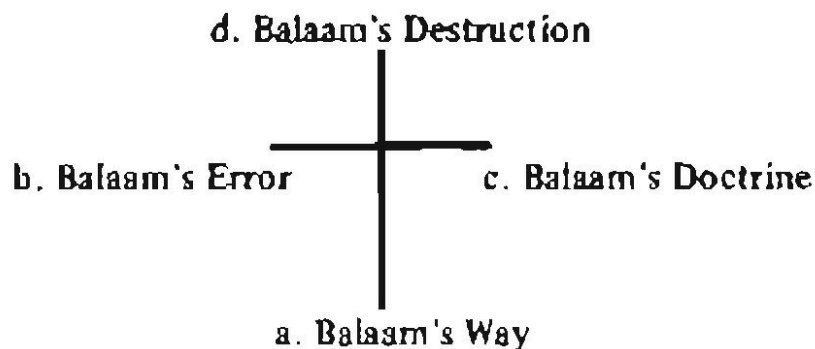
B. RECOGNIZES THE BAD

But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication (Revelation 2:14).

1. “Thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam”

The Devil’s priests are much stronger here at the Church of Pergamos than when they started. In the Church of Ephesus these priests were manifested by their evil deeds through which they planted their wicked ideas and works, By the time of the Pergamos Church, the evil seeds had grown into strong doctrines. The first doctrine to be overcome was that of Balaam.

For better understanding, we must stop and consider what this doctrine was. The story of Balaam begins in Numbers 22. Balaam was a priest and prophet who once knew God. Perhaps we could say he had a divided heart, for part of him wanted to serve God, but the other part was drawn to the Devil’s crowd, Balaam had the gifts of the Spirit, and God used him to speak blessing to Israel, but he was a mixture of enchantments and idolatry, as well. These strange mixtures readily deceived the people. Let us briefly consider the stature of truth of Balaam and his doctrine.



a. Balaam’s Way

1) His Nature

a) He Loved Reward

Balaam loved reward. This characteristic is also a part of our corrupt carnal nature. In fact, some preachers operate their churches on the principle of recognition and reward. By employing basic principles of psychology, it is easy to build an impressive church organization. This Balaam spirit of desiring reward is in all of us; therefore, God at times, deliberately withholds reward from us, to test our motives and try our hearts.

And the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the rewards of divination in their hand; and they came unto Balaam, and spake unto him the words of Balak (Numbers 22:7).

Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; (II Peter 2:14,15).

b) Compromiser of the Truth

Second, Balaam was a compromiser of the truth. We compromise the truth simply by withholding the full truth—holding it down. The king of the Amorites, Balak, was in great distress because of the children of Israel in their land of Moab. Realizing that they were outnumbered by the children of Israel, Balak came up with a plan of his own. He would try to get Balaam to invoke the curse of God upon them by promising him great reward.

And God came unto Balaam, and said. What men are these with thee? And Balaam said unto God, Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, hath sent unto me, saying, Behold, there is a people come out of Egypt, which covereth the face of the earth: come now, curse me them; peradventure I shall be able to overcome them, and drive them out. And God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed. And Balaam rose up in the morning, and said unto the princes of Balak. Get you into your land: for the LORD refuseth to give me leave to go with you (Numbers 22:9-13).

God spoke three times to Balaam: (1) Do not go, (2) Do not curse the people, and (3) These are blessed people. Yet when Balaam spoke to the representatives of Balak, he spoke only a partial truth—"I cannot go with you." With his eyes still on the promised reward, Balaam compromised the truth which God had spoken to him. Leaving the implication that their promise of reward was not great enough, he left the door open for another proposition. So Balak sent a more imposing representation to the Prophet with promises of even greater reward if he would come to them and curse the children of Israel.

c) Entertained Temptation

Continuing our interest in the nature of Balaam, we see that he deliberately entertained temptation. Although his talk was spiritual, his deeds spoke louder than his words.

...I cannot go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less or more. Now therefore, I pray you, tarry ye also here this night, that I may know what the LORD will say unto me more (Numbers 22:18,19).

Hopefully, he thought perhaps God would change His mind. If we already have God's Word in a particular matter, we should not continue "pushing God," for this is entertaining temptation. Balaam could have declared God's truth: "I cannot go, I cannot curse these people because God has already blessed them."

And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him. If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shall thou do (Numbers 22:20).

Notice the small word IF, In other words, IF the men come to him in the morning, God would give Balaam another chance to bring His word to them, but Balaam missed the whole point when he failed to note that small word IF.

d) Rose Up (changed the truth)

And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab (Numbers 22:21).

Balaam rose up early in the morning and presumptuously went on his own. This shows us much concerning the nature of Balaam. First he held down the truth, (by not declaring all that God had spoken), then he changed it into a lie. He did not wait for the men to come to him in the morning, nor did he wait to hear what God desired to speak to him that day. This is the very nature of the spirit of Balaam:

- a) It Loves Reward
- b) It Compromises the Truth
- c) It Entertains Temptation
- d) It Rises up on its own (changed truth)

Balaam, with his fleshly zeal and self-interest, rose up on his own. This certainly is presumptuous sin. And what was his next experience? He ran straight into the anger of God, “And God’s anger was kindled because he went:” (Numbers 22:22).

2) His Blindness

When one takes his own way and changes the truth into a lie, blindness sets in making it impossible to see the chastening hand of God. The first hindrance God set up before Balaam was the angel of the Lord with a drawn sword.

...and the angel of the LORD stood in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him. And the ass saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand:...(Numbers 22:22,23).

Balaam was blind to the presence of the angel; however, the beast that bore Balaam saw the angel. Blindness caused Balaam to beat the ass when she sought to turn aside from the angelic visitor that stood in their way.

But the angel of the LORD stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall being on this side, and a wall on that side. And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she thrust herself unto the wall, and crushed Balaam’s foot against the wall: and he smote her again (Numbers 22:24,25).

Definitely blind to what was going on, Balaam found his foot crushed against the wall and turned his anger against the animal rather than looking inwardly to see if there was any fault of his own.

And the angel of the LORD went further, and stood in a narrow place, where was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left (Numbers 22:26).

Now Balaam was in a complete strait, unable to turn or move, but he was still blind, totally unaware of what God was trying to do.

And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she fell down under Balaam; and Balaam’s anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff. And the LORD opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times? (Numbers 22:27,28).

Even with such a miracle, a dumb animal speaking, Balaam’s anger blinded him to what God was doing, It took a divine intervention before understanding came to him.

3) His Way Unveiled

Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face. And the angel of the LORD

said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? behold I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me (Numbers 22:31,32).

We have seen the nature of Balaam, his blindness, and now we see the unveiling of Balaam's way—the way of his nature. The angel said, “thy way is perverse.” To be perverse is to be self-willed and headstrong and to go headlong into things. In spite of the fantastic revelation that Balaam had from God, we find no evidence that his inner will was ever touched. It was his nature to press on headlong and headstrong in his own way, even though it was judged a perverse way in the sight of God.

4) He Chose the Permissive Will of God

And Balaam said unto the angel of the LORD, I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me: now therefore, if it displease thee. I will get me back again (Numbers 22:34).

Being sorry because we are caught in a sin and confessing it does not mean that we are sorry because we missed God's will. Many people do not regret their bad deeds. They are just sorry they were caught. Encountering the angel of the LORD did not change Balaam's will to go his own way. He merely confessed he had sinned because he was faced with God's displeasure. After all God had done to hinder him, he had the audacity to say, “IF it displeases thee...” No wonder the Apostle Peter warns us against the WAY of Balaam. Now let us consider the Error of Balaam.

b. Balaam's Error

Balaam's error lay in trying to curse what God had already blessed. Four times he sought to place a curse upon the children of Israel: the high place of Baal (Numbers 22:41), Pishgah (Numbers 23:13-26), Peor (Numbers 24:2-14), and second prophecy at Peor (Numbers 24:15-25). What a great study we have on this portion alone, but to put it briefly, Balaam's continued efforts to curse God's people surely demonstrate the persistence of the Devil working through the self-willed prophet of God. King Balak took Balaam to the high places of Baal first, but since the curse was not forthcoming, he took the prophet to another place. Balaam tried to invoke the curse at Pishgah, but each time God intervened and sent blessing rather than a curse. Then Balak took Balaam to a place called Peor, but was unsuccessful there, too.

What great and mighty prophetic utterances were brought forth through the mouth of Balaam on these occasions, and the conclusion of the whole matter was “How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, whom the LORD hath not defied?” (Numbers 23:8). Consider, for a moment, the reactions of our two main figures, Balaam and Balak.

And Balaam rose up, and went and returned to his place: and Balak also went his way (Numbers 24:25).

There is no record in the Word of God where Balaam sought the face of the Lord to enquire of Him concerning the prophecies that had come forth. We simply read that he returned to his place. And as far as Balak was concerned, he received no profit from all that his ears had heard, for he also went his way.

The WAY of Balaam revealed his nature, his blindness, his perverseness, which led to his taking God's permissive will. The ERROR of Balaam was his foolish thinking that he could curse what God had already blessed. Now we shall see the DOCTRINE of Balaam which the Priest refers to in His message to the Church of Pergamos.

c. Balaam's Doctrine

And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel (Numbers 25:1-3).

Because Balaam remained a strange mixture, he ceased being a prophet of God and became a prophet of Satan. Balaam could not cause God to curse the people, but he could cause the people to bring a curse on themselves by

getting them to partake of sin. Balaam's doctrine taught Israel how to corrupt themselves with heathen idolatry, thereby bringing God's judgment and curse upon them after all. Under those circumstances we cannot blame God. We can bring God's anger upon ourselves. God wants to love, forgive, and bless us. Although the children of Israel knew they were God's chosen people, called out of Egypt and on their way to the promised land, yet they were led astray by Balaam's doctrine that taught them to corrupt themselves. No longer a separated and consecrated people, they settled down in a cohabitation with the Moabites.

Let us take another look at their experience at Peor when Balaam was anointed by the Lord to speak forth two mighty prophecies. The first prophecy concerned a revelation of who Israel was; the second revealed the Son of Man. In spite of Balaam's own inward condition, the Spirit of God came upon him to minister the gift of prophecy. Instead of a curse, he pronounced blessings upon God's people. How did Balak react?

And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his hands together: and Balak said unto Balaam, I called thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast altogether blessed them these three times (Numbers 24:10).

Now see how Balaam reacted.

If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the LORD, to do either good or bad of mine own mind; but what the LORD saith. That will I speak? (Numbers 24:13).

In other words, "I couldn't help myself. God's Word came upon me and I spoke these three times, but it was God speaking, not me." Balaam was saying, in so many words, "If I could have spoken otherwise I might have done so." His actions proved that he would have done otherwise.

And now, behold, I go unto my people: come therefore, and I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days (Numbers 24:14).

The word *advertise* means to counsel, devise. Balaam is saying, "Come with me and I will show you how to get them after all. Even though I was bound by the Spirit of God and couldn't curse them, I will counsel thee, I will devise with thee a plan of how to get them."

We have no record of the advice given to Balak, but a clue is given in Numbers 31:16. On this occasion Israel was at war with the Midianites; in fact, it was during this very battle that Balaam was slain. We are especially interested in a statement Moses made to the victorious warriors as they returned with their captives and booty. After slaying the kings of Midian and all the male members, the children of Israel took all the women and their little ones captive, plus the cattle, the flocks, and all the goods of the Midianites. So Moses, Eleazar the priest, and all the princes of the congregation went out to meet them.

And Moses was wroth with the officers of the host, with the captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, which came from the battle. And Moses said unto them, Have ye saved all the women alive? Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Pe-or, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD (Numbers 31:14-16).

Moses reminded his officers of the devastating results of the counsel given by Balaam at Peor. There is an old saying, "If you cannot lick them, join them." Balaam taught this same principle of Balak, whereupon the women of Moab went in among the men of Israel, enticing them to fornication and adultery, which in turn brought the chastisement of God upon Israel.

The counsel of Balaam brought Israel under the judgment of God. Let us take a more specific look at their sin.

1) Whoredom with the Daughters of Moab

Of course this was the trick and plan of Balaam's purposed corruption. He could not curse God's people, but he reached his intended goal by causing the people to pollute themselves. The Israelites began to intermarry with the daughters of Moab. Whoredom is another word meaning adultery, fornication and illegal union. It also means to be

wanton, to commit adultery continually. Israel was committing literal adultery and whoredom, playing the part of the harlot, while God had set her apart to bless the nations of the world by the knowledge and truth of Jehovah to be manifested through her. In fact, she was called the “wife of God.” What a singular, unique, and fantastic position Israel held in relationship to Jehovah God.

2) Israel Ate the Meat that was offered unto Idols

Even though Israel had the revelation of the one true God (LORD), they still participated in the heathenish worship of the gods of the Midianites.

But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord’s table, and of the table of devils. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he? (1 Corinthians 10:20-22).

By right of creatorship we are already His, and God’s very nature is to retain possession of what belongs to Him. The Apostle Paul asks a very potent question: “How can we eat of the Lord’s table and then eat at the Devil’s table too?” Some Christians are double minded. On Sunday they eat at the Lord’s table, and throughout the week they participate in things that belong to the Devil’s table. How dare we provoke the God whose very name is *Jealous*?

We find God’s chosen people, Israel, seated at the sacrificial feasts to the idols of the Midianites. Sin spreads insidiously as a disease, reaching out to engulf greater areas of our lives. Unchecked sins multiply until we find ourselves, not merely partaking of the Devil’s fare, but bowing to him as the ruler of our lives.

3) Israel Bowd to their Gods

Forsaking the one true God, Israel began bowing to false gods.

4) Israel Joined Herself unto Baal-peor

Baal, meaning lord, owner, possessor, is a heathenish word. In Egypt it was known as Bel, but it was the main masculine deity of the Canaanite world. So Israel joined herself to Baal-peor, the devil god himself. Baal worship was extremely vile and licentious. They were known to offer human sacrifices unto Baal, their owner, their lord, their possessor. God had called His people to righteousness and separation. Calling Israel His wife, He had promised to be a husband to her saying, “I will feed you, clothe you, keep your feet well shod, keep diseases from your bodies, and carry you over into Canaan’s land. You don’t have to fight for it, for I give it to you—a land flowing with milk and honey,” Israel practiced physical and spiritual whoredom in the very face of Jehovah God, eating of the sacrifices offered unto the Devil, bowing down in worship until they were joined unto the heathen god of Baal-peor.

Naturally, “the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel” (Numbers 25:3).

And the LORD said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the LORD against the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may be turned away from Israel, And Moses said unto the judges of Israel. Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baal-peor (Numbers 25:4,5).

A plague broke out in the camp of Israel: the judgment of God was upon them. Those who died in the plague were twenty and four thousand. What a tragic day in the history of Israel.

d. Balaam’s Destruction

To close off the account of Balaam, let us see his destructive end. He was killed as a soothsayer, for Balaam never let go of his witchcraft, divination, and idolatry. Israel was at war, and Balaam was slain in the camp of the enemy.

And Moses sent them to the war, a thousand of every tribe, them and Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, to the war, with the holy instruments, and the trumpets to blow in his hand. And they warred against the Midianites, as the LORD commanded Moses; and they slew all the males. And they slew the kings of Midian,

beside the rest of them that were slain: namely, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian: Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword (Numbers 31:6-8).

An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD for ever: Because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee (Deuteronomy 23:3,4).

And all the cities of the plain, and all the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, which reigned in Heshbon, whom Moses smote with the princes of Midian, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, which were dukes of Sihon, dwelling in the country. Balaam also the son of Beor, the soothsayer, did the children of Israel slay with the sword among them that were slain by them (Joshua 13:21,22).

When Balaam came up the second time against Israel, he came as a soothsayer. On the first occasion, when the Moabites and Balak wanted him to curse the children of Israel, he was still on talking terms with God. He was trying to hold on to God with one hand and his enchantments with the other. Once Balaam switched to the enemy's side, he came up to battle against Israel and was slain. His body went to the grave, his spirit went upward, and his soul went to hell (Ecclesiastes 3:21). Lucifer, anointed and exalted as he was, fell from his first estate, and lost his relationship with God. Likewise Balaam fell from his position as a priest and gifted servant of the Lord. He lost all he had and went into hell at the end of his earthly journey.

But this was not the end of Balaam. Let us recall a portion of Balaam's second prophecy which referred to the Star of Jacob who is Jesus Christ. This prophecy was given at Peor.

He hath said, which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the most High, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open: (Numbers 24:16).

I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth. And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly. Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city (Numbers 24:17-19).

This is too important for us to slip past, for it concerns things yet to come to pass. It is frightening to realize that in spite of the spiritual gifts and privileges which Balaam had received from God, he finally turned his back on it all because he had no real love for the truth. Having a ministry or knowledge of the Word or spiritual gifts is not assurance of final salvation. Unless we let our wills become joined to the truth as it is revealed to us, we can lose out with God in the end. Such was the case with Balaam.

...because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness (II Thessalonians 2:10-12).

The first fact stated in the prophecy concerning the Son of God (Jesus Christ) is "I shall see him, but not now." Balaam spoke in the future tense, for he did not see the Son then, but this experience awaited him in the future. "I shall behold him, but not nigh." The revelation of the Son of Man is related to the time when He shall come as a star out of Jacob with a sceptre in His hand, the time of the second coming of Christ. Obviously, Balaam was not alive when Jesus came the first time, clothed in humility. Balaam declared "I am going to be present at that scene when the Son of Man comes the second time. I am going to look upon Him, but I will not be close to Him." How amazingly accurate is the Word of God in its most minute detail.

Balaam will see Him but from afar. What is it that brings us nigh, close to Jesus? It takes His precious Blood: "...ye who were sometimes afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Ephesians 2:13). As sinners, we were all afar off until the Blood of Jesus Christ reconciled us and brought us nigh to Him. Balaam will not be numbered among the redeemed, for the end of his tale reflects his rejection of God's way. When he speaks of "seeing him," he

cannot be referring to the Almighty God, for he had already seen Him by vision. He is speaking of the future and can be referring to none other than our Lord Jesus Christ at His second coming.

The prophecy continues: “there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel,” The word *star* means to blaze, to shine, to be as a heap—a witness. Out of Jacob will come a star, a light that is going to blaze and shine. And out of Israel will rise a Sceptre—a prince with ruling authority who will smite all the children of Sheth and the comers of Moab. The Bible lists seven classes of people that this Sceptre will destroy.

1. Edom (red anger). Because of the cruelty, wrath, and oppression of the Edomites against the children of Israel, God will destroy them through the Sceptre, Jesus Christ.

2. Seir (hatred).

3. Amalek (rebellion). “And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek was the first of the nations; but his latter end shall be that he perish for ever” (Numbers 24:20). Amalek was the first of the Canaanite nations to persecute Israel on her way to Canaan’s land.

4. Kenites (to strike, lament, to moan). “And he looked on the Kenites, and took up his parable, and said, Strong is thy dwellingplace, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock. Nevertheless the Kenite shall be wasted...” (Numbers 24:21,22). In spite of their strong dwelling places, built in the high places of haughtiness and pride, they were to fall and be taken captive.

5. Asshur (Assyria, which means success), “...and shall afflict Asshur...” (Numbers 24:24).

6. Eber (to cross over, transition), “...and shall afflict Eber,” (Numbers 24:24).

7. Chittim (aggression), “...and he also shall perish for ever” (Numbers 24:24).

When Jesus comes as a Star out of Jacob and as a Sceptre out of Israel, He is going to judge literally all these nations. However, these nations are spiritual pictures of what He wants to deal with in our flesh. There is a change when the Star out of Jacob and the Sceptre out of Israel comes upon the scene, whether it be in our hearts, or in the literal sense when He comes to judge the world for sin.

Balaam spoke prophetically about the Star out of Jacob and the Sceptre out of Israel, stating that he would see Him, but not now, and that he would behold Him but not nigh. Thus, we see that Balaam will be resurrected to be the false prophet during the tribulation period. There is only one way that Balaam can be alive at the second coming of the Son of Man, and that is for him to be resurrected. The only two resurrected beings on earth who will be alive when Jesus Christ comes again, outside of the Bride who will return with Him, are the anti-Christ and the False Prophet.

And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast [anti-Christ] before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed... (Revelation 13:11-15).

The second beast, the false prophet, is not born but comes up out of the earth. This is only possible if that body had gone to the earth prior to this resurrection experience. The anti-Christ comes up out of the bottomless pit, whereas the false prophet comes up out of the earth. The false prophet has a twofold nature, represented by the two horns. His two horns were like a lamb, which shows that he has been acquainted at one time with the power of God and knowledge of the Lamb, or he would not be able to come up with such imitative power—two realms of power

like a lamb. The purpose of the two horns is for deception. He will appear to be a real prophet of God, speaking such great things of the antichrist that many people (both Jews and Christians) will be convinced that the anti-Christ is the real Christ, the Messiah. Yet he “spake as a dragon” for his words are provoked by the Dragon. In Chapter 19 of Revelation, we see Jesus Christ coming just as Balaam prophesied. The lake of fire is an eternal place of torment for the resurrected body, soul, and spirit of unbelievers. The beast and false prophet are cast alive into the lake of fire, proving that both are resurrected beings.

Now we can understand why the study of Balaam has been so important. From the Word of God, we see that he has yet a greater part to play as a deceptive prophet of Satan.

Although Balaam died a long time before, his doctrine was still very much alive in the Church of Pergamos. Among other things, they were taught to “eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.” It is easy to become lax and careless in our standards of holiness and separation. When the church yields to all sorts of worldly ideas and practices it soon is given to idol worship as well. Idol worship is not limited to the grotesque figures of man’s handiwork, but includes the many manifestations of pride and human achievement that men’s hearts bow down to. Church members can even make an idol out of their fine new church edifice, bowing down to it and taking pleasure in it. Idol worship can take many forms, whether it be ecclesiastical pride, pride of achievement, pride of reputation, pride of beauty, pride of family, pride of nations, or pride of economy.

The Priest, with His ministry of inspection, finds two serious offenses in the Church of Pergamos: the doctrine of Balaam and the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. It is little wonder that He called them to repentance. If not guilty of whoredom in the physical sense, we must all guard against spiritual whoredom which the Apostle James refers to.

Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God...Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded (James 4:4-8).

A double minded person is one who tries to serve God while still hanging on to the world. If we are the world’s friend, then we are God’s enemy. Balaam is a very sad example of spiritual whoredom and its tragic results.

“So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate” (Revelation 2:15). The doctrine of Jewish ritualism still held a firm grip on the church—one carnal man ruling over another. The Spirit of God hates this kind of authority. The fleshly nature in all of us enjoys ruling over someone else, but this is not how God operates. God’s desire is to give true authority and rule to man through His infinite sources of wisdom, understanding, and knowledge.

Not only must the Pergamos Church overcome the doctrines of Balaam and the Nicolaitans, but they must also war against the Head of Enchantment which carries with it the stones of beryl and topaz. These stones of power and beauty, seen also as horns of defensive and aggressive power on the seven heads of the Dragon, equip the Head of Enchantment to be an effective tool against men.

The Beryl stone (meaning to test, try, to investigate) is partly the reason why people so readily accept the Devil and his ways. The Head of Enchantment, with its investigating stone, persuades people to try things out, but they little realize that it may be the beginning of a lifetime of enslavement. It can cause things to look bewitching, thrilling, enticing. With the thought of just taking a taste of sin or just giving it a try, that individual has opened himself to serious problems. This spirit causes people to “play around” just for the fun of it, but it soon ends up with fornication or adultery.

The Topaz stone (meaning pleasant) on the Head of Enchantment works to inject the element of pleasure into sin. After being baited into a sinful practice by the stone of Beryl with its investigating, trying, testing power, the Topaz stone begins to work its pleasure in the thing. After the Beryl horn lures an individual into sin, then the Topaz stone, or horn, comes to add pleasure to it. Soon one becomes like the hog after slop; he cannot wait to get back to the trough.

Yes, sin possesses a measure of pleasure. We acknowledge that, for it is that measure of pleasure which holds people captive, and it is that pleasure that makes it hard for some to break away from their sin. It is the work of the Head of Enchantment, and especially the horn of Topaz at work. But with an enlightened mind, it is easy to make the right choice, even as Moses did.

Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the

recompence of the reward (Hebrews 11:25,26).

III. HE MINISTERS AS PROPHET

The Prophet prophesies judgment as well as blessing as He calls the Church of Pergamos to repentance. If they repent, they can overcome the seat of Satan with his doctrines of Balaam and the Nicolaitans; they can overcome the Head of Enchantment with its horns of Beryl and Topaz. We overcome by the sword of the Word of God. Its cutting power can divide soul and spirit, joints and marrow, discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. The “sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:17) will help us stand in the evil day.

Repent: or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it (Revelation 2:16,17).

A. PROPHECIES JUDGMENT

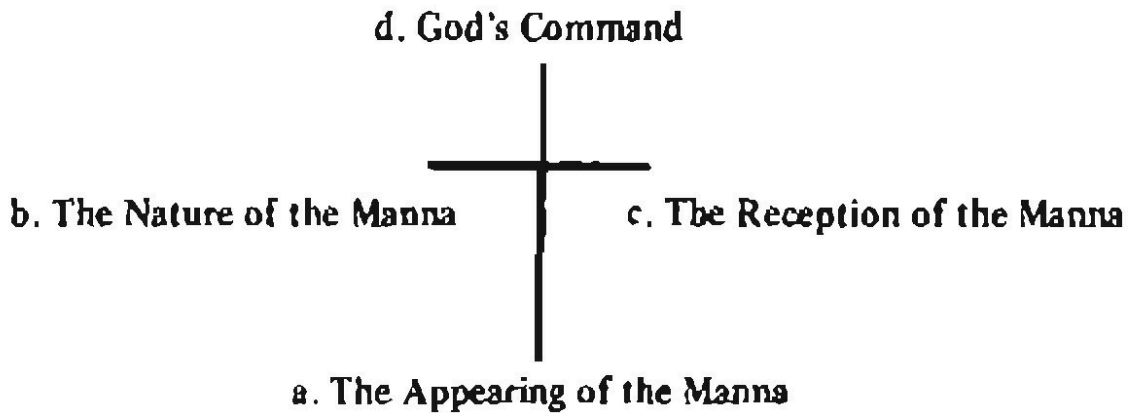
We overcome by repentance, and with repentance comes the effectual sword of the Word of the Lord to work in our behalf, instead of working against us through its fighting, destructive power. The Word exposes, reveals, crucifies, delivers, heals, and sanctifies. In the Word we find power to triumph, whatever the need. However, failure to repent reverses the whole picture. The Prophet said, “I will come quickly...I will fight against you with the sword of my mouth.” The sword of the Word of God is our defense, as long as we do business with God, but once that ceases, the same sword becomes a severing and wounding weapon against us. The Word can give life, but it can also kill.

The Pergamos message is sent to “He that hath an ear,” meaning one that has a circumcised ear, an open ear to hear. God used literal circumcision, which was a cutting back of the flesh, to portray spiritual circumcision. The fleshly ear of our carnal man must be cut back before our spiritual ear is opened to hear God’s Word. The open ear hears what the Spirit of God says to the churches. This is not true of all who have ears; “But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear” (Matthew 13:16).

B. PROPHECIES BLESSING

The Prophet promises all who overcome at the Pergamos level of spiritual growth, the privilege of eating hidden manna, and receiving a white stone with a new name written in it. We know from the type in the Old Testament Tabernacle, that manna was found in the Ark of the Covenant, which has to do with the head realm of spiritual growth. To possess fully the manna, one must attain this position by stature. Nevertheless, in order to acquaint us with the manna, the Spirit of God lifts us up by gift to experience it. Before we can understand or fully appreciate this promised reward, we must stop to consider Israel’s experience with the manna in the wilderness. Manna is a type of those hidden, secret, mysterious things of God which man cannot find on his own initiative, for they must come by revelation of God. The manna in the wilderness came out of the glory of God.

1. Manna



After traveling for a month and a half through the wilderness, the nation of Israel became weary and discouraged. Disgruntled by their circumstances, they murmured against their leaders, Moses and Aaron.

And the children of Israel said unto them. Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger. Then said the LORD unto Moses. Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no (Exodus 16:3,4).

a. The Appearing of the Manna

1) From Heaven

This was secret, unknown bread—supernatural supply, for it came out of heaven and out of the glory of God. “And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the LORD;...” (Exodus 16:7). This heavenly bread was sent to try and prove the children of Israel, whether or not they really wanted to go all the way to Canaan’s land.

As already mentioned, this was a head realm experience, because the manna came out of the glory and was later kept in the Ark of the Covenant. In this dispensation of grace, we, too, will be tested by the hidden manna of God’s Word to see whether or not we really want to grow into the full stature of Jesus Christ so that we might be His Bride.

Israel cried out for bread, but later she loathed that “light bread.” Today, many say that they want to be in the Bride of Christ, but the manna of His Word tests them, and they, too, reject the Word as light and loathsome bread.

2) Early in the Morning

And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground (Exodus 16:14).

We must learn to seek God for the manna early in the morning before the heat of trials and problems arise and before our study time is crowded out by the cares of the day. Learn to spend time alone with Jesus in the early morning, beloved, and you will discover that your whole day will be changed. Coping with the essential activities of the day will be much easier. No effort was required from the children of Israel to make the manna fall—their job was to gather it. God reveals His Word, but we must gather and eat; then we can put it into practice.

3) It Came as the Dew Came

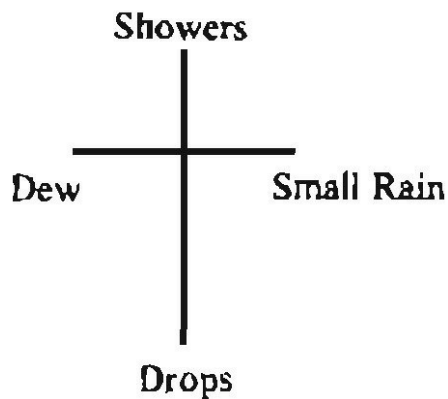
And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it (Numbers 11:9).

God gave the children of Israel a full stature of rain which corresponds with the stature of truth found in II Timothy 3:16. As we compare these two statures, we find that one becomes a commentary to the other, for each shows how God reveals His Word. From these scriptures we see that dew represents reproof.

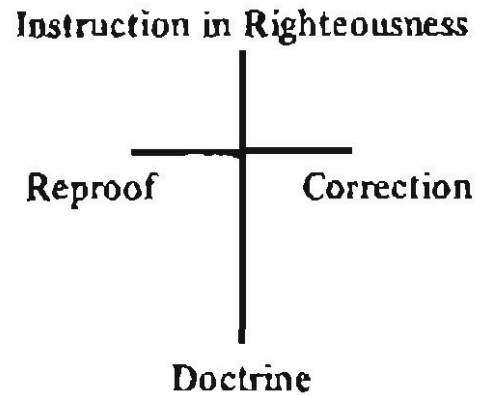
Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: (Deuteronomy 32:1,2).

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works (II Timothy 3:16,17).

THE WORDS OF HIS MOUTH



ALL SCRIPTURE



God's reproof comes like the soft and gentle dew that descends in the night upon the earth. This is not always so with man's reproof, for it frequently comes like a "crashing bolt out of the blue." The coming of the dew also brought the manna, so we see a correlation here. This hidden manna of the Word is found in the dew of God's reproof. God's Word comes first as drops of doctrine, then as the dew of reproof, and then as the small rain of correction, and finally as the showers of instruction.

4) It Came in the Night

God will give us hidden manna in spiritual night seasons as well as in the day of blessing. How many precious hidden secrets of the Word He desires to bestow if we will be receptive and appreciative.

b. The Nature of the Manna

To the overcomer, the Prophet promised hidden manna, the head realm bread which is hidden in the Ark of the Covenant. But even while we are in the wilderness portion of our journey, He gives us a taste of this heaven sent bread. Israel's experiences with the blood, fire and water took her out of Egypt (type of the world) and brought her into the wilderness. During the wilderness portion of her journey to Canaan's land Israel began to come under God's government. The wilderness, a type of our espousal period, is where He tests us to see whether or not we are willing to come under the divine will of His government. Time will show, as it did with the children of Israel, whether or not we really have a taste for His governmental bread.

1) It was Small

The word *small* means to crush, to crumble, to beat into pieces, to bruise, to make as dust and powder. Its very smallness was a test of their hunger for it. Had God simply handed it to them in large loaves, they would have never been proven by the bread. But anyone consumed with hunger does not mind getting down on his knees and patiently picking it up piece by piece, even though it is very small. This is how the Word of God comes to us—line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, and there a little. It always begins in the seed stage. Then comes the blade, then the ear, and finally the full ear. How badly do we want this bread? Do we despise it because it comes first in such a small form?

2) It was Round

The word *round* means to peel, to shred, to scale. Apparently the manna was round and was made in layers like the little pearl is made, fine layer upon fine layer, each so thin that it takes a microscope to see the different layers. The Word of God is also much like that, for we find it comes in many layers, each truth building upon the other.

3) It was Fragile

The manna was fragile and precious. It could not be handled roughly or carelessly; it was small as hoar frost on the ground. We look out on a frosty morning and nothing is too small or insignificant for the hoar frost to cover it. If we try to pick it up, it melts instantly because our nature is contrary to that of the frost.

The breath of God has a hot and a cold aspect. "The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; *hail stones and coals of fire*" (Psalm 18:13). The principle of the cold breath of God's humility and the hot breath of God's glory and exaltation is seen in many portions of God's Word. Take, for example, Israel's experience in crossing the Red Sea: "And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed (frozen) in the heart of the sea" (Exodus 15:8). God's cold breath froze the waters so that they stood as a heap, and His hot breath dried up the bottom of the sea so that Israel walked across dry-shod (Exodus 14:21).

It takes a cold hand to receive the manna. If we pick it up with our hands filled with wrath and the heat of our passions, the manna will melt and disappear. But if we come with hands clothed with the humility of Jesus Christ (having been receptive to His cold breath), we can receive the manna that comes along with the dew of reproof.

4) It was a Seed

And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and it was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey (Exodus 16:31).

The manna came like a seed, which speaks of reproductive life. The nature of a seed is to grow, and to produce more life. This is true of the manna Word of God as well. If we receive it into our hearts as its seed stage, it will grow and reproduce life and strength that will carry us all the way to Canaan's land.

5) It was White

White is a symbol of purity. This heavenly bread is pure bread which has not been tampered with by the defiling hands of man. Manna has no leaven in it; it is pure and white.

6) It was Sweet

When the Word of God tastes bitter, the trouble is not with the Word, but with our palate. The carnal man has no taste for the Word of God. We must develop a palate that has a taste for the things of God. The children of Israel failed to do so, and in due season, they found the manna distasteful. They never relished its sweetness at all. In fact, they loathed it!

7) It was Oil Bread

And the people went about, and gathered it, and ground it in mills, or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans, and made cakes of it: and the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil (Numbers 11:8).

Notice, manna is not ordinary bread; it had honey and oil in it, so much so that the bread tasted like fresh oil. Oil is a type of the Holy Spirit, and the Manna from heaven carried that anointing upon it.

c. The Reception of the Manna

It was while she was in the wilderness that Israel was called God's church (Acts 7:38). As the church of Jesus

Christ today, we stand in the position of receiving the Word in the same manner that Israel did in the wilderness. Since God's spiritual manna has the same nature and character as His literal manna, we should take heed lest we make the same mistakes that we see in Israel's reception of the manna.

1) What is it?

And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat (Exodus 16:15).

The small white thing which looked like hoar frost on the ground, seemed quite unimpressive to their eyes. Of course, they were ignorant of what it really was. When one is ignorant of the qualities of something, he has a tendency to despise or count it as nothing. So it was with Israel.

2) Ignorance

And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know;...Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end; (Deuteronomy 8:3,16).

God gave them manna to humble them and to prove them. Israel was unimpressed and unaffected by the miracle bread that carpeted the ground around her, and eventually disdained it as "light" bread or insufficient bread. Esteeming it of little worth, they thought that the manna lacked strength to carry them into Canaan's land. Israel was ignorant of the true nature of the manna; in fact, she never did fully realize what it was.

3) Accused Bread

And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes (Numbers 11:4-6).

Still the people murmured and complained, looking back to their diet in Egypt, longing for its varieties of food. They longed for its fish, which is a type of fleshly freedom or swimming about in carefree abandonment. Melons and cucumbers have to do with satisfying thirst, whereas the garlic stimulates the fleshly appetite. These pleasures were still vivid in their minds, so they began to accuse the bread of Glory. The fault was not in the bread, but the blame was their own, because they refused to allow God to circumcise their mouths so that they might have a proper palate to appreciate the taste of the bread.

Jesus Christ is the true Bread of heaven. If we do not permit God to circumcise our mouths, our palate, our appetites, we will have no appreciation and understanding, no taste and responsiveness even to Him.

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth Life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst...I am that bread of Life...(John 6:32-48).

Jesus Christ is the anti-type, fulfilling the many aspects of the manna sent from heaven in the wilderness. The account in John 6 continues to describe Jesus as the Bread of Life, and as such, we must eat of Him in order to have eternal life.

4) Rejected Bread

And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in

the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread (Numbers 21:5).

Ignorance of a thing makes one insensible to its true value. And so it was with the manna; they accused it, and then they rejected it. With no appreciation in their hearts, the rejection of it came easy.

d. God's Command

Receiving the manna carried a responsibility. We, too, will give an account for what we do with the revelation of the hidden mysteries which we receive from God through His Word.

1) Gather According to Eating

This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons; take ye every man for them which are in his tents (Exodus 16:16).

They were to gather the manna according to their ability to eat. There was no lack of supply; it was sufficient to satisfy everyone's capacity. And so it is with the Word of God today. The supply never runs out. Regardless of how much has been revealed to us, there is always more.

2) Leave not Until Morning

They were to gather a fresh supply daily. We, also, are to walk daily under the government of the Lord's Word instead of trying to walk under yesterday's or tomorrow's government. Walk under His Headship today—today's supply.

3) Gather Early in the Morning

They were to gather the manna early before the heat of the day melted it away. This is a good injunction for us to follow. We need to gather fresh manna in the morning for our new day's journey, before the heat of the problems of the day beset us.

4) Gather Twice on the Sixth Day

And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man:... (Exodus 16:22).

Six days they worked to eat, for it was work to gather up the manna each day. On the sixth day they worked twice as hard so that they need not work on the seventh day, the Sabbath.

God provided a double portion for Israel on the sixth day. He appointed them a time of rest on the seventh day, and he took care that they should not be the losers for it. No one will ever be a loser by obeying and following the commands of the Lord.

The overcomers of the Church of Pergamos were promised "to eat of the hidden manna" which the Prophet Himself would supply. If we understand and appreciate the hidden manna, it will provide strength to take us into marriage relationship with the Heavenly Bridegroom, and it will bring us under His government and rule. Without the governmental rule of the hidden manna, we cannot attain the Bride and Bridegroom relationship, that oneness of will, spirit, and mind.

2. White Stone

Also, the Prophet promised "a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." The *stone* has to do with the right to cast a vote, for the word means verdict, a vote, a ballot, a

voice, a ticket of admission. This is a white stone, and the word *white* is the same word as light, therefore, this is a stone of light or wisdom. To understand all that this implies we must refer back to other areas of truth we already know.

For example, in Matthew 6:22,23 we learn how this matter of voting and the thought of light relates to us today. We will also understand why it was such a great promised reward to the overcomers of the Church of Pergamos.

The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness (Matthew 6:22,23).

Eighty-four percent of our sense perception comes through the eye gate. This channel of sight is called the eye in the body; in the soul realm it is our imagination; and in the spirit realm it is known as faith.* This mighty channel is likened to a lamp which represents our light. If our eye is single unto the Lord, free of hypocrisy and pretense, then it is a channel of light. But, if this channel be darkened with evil, the darkness is great indeed.

When we are converted, we receive a new heart, a new spirit, and a portion of God's will. As this new man grows within the believer, the old nature, the old man, gives way to the new man, and spiritual growth takes place. A Christian has a dual nature, for he still possesses his old carnal nature as he receives the new. As we learn to cooperate with the new man within us, the Spirit of God will flow out through our new heart and begin possessing the channel of our faith, working down through the area of our imagination, and even sanctifying the eye of the body. When this white light is flowing through, then the "whole body" shall be full of light." This *white* light is not the natural light of understanding with which all are endowed, but it is a pure white light which comes from the Spirit of God. When the Spirit of God possesses the channel of sight, it begins to work out through the other four senses as well, seeking to sanctify the whole body.

We begin to experience this white light at the Laver. We are cleansed by the washing of the water by the Word of God, and at the Laver we enter into a progressive sanctification that will deliver us from the indwelling sins of the flesh. Only when our being is enlightened by the white (pure) light of God, can we see clearly enough to cast our vote for the will of God in our lives. First the light is formed, giving us a single eye unto the Lord. Then we are ready to receive the stone, that we might cast our vote for full surrender to go on in spiritual growth into the Holy Place, thereby entering into the espousal period with the Bridegroom. In the Holy Place, at the Golden Altar of Incense, the Golden Candlestick, and the Table of Shewbread we lay down our will in full surrender to the divine will of God.

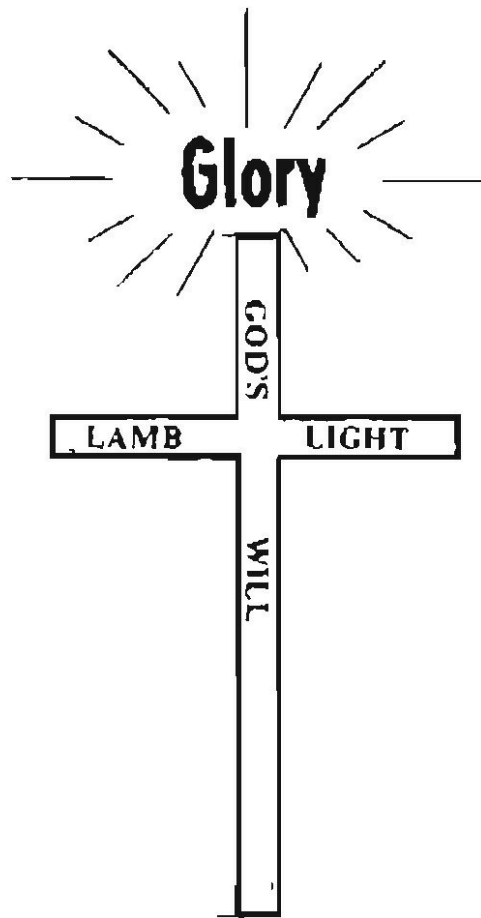
The stone is made up of the light which is received at the Laver of cleansing and sanctification. There we take on His Name, enter into His death, and come forth daily in His resurrected life. The white light gives us the ability to see, and once we really see, we can cast a vote saying, "Lord, I want the wisdom, understanding and knowledge that you can give me at the Golden Candlestick. I don't want to walk according to my distorted light any longer." This is how we cast our vote at the Candlestick. Without this light, we can never make it over to the Table of Shewbread, where He will open to us the deep and hidden mysteries of His Word. The reception of that Word brings with it the obligation of government, for through the Word, the Lord will govern and direct our lives. We are then ready to walk in complete surrender of will, under His divine headship.

So when we come to the Lord in prayer, seeking for more light and truth, the Spirit of God leads us right back to the Laver where He shows us greater singleness of eye and heart. As we deal with each particular attitude by crucifying it in the pool of His death, we are brought up on the resurrection side. A new degree of white light possesses us (the natural light has been replaced by His white light), and then we have a new vote. We have a new voice which is heard by our Father in heaven. We have a new ballot to cast for His wisdom, understanding and knowledge at the Candlestick. The Bride of Christ lays her will down in the prostrate position of surrender and obedience to His will. With her eye single, and with the right of vote (white stone), she begins saying "I will obey you, I will come under your Headship, I will go all the way, Yes, Jesus...I will...I will...I will." The Lord does not force or coerce our will, we have to make our own choice—cast our own vote.

And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof (Revelation 21:23).

The Lamb is the light of the New Jerusalem. This is the same white light we have been studying. The Lamb of

God is Jesus Christ, who was both man and God. At all times Jesus, the man, kept his human will in a prostrate position, surrendered to the will of the Christ within him. Because He had pure light, He knew that a prostrate position was the only position in which a human will belonged. Notice, God's will is also crowned with glory.



If we keep our will in the horizontal position, we need never trouble ourselves about the will of God. His will is crowned with the light of glory beyond comparison. If we lay hold of that white light at the Laver, and move up to the Altar of Incense, we can cast our vote for the eternal union of our will with God's will. It is not just a matter of voicing our desire, but that of casting our vote and asking God to put our will in that position of humility, surrender, and obedience unto Him.

How great will be our light! We will walk under the glory of God which is the light of His divine will; and the Lamb's light is the light of the surrendered will of Jesus Christ. The Lamb's light shines forth at the Golden Candlestick. We will not partake of the light of the glory of God until we first take the light of the Lamb, positioning our will even as His.

The Prophet continued to prophesy blessing. Besides the white light and the stone, with the right to cast a vote, He also promised a new name. In Scripture name means nature, so He was promising a new nature to those who would overcome. With this new nature, we will praise Him for each opportunity to lay our will down.

...and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it (Revelation 2:17).

No man will know this new name, new nature, saving he that receiveth it. Although the light, the effect of the new name or new nature can be seen by others, yet they cannot know or comprehend the personal portion that has been granted to the one who has cast his vote to come under the will of Jesus Christ. No one else can know the portion of the name, nature of Jesus Christ, that has been personally given unto us as we cast our vote, our white stone, for marriage union with His will. This is a great mystery, how we can be one in Christ Jesus on one hand, and

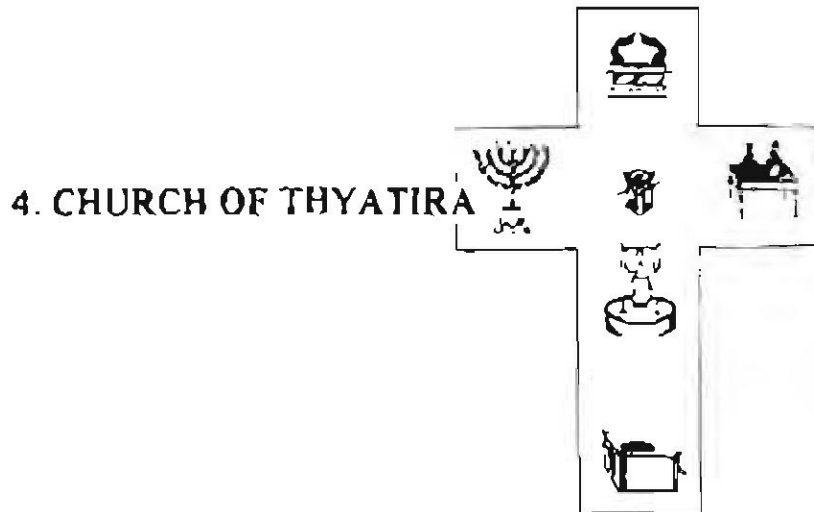
on the other hand, we can have our own personal portion of His Name or nature that no one else knows.

This concludes the ministry of the King, Priest, and Prophet unto the third church, the Pergamos Church.

* B. R. Hicks, [*The Threefold Nature of Man*](#), (Jeffersonville, Indiana, 1969).

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CHURCH OF THYATIRA (Revelation 2:18-29)



Thyatira, the fourth church, relates to the golden Candlestick in the Mosaic Tabernacle. Here we experience the light of God's humble mind, which opens new avenues of truth as we let this light illuminate God's Word. Thus we enter a new realm of growth in the stature of Jesus Christ. The same problem plagues this church that has troubled each church from the beginning. The Church of Ephesus had GOOD WORKS, but they had their works in the wrong order. They placed works above their love relationship with Jesus Christ. The problem continues, and by the time we come to the Pergamos Church their works had begun to deteriorate, being intermingled with false doctrine. When we leave our first love and put our works first, we leave the door wide open for Satan to come and place his throne in our midst to rule over our works. With Satan's throne in the midst, their works became mixed with the doctrines of Balaam and the Nicolaitans. These works were perverted in the sight of God. At the Church of Thyatira the strange mixture continues and worsens, for the Devil's teacher enters the picture, busily propagating Satan's synagogue.

I. HE MINISTERS AS KING

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

Attention is especially drawn to the king's fiery eyes with their power of discernment, which enable Him to penetrate to the innermost parts of man's being. Nothing escapes His eyes. He is the King who has the power not only to discern and expose, but also to purify. His eyes, "like unto a flame of fire," can shrivel and consume the wood, hay, and stubble of our carnal hearts. Only the works of gold, silver, and precious stones of God's will can bear this fiery gaze.

We see that the feet of the King "are like fine brass." These are judgment feet, amber in color. Amber implies a combination of gold and bronze. The King's feet have power to trample under whatever He discerns in our lives that is unlike Him. Why not invite these precious feet to tread upon the works of your fleshly nature? Say to Him, "Lord,

come and walk up and down my will with your brazen feet of judgment,” and He will do just that. Although His feet are feet of judgment they are also living resurrected feet. He never tramples down something within us without leaving the seeds of resurrection life and power behind. After we understand this, we welcome His feet of judgment and rejoice when they walk up and down the garden of our heart. When He tramples down and kills something within us, we rejoice because His nature with which He fills us is far better.

After ministering as King, Jesus begins to reveal Himself as Priest as He examines their works and sacrifices to God. He always recognizes the good first and then the bad.

II. HE MINISTERS AS PRIEST

I know thy works, and charily, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first (Revelation 2:19).

A. RECOGNIZES THE GOOD

1. Works – Past

The Priest recognizes the past works of the Church of Thyatira. Our High Priest is ever faithful to see and remember our past works for Him.

2. Charity – Love

In spite of the strange mixture of doctrine and practice, Thyatira still possesses some real love for Christ. The Priest acknowledges that He is aware of their love which found expression in their many works of charity.

3. Service

They served Him, and He commends them for giving forth some of the Word of God.

4. Faith

In spite of the flourishing of false doctrines, there is still some true faith coming through the Word of God.

5. Patience

They have suffered long and been patient with those who are not going on for God. They had been merciful toward the people who followed Jezebel and her teachings. Their patience is certainly noteworthy.

6. Works – Present

When they first started as a church, they did some good works for God. He recognized these works from the very first, but now mention is made again of their works, for these works had multiplied. This is as it should be, for the last works are a continuation and fruition of the first.

The Church of Thyatira is not cast aside by the Priest, for they still enjoy His blessings and presence. Nevertheless He warns them of the judgment and death that will follow if they fail to repent. As a Priest, He continues speaking, “Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee.” He is talking about the church in general, and not of individuals as such. Clearly, the Head of Enchantment is still making their works seem more enchanting and exciting than the satisfaction that comes from worshipping God in the Spirit and partaking of His Word. This same head maintains the delusion started in the Pergamos Church. Thus, the Christians in Thyatira are guilty of putting their works over their love, even as their predecessors.

B. RECOGNIZES THE BAD

Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not (Revelation 2:20,21).

1. Jezebel

The name *Jezebel* means chaste, but in this case her name belies her nature, for she was unclean and unholy. Jezebel is a symbol of the world.

2. Prophetess

Notice, God does not call her a prophetess, but she gives herself the title. Although her assumed office bears no weight in the sight of God, it still sorely affects the Church in Thyatira. The Church of Jesus Christ needs the gift of discernment, which has been provided in the gifts of the Spirit.

In his first epistle, the Apostle John admonished Christians, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). Through the gifts of the Holy Ghost, Jesus Christ has provided a way for us to discern between God’s Spirit of truth and the false or lying spirits of the Devil. Apart from spiritual discernment, we leave ourselves open to the false prophets who appear to be true prophets of God, but actually are wolves in sheep’s clothing. These false prophets contaminate and devour the church with their corruption and false teachings. This is Jezebel’s ministry in the Church of Thyatira.

3. Teach

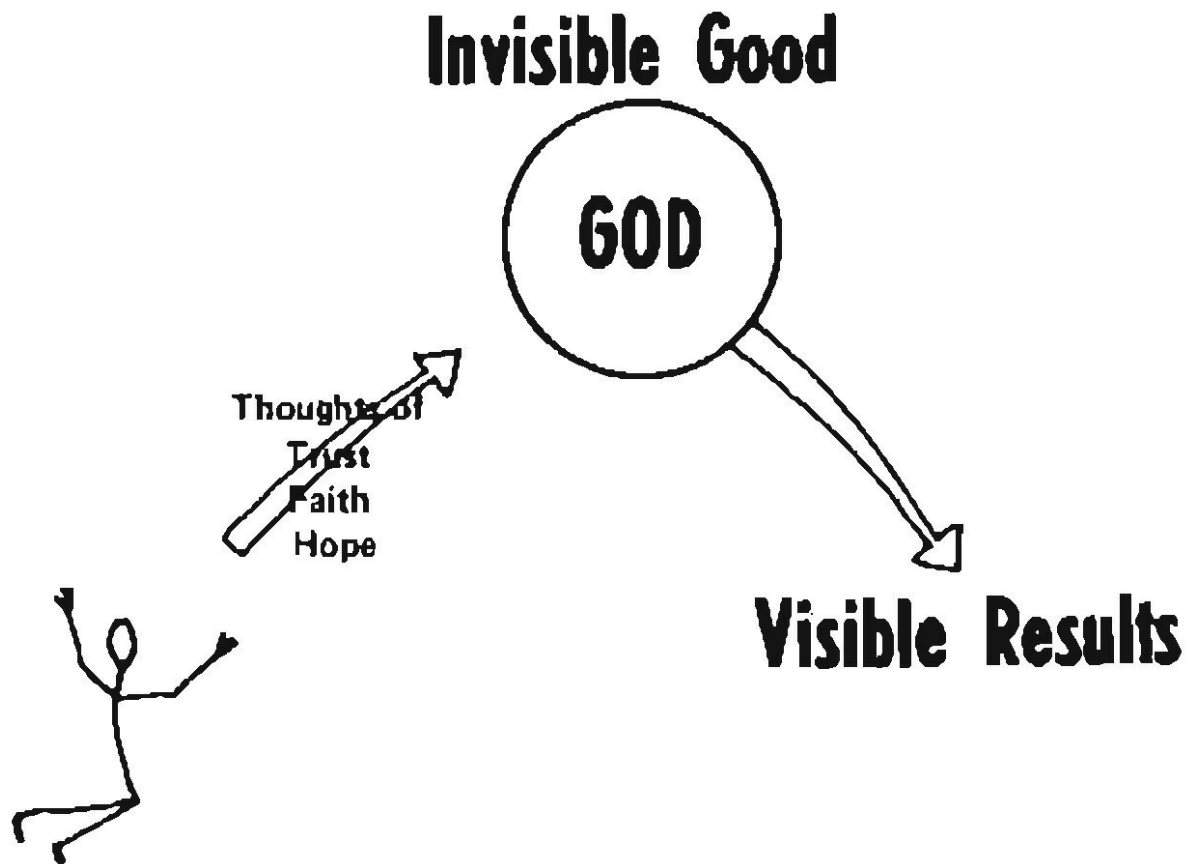
As a prophetess Jezebel stands in the position of influence and teaches the same defiling message of Balaam that had come out of Pergamos. She teaches the church to commit fornication and eat things sacrificed to idols. Jezebel expounds no new philosophy; she teaches more of the same message that had already mortally afflicted the church.

4. Seducing Spirit

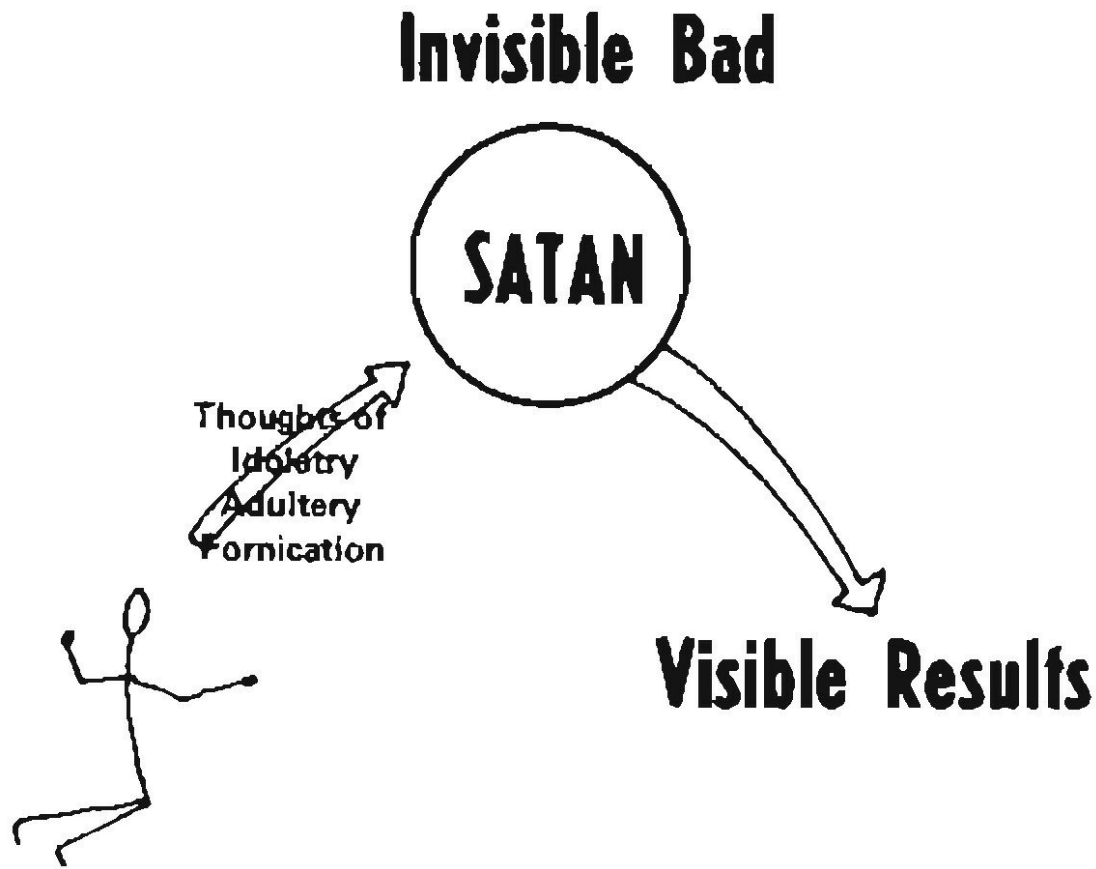
The spirit of her teaching is seductive in both the natural and spiritual realms. This church fights the same Head of Enchantment that the Church of Pergamos struggled with. Even as Balaam did, Jezebel taught a broad-mindedness and tolerance that weakens the church with compromise and worldliness. Wherever friendship of the world is taught, one always sees a great deal of natural fornication and adultery present as well.

Before the visible and physical act of fornication or adultery takes place, it begins back in the invisible. In fact, all visible things, whether they are good or bad, come out of the invisible. All good comes out of the invisible God. Consider prayer, for example. We heave up our faith and hope unto the Lord as we continue petitioning Him in prayer. When sufficient prayer has been made, the invisible God brings that petition to pass in the visible realm. Then we see the fruit of our prayers; we have the answer.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning (James 1:17).



All evil comes out of the invisible realm of Satan; it is conceived and inspired by him. In James 4:4 we are told that friendship with the world is enmity with God. It is impossible to be friendly with both God and the world. Where friendship of the world is taught in the house of God, it fosters spiritual fornication and adultery, illegal union with the things of the world. The spiritual adultery which begins in the invisible soon moves out into the visible realm, and such a church is usually filled with the outward manifestation of literal fornication and adultery as well.



“And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not” (Revelation 2:21). God graciously leaves the door of repentance open to Jezebel, but she refuses to repent of her sin. She persists in her defiling way, caring nothing about the things of God. When judgment is slow in falling, one can easily be deceived into thinking that he is getting by. God’s directive will is to bless us into repentance, obedience, and surrender. If we fail to repent, God has no choice but to take the permissive route and minister chastisement and finally judgment.

III. HE MINISTERS AS PROPHET

Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works (Revelation 2:22,23).

A. PROPHECIES JUDGMENT

Just as all visible good and bad come out of the invisible, even so judgment begins in the invisible and spiritual realm first. When an individual comes under God’s judgment, the judgment first works in the invisible realm of the spirit. Frequently, those under judgment are unaware of the death that is working in them. Samson is an excellent example, for he did not know when the Spirit of God departed from him. Only when circumstances demanded that he use the power of God, did he find that the power had departed from him. When the Philistines started to gouge out his eyes and chain him to the mill like an ox, then it was made visible to him. This same principle is true with God’s blessings, for they start in the invisible before they become manifested outwardly.

God respects our choice. We can heed God’s warning and choose to repent, or we can reject it and continue in our own way. We can choose God’s way or Satan’s way. However, if we choose wrong we must suffer the consequences. If we want our own way, God will respect that prerogative and give us exactly what we want, but

tribulation and judgment will accompany our choice.

Just as God offers us the power to choose the right way, so we also allow others the same privilege. We cannot force another to do the right things. The choice belongs to each individual.

If we fail to respond to the ministry of the King, and that of the Priest, then the Prophet begins to work, prophesying about the good and the bad.

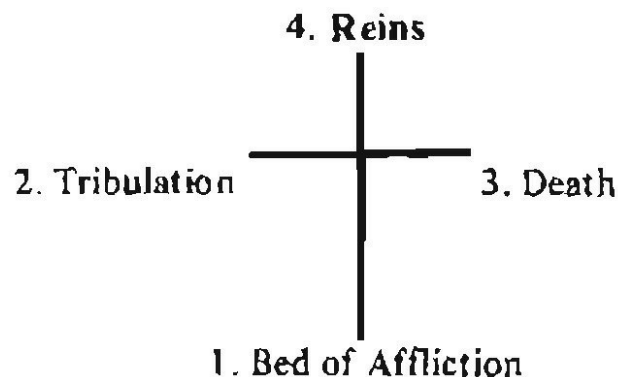
THE GOOD

1. Works (Past)
2. Charity
3. Service
4. Faith
5. Patience
6. Works (Present)

THE BAD

1. Teach (Wrong)
2. Seduce
3. Fornication
4. Idolatry
5. Adultery

He begins to speak judgment with the words “Behold” which means stop, look, and listen! The Prophet gives this important message in order to deter their headlong plunge into the teaching of Jezebel. It is intended to put a little fear of God in their hearts.



1. Bed of Affliction

“I will cast her into a bed...” He is talking about a bed of affliction. Physical affliction is one of the effective tools that God uses to stop us in our self-willed way, for it gives us time to reconsider and reevaluate our actions. Affliction breaks us, and in our weakness it is easy to turn our hearts and hopes toward God. Through affliction, many a person has found their way back to God. Nevertheless we realize the very opposite happens in some cases. Some people harden their hearts when afflicted. The rays of the sun can melt or harden. The nature of the substance shined upon determines the outcome. Butter, for example, melts quickly under the warm rays of the sun, whereas clay becomes harder and harder.

2. Tribulation

“...and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation.” If we follow after false teaching that leads us contrary to the truths of God, we can expect tribulation. Jezebel and her followers will receive affliction and tribulation. The word *tribulation* means to harrow with a sharp instrument, having big teeth. A farmer uses a harrow to break up the large, hard clods of earth. If we choose fornication and adultery, in the natural or spiritual, then we will get the harrow of God’s tribulation with it. God has a way of giving us what we want, and then letting that very thing become the instrument of chastisement. Our idols become a whip upon our backs.

Sometimes we are tempted to think that we are getting away with sin. Although Samson indulged in fornication with the harlot in the city of the Philistines, he still had enough of the power of God upon him to walk away with the doors of the city, its posts, and bars, and carry them to the top of the hill. That time the Philistines could not take him

captive. Instead he mocked them with the display of his strength and power. But this in no way indicated that he was right with God, God's mercy left the power of God upon Samson in the midst of his enemies, but the day came when the end of the matter was made known. God lifted His power from Samson, so suddenly and so quickly, that he knew not that the power had departed. When he sought to resort to the power of God again, he stood exposed in his helplessness before his enemies.

God is slow to anger and plenteous in mercy, so be not deceived by the outward appearance of things. He gives us time to repent, but after (that comes sure judgment. It was this judgment that the Prophet spoke of concerning Jezebel and her followers.

3. Death

"I will kill her children with death." Those that accept the teaching of Jezebel can expect nothing but death. How can we expect life if we follow the wrong teaching? Life comes from God, and there is no spiritual life in false, hypocritical, unclean, and deceitful teachings of false prophets. Spiritual death sets in, starting in the invisible and working its way out into the visible. Historically speaking, this is the time when spiritual death was seen in the church. The three churches, Pergamos, Thyatira, and Sardis correspond with the Dark Ages that the church passed through. What the Prophet prophesied was fulfilled and death came.

4. Reins

"...and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts." Sometimes the word *reins* is translated kidneys, for they symbolize the inner emotions and feelings of man. The Prophet declares He will search the heart and search the reins of men. Our reins (used to control and guide the steed) depict the desires of the human will which guide the whole wheel of our being. We are controlled and directed by the desires of our will, for our will acts as the axle which governs the entire wheel of our being. All our emotions and desires begin in the will, so we can see the power of these reins. It is the ministry of the Prophet to search out and know the reins and the heart. He is now speaking on an individual and personal basis, and is not concerning Himself with the church in general. We cannot excuse ourselves because of our church affiliations, for the Prophet will examine and try each of us on an individual basis. Too often we try to use the faults of the church in general as an excuse for our personal failures, but the Prophet looks into our own hearts, and searches out our own desires.

After searching out the reins and hearts, He continues saying, "and I will give unto every one of you according to your works." In other words "you reap what you sow." If our works are the works of the flesh (carnal works), then we will suffer the loss of these, for "the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is" (I Corinthians 3:13). If it is the enduring work of the Spirit, it will stand the test and shine all the more brightly because of the fire. Keep in mind that each of us will answer for only ourselves. What others may do should be of little concern to us. Although these are things we fail to understand now, we can set them aside and put our attention on Jesus. After all, He is all that really matters. When we get to heaven, we will understand many things that are a mystery now. In the meantime, let us concern ourselves with seeing Jesus.

But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not (his doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden (Revelation 2:24).

In the Church of Thyatira were some who had not polluted themselves with Satan's doctrine. The word *doctrine* means laws or principles of operation. Satan has the depths of his laws and principles, if a person plunges into the very depths of these principles there is no coming back. Once marriage union, in its deepest and fullest sense, takes place between the human will and Satan's will, there is no deliverance. Once the human will has completely decided for the things of Satan, there is nothing left in that will that desires to turn to God.

Considering this matter of the "depths of Satan," let us turn to the book of Jude. Sin is sin in the sight of God, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10). Nevertheless, sin does fall into two categories. There are natural sins, such as immortal sins of lying, stealing, and killing. These are the sins which can readily be forgiven. Because of our frail human nature with its propensity toward sin, we can easily be overtaken by sin. But the sins of the Spirit are of far greater significance, for spiritual sins lead to the depths of Satan. Let us examine Jude's account with this thought in mind.

For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ (Jude 1:4).

Jude is dealing with a special class of sin, spiritual sin—the sins of the ungodly. Ungodly men are sinners who have once known God and have turned their backs on Him in rejection.

Here is a puzzling phrase perhaps, “who were before of old ordained to this condemnation...” To understand this, we must look back into eternity. As we have already said, everything that is visible has come out of the invisible. Everything that exists has come out of the loins of the invisible God. Before each of us was made visible as a human being in this world, we existed back in the loins of God in a seed form as a spirit and soul. While in this state, we all made an original choice for or against God. This took place at the time of Lucifer’s rebellion in heaven which resulted in the expulsion of Lucifer and the many angels that made their choice for him. In Ezekiel 28, we find a description of Lucifer, the Son of the Morning, before his fall. Notice especially verse 14, “...thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.” The word *stones* in the Hebrew means to build, to obtain children. Every human being comes out as a seed form of spirit and soul from the invisible realm of God into the visible realm of this world, and is placed as a living seed in a human body which is formed within the womb of its mother as a result of the union of the physical seeds of the mother and father.

Back in eternity, these living seeds were exposed to the person of Lucifer. Lucifer tested every seed, and each seed was given an opportunity to choose for God or against Him. There were some seeds that made their choice for God; some seeds, however, made their choice for Lucifer, who manifests himself in this present world as Satan, Devil, Serpent and Dragon. The reference in Jude 1:4, “ordained to this condemnation” refers to the seeds that joined themselves to fallen Lucifer when they existed in seed form in the loins of God.

Although some seeds joined themselves to fallen Lucifer back in the ages of eternity, their wrong choice in no way predestined them to spend eternity in hell. God gives them another chance in the dispensation of grace to make the right choice, for the Gospel call has been sent forth to “whosoever will”—the door of salvation is open to all who will believe, repent, and accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour. The word *ordained*, used by Jude, means to write previously, to announce, prescribe, evidently set forth. God, who knows all things in advance, is able to write prophetically the blessing or the condemnation according to the choice that He foresees that we will make. Regardless of the choice that one made back in the loins of God, all seeds are privileged to make another choice in this life. Each must choose to accept or reject God’s provided salvation through Jesus Christ.

Some of the seeds that made a wrong choice back in eternity will repent and choose to live for God in this life. The ungodly men that Jude refers to in verse four are men who accept salvation in this life and then turn back to the wrong choice that they made in eternity.

Just think of it! These men once knew the grace of God, but they turned it into an unclean thing, “turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ,” *Lasciviousness* means to be licentious, incontinent, filthy, wanton. Taking the very goodness of God, His holiness, His grace, His love, His mercy, His light, His truth, they turned it into a filthy, perverted thing. There are ungodly people who try to justify their works of darkness by twisting the light and truth of God’s Word to suit their evil purposes. When we misquote and misuse the Word of God, we are guilty of lasciviousness in the spiritual sense. Only ungodly men would know to do so, for they have the knowledge of the Scriptures from their former days of having walked with God. Jude, using many metaphors, gives a tremendous description of the ungodly.

Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities (Jude 1:8).

Filthy dreamers are those who abuse their own bodies. The “don’t try to rule me” attitude causes some people to despise dominion. People with this nature resent any authority. They resist the rightful authority of parents, teachers, church, and finally even God. And they speak evil of dignities. It is that critical faultfinding attitude against God’s leaders. Michael did not speak evil of or bring a railing accusation against even the Devil but said, “the Lord rebuke thee,” (Jude 1:9). I fear and tremble when I hear how lightly some speak of the Devil. Obviously, they underestimate their enemy and fail to realize his power.

Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core [Korah]. These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with

you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever (Jude 1:11-13).

The way of Cain speaks of a bossy spirit of pride which seeks to rule over even spiritual things. The error of Balaam was trying to curse what God had already blessed. The gainsaying of Core was rebellion against God-given authority. The sons of Korah are the first layer in the depths of the pit, because they knew the depths of Satan. "Spots in your love feasts" tell of a dirty leprous defilement in the love feast which followed the Communion service of the saints. Again we see tares in the midst of the wheat, but which are void of the fear of God. They are as "clouds without water," empty clouds that blot out the face of the sun but void of the moisture of His blessings, because they are without rain. "Trees whose fruit withereth" speak of trees full of the leaves of profession, fruitless and unprofitable, encumbering the ground. "Twice dead" these ungodly ones were spiritually dead when born into this world, were brought into spiritual life when converted, but turned their back on God again and died for the second time. They are "plucked up by the roots" therefore, don't pray for them, but simply get out of their way lest they defile you. And to end the description; "raging waves of the sea" boiling and churning, and then the wave is gone, leaving only its foam behind, the foam of their own shame. A "wandering star" denotes Light for a limited season. It is a light out of orbit having no permanent dwelling place; just a flash and then it is gone.

To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him (Jude 1:15).

In spite of the relationship that these men once had with Him, God calls them what they really are, ungodly sinners. They were guilty of ungodly deeds and hard speeches. Look out for the murmurers and complainers, or those who live in the negative, for this sin kept Israel (the first generation in general) from possessing Canaan's land.

Habitual talking against God's people and God's leaders will finally bring a person into the deep things of Satan. As we have noted before, sin is always progressive. It, too, begins in small seed form, but slowly and surely matures into a full tree.

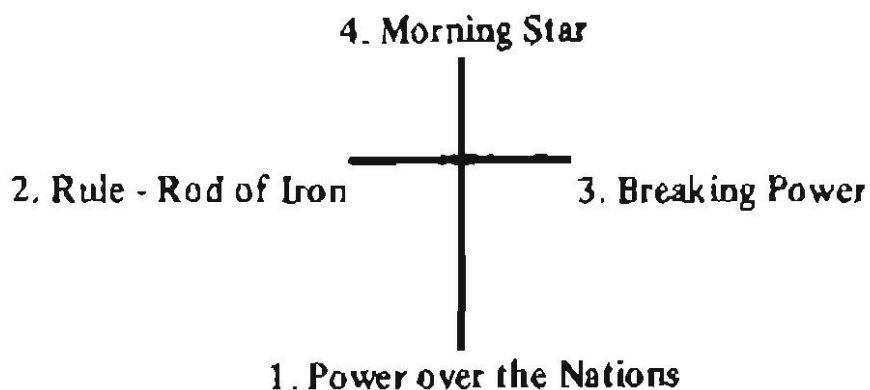
These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the spirit. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life (Jude 1:16-21).

Without a doubt, beloved, we are living in the last days. As the "depths of Satan" were well entrenched in the Church of Thyatira, we can expect an even greater blossoming of this very thing in the church of the end time. Thyatira knew it in its seed form, but we shall see it in its full maturity.

B. PROPHECIES BLESSING

And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches (Revelation 2:26-29).

A full stature of reward is promised by the Prophet to all those who will overcome the Jezebel in their midst and all that accompanies her teachings.



1. Power over the Nations

The word *nations* means a race, a tribe, specifically a foreigner (non-Jewish), usually implying pagan, heathen, Gentile. We realize that this promise will be literally fulfilled when Jesus Christ returns with His Bride to rule over the nations of the earth. However, since all Scripture is profitable, then we can glean a wonderful personal lesson here. We have nations of our fleshly nature which war against us in our spiritual journey, but we can live in repentance and experience an overcoming life on the realm of spiritual growth which the Church of Thyatira represents. As we overcome, He imparts to us power over the nations of our flesh, praise His Name!

2. Rule Them with a Rod of Iron

The word *rule* comes from the word meaning a shepherd. This ruling authority is not the mail-coated fist, but the tender rule and care of a shepherd. The true Shepherd, Jesus Christ, rules His sheep by feeding, hallelujah! There have been times in our individual lives when we were unable to walk in surrender and submission to His perfect will, but in His love and tender mercy. He continued to feed and nourish us with His Word. Through that feeding we grew strong in surrender and were able to come under His rod. Praise God, He rules by feeding. As we overcome, Jesus gives us ruling power over the nations of our flesh. The flesh must bow in surrender and obedience to the ruling authority of Jesus Christ. What reality we experience as we walk with Him!

In this life we are primarily concerned with ruling over our own carnal nature; however, we know that God has an eternal rule appointed for those who overcome and grow up in Jesus Christ.

3. Breaking Power

“As the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers.” This power will break everything that is unlike Jesus Christ and break each one of His enemies. However, before we can break the enemy against God in anyone else, we must first have that enemy broken in us. We need not live defeated lives, for He will impart His power unto us that will break everything unlike Jesus Christ.

4. The Morning Star

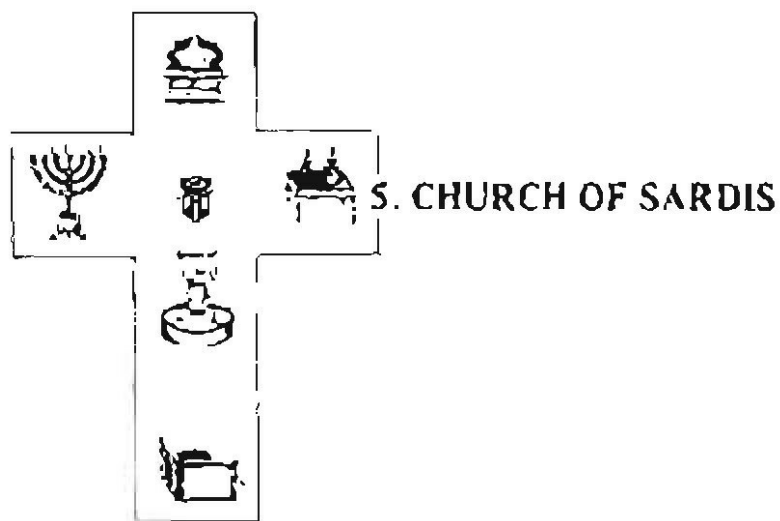
This is the light of His Word arising like the bright star of the morning, which heralds the sunrise. The word *morning* means to rise, to rear up, a mountain, to lift above. With the rising of the Morning Star comes new hope for a new day. With this hope, we can go through the greatest darkness, for Jesus Christ is our Morning Star.

Again we hear the same injunction: “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” The message to the Church of Thyatira has its personal application to us if we will hear. Let us not be content to stop at this level of spiritual growth, but let us press upward into the stature of Jesus Christ. Overcoming at the Church of Thyatira prepares us to press on into the Church of Sardis.

CHAPTER SIX

THE CHURCH OF SARDIS (Revelation 3:1-6)

We have reached the level of the Sardis Church, the fifth church, which corresponds with the Table of Shewbread in the Tabernacle.



By this time the religious works of the Church are completely perverted. Through his doctrines, teachings, and priesthood, Satan is so ruling that their works have become entirely polluted in God's sight. Nothing good is said about their works, for death reigns in this church.

Sardis means to scorn, to mock, to sneer. When we place our spiritual works above our love relationship with Jesus Christ, we end up with utter loss—loss of our first love and loss of good works. Eventually we begin to scorn the very things which we once held dear and precious to our hearts. Our love union with Jesus is a formidable wall of protection against the enemy, but when we place works above this love relationship, then the Devil moves in with his Head of Death, as he did with the Church of Sardis. Lucifer first moved into the other churches with his Head of Deceit, then followed with the Heads of Affliction, Blasphemy, and Enchantment. Each head helped to prepare the way for the Head of Death which strikes against the Church of Sardis.

I. HE MINISTERS AS KING

And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars;... (Revelation 3:1).

When Satan thrusts his Head of Death against us, we do not feel like praying; we feel dead to the Word of God; we feel no desire to press on. At times like these God is faithful, praise His Name, to loosen from His right hand the power necessary to overcome at this stage of spiritual growth. He releases this power to those who sincerely desire to overcome the Head of Death. On one hand it is amazing how much of Satan's power is loosened against the church; on the other hand, it is even more amazing to see the mighty power of God which He releases on behalf of

the church. Jesus promised that the gates of hell would not prevail against His church. The resurrected King stands in the midst with overcoming power. How precious is this confidence in Him when we find ourselves in the place of death. As King of kings. Jesus Christ releases the needed power to overcome on each realm of spiritual growth and experience.

A. THE SEVEN SPIRITS

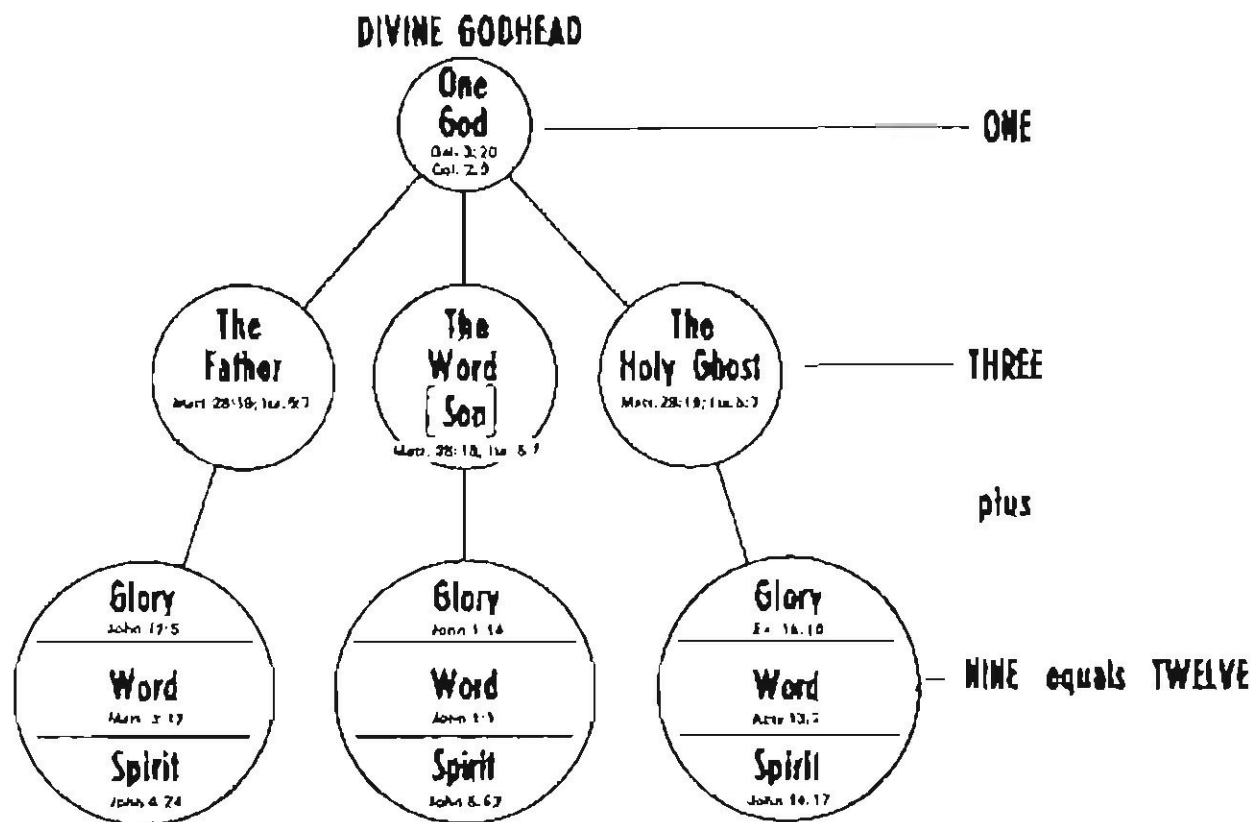
The number seven in Scripture denotes completion, and in conjunction with the seven Spirits of God they indicate complete power of discernment and sight. These same seven Spirits of God are also described in the Book of Revelation: "...seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God" (Revelation 4:5), and "...stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth" (Revelation 5:6). These Scriptures clearly emphasize the "seeing power" of the Spirit of God.

"I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead" (Revelation 3:1). DEAD was the spiritual condition of the Church of Sardis. But the Resurrected King faithfully stands in the midst of this church, with the seven Spirits of God to give victory over death. Let us consider the ministry of the seven Spirits of God.

1. The Spirit of the Father (Spirit of Glory)

The Spirit of the Father is the glory which raised Jesus Christ from the dead (Romans 6:4). This same resurrection glory is the Spirit which will overcome spiritual death, as well as natural death in our individual Lives. Whether we are attacked by Lucifer's Head of Death or by death arising from our carnal wills, we can overcome, praise His Name. At times, we feel as though we are shrouded by death. We have no desire to study or pray; we feel dead concerning the things of God. If we will surrender for the death of Jesus Christ to cover the area of flesh which is producing spiritual death in our lives, soon the resurrection glory, the Spirit of the Father, will resurrect us from spiritual death.

Let us refresh our memories for a moment. We know there is only ONE GOD, one Godhead, (Colossians 2:9), one fountainhead, and this One God reveals Himself to man as the TRIUNE GOD:—Father, Son, (Word), and Holy Ghost. So God is One and Three, and He is also Three in One. As we continue to study this matter in God's Word, we see that God the Father has glory, He has Word, and He is Spirit. In examining the Word (Son) we find He has glory, He is Word, and He is Spirit. Even so, the Holy Ghost has glory, He has Word, and of course, He also is Spirit. When we view the Godhead in its aspect of complete unity, we see Him as one, and when viewing Him in His triune manifestation we see Him as three. However, as we examine the Godhead more minutely, we see Him ministering in a ninefold aspect. If we add the threefold revelation and the ninefold revelation, we get the number twelve. Therefore, we can say God is one, God is three, God is nine, and even twelve. What a shame that the ranks of Christendom have been riddled with strife and contention over these truths; they have focused on only one aspect of the truth of the Godhead, failing to see the others. Perhaps a few simple diagrams will help here.



For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you (Matthew 10:20).

When we are brought up before governors and kings for our testimony's sake, we are to give no thought of how or what we shall speak. In that very hour, it will not be us speaking, "but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." This does not refer to teaching or preaching, for that involves study and preparation in the Word and prayer. This inspirational speaking of the Spirit of Glory operates when we are testifying or giving an account for our faith. Under these circumstances, we are told to just open our mouth, and the Spirit of Glory of the Father will speak through us.

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified (1 Peter 4:12-14).

We receive the Spirit of Glory when we are reproached and persecuted. As Christians, many fiery trials cross our paths, but the Lord permits them in order to try us, to test and investigate our motives, and to expose our fleshly nature. The human heart is deceitful and desperately wicked, making even the works of the flesh seem spiritual. However, the fiery trials reveal the true nature of all works. Real reproach and persecution accompanies the revelation of the Word of God. In the religious world persecution arises from vicious ministerial jealousy. But we are to rejoice because of the privilege of being "partakers of Christ's sufferings"—suffering for the Word, for the Word is Christ.

In verse 14 we read, "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye." This refers to the reproach for the nature of the Word, the Christ. Name means nature, character, and authority. It is a happy privilege to suffer men's reproach which comes because our lives manifest the nature of Christ with His righteousness, purity, patience, and loveliness.

If we rejoice while suffering reproaches and persecutions, the Spirit of the Father, which is the Spirit of Glory, is

ours. Sometimes we desire victory over the Head of Death, but we want to by-pass the persecution we must go through before we receive the glory which will overcome the Head of Death. Reading of the victorious saints in Foxe's Book of Martyrs, we see the Spirit of Glory upon them so strongly, that many times their persecutors were overwhelmed and confessed their newfound faith by joining their victims in death.

The word *spirit* means to blow hard, to breathe hard. It is the very breath of God, the very breath of the Father. With His breath of glory comes power to overcome even the Head of Death.

2. The Spirit of Humility

And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: (Mark 1:10).

And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him (John 1:32).

Since the dove is noted for its gentleness and meekness It is a fit symbol of humility. When John baptized Jesus, the Holy Ghost, in the form of a dove, descended upon Him from heaven. Surely we have no greater example of humility than Jesus Christ. Throughout his earthly journey, the will of the man Jesus was constantly obedient and subservient to the divine will of the Christ in Him. What humility!

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father (Romans 8:15).

We need the Spirit of Humility to overcome death. While we are fighting the Head of Death is not the time to display the big "I" within us. What WE have received from God, and what WE are able to do is no fit match for the Head of Death. We find the answer to the onslaught of Satan's attack through the Spirit of Humility. The Spirit of Adoption mentioned in Romans 8:15 is the Spirit of Humility.

Only by keeping our will in subjection to God's will can we ever hope to overcome the Head of Death. What great subjection and humility is manifested in the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus Christ cried, "Abba Father... nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt."

And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt (Mark 14:35,36).

The "Abba Father surrender" is a surrender that goes beyond what one knows to be the perfect will of God. Jesus knew that His destiny was death on the cross as a vicarious sin offering for the sins of the world. Yet we see Him about to die in the garden. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death" actually means, "My soul is disintegrating from my body." He was dying, hemorrhaging through his pores: "And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:44). Jesus did not fear death, because the very purpose of His coming into the world was to die upon the cross (John 12:27).

Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; (Hebrews 5:7).

The cup of death was presented to Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. This is why He cried out, "Spare me so I may go to the cross." Although His goal was the cross, He surrendered to die in the garden short of the goal. The Abba Father Spirit (the spirit of adoption) is "Not my will but thine be done."

What greater demonstration of the Spirit of Humility could we possibly find than this? The Spirit of Humility and the Spirit of Adoption are one and the same spirit. A son who cries "Abba Father" presents a spirit fully surrendered in humility to God's will.

And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father,

Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ (Galatians 4:6,7).

Only God sees humility because it resides in our hearts. Men see the outward manifestation of our inward humility through our meekness. Meekness is an important Christian characteristic.

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted (Galatians 6:1).

What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness? (I Corinthians 4:21).

As ministers, we not only face the Head of Death in our own lives, but we must overcome the Head of Death which rises against us from our congregations. First we must gain victory in our personal battles with death before we can help those we oversee. When death pervades a service, the first step to victory is to humble ourselves before God and surrender to His will. With the Spirit of Humility, a minister can overcome the Head of Death which comes against his congregation. After the Lord sees our humility, He reveals the route of deliverance that we should follow in that particular service. God uses various means to set His people free—the song service, a prayer line, or through the preaching of the Word.

Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price (I Peter 3:3,4).

A meek and quiet spirit is the Spirit of Humility. As we become acquainted with the Kingship of Jesus Christ in our lives, and thereby humble ourselves before Him, we are able to overcome the Head of Death. When death settles down upon us with darkness and heaviness, it causes us to feel that we are not sincere and that we are stalemated in our journey with the Lord. And we feel helpless to alter the situation. As the continual erupting of a volcano spews out its deadly lava, accusation and death are spewed out upon us, producing utter helplessness. But as soon as we acknowledge His Headship and humble ourselves, He will supply the overcoming power of the sevenfold Spirit of God. Many battles are won as we bend low at His feet in humility. Great power is released as we manifest the Spirit of Humility in our lives.

3. The Spirit of Authority or Ownership (Lord)

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).

In the original language, the word *Lord*, spelled with the small letters *ord*, is Adonai which means master, husband. In other words, Jesus was saying “The Spirit of the Master-Husband is upon me, or the Spirit of Authority and Ownership.” He has sent me to preach. As we allow the Lord (Master-Husband) to possess us, and as we willingly subject ourselves to His authority and ownership, then we will be a blessing and inspiration wherever we preach the Word of God. Verse 14 specifies that Jesus was speaking here: “And *Jesus* returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee.” Even though He was God in flesh (indwelt by the Christ), yet He is under subjection to the Spirit of the Lord. He was sent forth by this Spirit of Authority and Ownership.

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his (Romans 8:9).

The “Spirit of God” refers to the complete Godhead—Father, Word, and Holy Ghost. The “Spirit of Christ” is the Spirit of Authority and Ownership, even as the man, Jesus, who through death and resurrection was made both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36).

Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord (II Corinthians 3:17,18).

When we walk by the dictates of our carnal will, we walk in darkness and death. When our will rises in defiance to God's will, we cannot experience true liberty, for we live in a bondage house of fear, doubt and unbelief. In this spiritual condition carnal reasoning blurs our vision and veils our understanding, making it impossible to see the prize. But as we humble ourselves, praise His sweet Name, and surrender to His authority and ownership, He removes the veils and with an open (unveiled) face we are able to behold the glory of the Lord. As we gaze upon that glory, hallelujah, we experience being changed from one plane of glory to a higher realm of glory. How? By the blessed spirit of ownership (Lord).

Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; (Philippians 1:15-18).

Christ, the revealed Word of God, can be preached in pretense as well as in truth. Some, with no personal experience with Christ, preach Him out of their carnal nature, motivated by the desire for a ministry or personal gain. They preach the Word in envy, strife, (striving and struggling for exaltation), contention (fighting those who differ with them), pretense (pretending to be what they are not). But there are those who preach Christ in love, truth, and good will. It is impossible to preach in love unless we are in the will of God. The apostle continued. "For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:19). Although he was in bonds, Paul knew that all his painful and adverse experiences would bring him higher in spiritual stature. These very circumstances would, in due time, liberate him from the bondages of the Self and bring him under the headship of the Spirit of Jesus Christ—the Spirit of Authority.

4. The Spirit of Holiness

The Spirit of Holiness is the spirit of purity. There are areas of experience that cannot be overcome any other way than by the Spirit of Holiness. When we are clothed with this spirit of purity and righteousness, the Head of Death is thwarted in his attack. We need to pray for God to give us the Spirit of Holiness that the Father has promised.

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? (Luke 11:13).

The Holy Spirit is an all inclusive term meaning the Spirit of the entire Godhead. Each is holy; the Father is holy; the Son (Word) is holy; and the Holy Ghost is holy. Through fleshly attitudes and dispositions, Satan makes an inroad with his Head of Death. However, we are assured that if we ask, our heavenly Father will give us His Spirit of Holiness which will ward off any attack of the Head of Death.

Jesus Christ had the Spirit without measure because in Him dwelt the fullness of the Word, but we receive God's Holy Spirit progressively. As we deal with our carnal nature through personal crucifixion and grow in the Word, we continually receive new measures of His Spirit of Holiness. The Old Testament type and shadow, the cloud and fire, shows clearly why Jesus Christ was the only one who has received the Spirit without measure. Hidden within the cloud was the glory of God, and within the glory of God was God's fire of jealousy. When we read of the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, we see God's fire or jealousy coming forth from the glory of the Lord and consuming the two hundred and fifty men who rebelled against God's appointed leadership as they offered incense.

And Korah gathered all the congregation against them unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the congregation...And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense (Numbers 16:19-35).

Even so, if the glory of God's Spirit came upon our unprepared hearts, the fire of God's jealousy would burn and

consume us because He would find so many unholy things within us that would provoke His Holy Godly jealousy. His name is Jealous, and He jealously guards His rights of ownership and headship in our lives, not for what we can do for Him, but for what He plans and intends to do for us. Therefore, His Spirit of Holiness is meted out to us only as we are able to receive it. As we grow in God, the Spirit of Holiness rests upon us in ever increasing measure.

The Spirit of Holiness possesses resurrection power. Neither death nor the grave could hold Jesus Christ because He had the Spirit of Holiness.

For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither will thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption (Psalm 16:10).

Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh: And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead (Romans 1:3,4).

What caused the glory of the Father to resurrect Jesus Christ from the dead?—the Spirit of Holiness. It was impossible for Him to see corruption with the Spirit of Holiness upon Him. Even so, we can overcome death by this same Spirit. When we feel spiritual death (that cold, dead, binding spirit), descending upon us, let us check to see through which corrupt door of the flesh that it is coming. We can then crucify that area or place of corruption by yielding it up to the death of Jesus Christ. It is Christ who reckons the flesh dead (Romans 6:11). As we allow the Spirit of Holiness to come and lift us up with its resurrection power, we will walk in triumphantly over the Head of Death in our lives.

5. The Spirit of Life

Within the glory of God there is also a Spirit of Life. When God's Word is quickened, we feel the Spirit of Life rising up within us. And when we have really prayed with Holy Ghost intercession and travail, we feel alive and refreshed because of the Spirit of Life that has been imparted through prayer. The account of Nicodemus seeking counsel of Jesus by night specifies that this Spirit of Life comes through the quickened Word and through the Spirit of God.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God (John 3:3-5).

We receive the Spirit of Life through the quickened Word of God. Until God's Spirit enters into the Word, it is a dead letter which has no power to change us. However, when the Spirit of Life enters into the Word of God, it starts washing us and cleansing us from all fleshly defilement. The waters of God's Word strengthens us and satisfies us with His life. We never forget God's quickened Word, for it remains as a living truth down in the subconscious, and the Spirit of God can bring it up to the conscious level whenever it is needed.

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2).

The Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus overcomes the Head of Death. Life overcomes death: "O death where is thy sting?" It is impossible to be swallowed up by both death and life at the same time, for they are direct opposites. When we are swallowed up by the Spirit of Life in the Word of God and in the Spirit of God, then the Head of Death has no power to engulf us in any way.

And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness (Romans 8:10).

The body is dead because of sin. Our physical body has death working in it, and if Jesus tarries, all of us will eventually go to the grave. But the Spirit of Life has power over physical as well as spiritual death. Even though we go by way of the grave, we have the glorious hope of the resurrection if we have been made partakers of this awe-

inspiring Spirit of Life. Beloved, rejoice and be glad for this great gift of God!

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: (I Peter 3:18).

Again, we see that death could not hold Jesus Christ within its confines, for the Spirit of Life was upon Him to quicken Him with its resurrection power.

6. The Spirit of Truth

Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you (John 14:17).

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me (John 15:26).

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come (John 16:12,13).

The Spirit of Truth is found equally in the Word and in the Spirit. The verses above refer especially to the Holy Ghost in His ministry as the Spirit of Truth in this dispensation of the church age. Nevertheless, it is equally true that the Christ, the Word, is also the Spirit of Truth. The Spirit of Truth (Holy Ghost) leads us into all Truth (the Word) (John 16:13). The Holy Ghost's Spirit of Truth is under subjection to the Father and the Son, even as the Son (joined to the Word) was under subjection to the Father and the Holy Ghost during the time of His incarnation. Another term, the Spirit of Faith, is synonymous with the Spirit of Truth.

We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore had I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; (II Corinthians 4:13).

How easy it is to have confidence or faith in the nature of God when you know the Truth. Again, we see another term with the same meaning.

Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow (I Peter 1:11).

The Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of Truth, and the Spirit of Faith. People who love God love the Spirit of Truth. If God's Word is strange to us, then we do not recognize the Truth when we hear it. Living in the Word of God enables us to discern the Spirit of Truth from the spirit of error. If we have the Spirit of Truth in us, then those who love God will hear us and receive us.

They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error (I John 4:5,6).

Living in the Word of God and speaking the Truth overcomes the Head of Death and also death from our carnal wills.

7. The Spirit of Grace

The Spirit of Grace was the first thing that moved upon us when we heard the Gospel. Since grace is our first experience with God, it is fitting that it also be the first of the twelve foundations of the New City.

Although greatly benefited and blessed by the Spirit of Grace, we must take heed lest we grieve and even sin

against Him. We can do “despite” unto the Spirit of Grace. The word *despite* means to insult, to exercise violence, abuse, reproach, entreat shamefully, spitefully.

He that despised Moses law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace? (Hebrews 10:28,29).

The Spirit of Grace is related not only to the unmerited favor that God bestows upon us, but its root meaning is gratitude. We need to be thankful for material blessings as well as spiritual ones. A grateful heart always receives more. Gratitude also helps to keep our attitudes right toward God and man. In fact, it is impossible to have a bad spirit when the Spirit of Grace (gratitude) is upon us. James asks, “Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?” (James 3:11). One or the other must be turned off. The Spirit of Grace or gratitude for past favors unlocks God’s treasure house of spiritual and natural blessings. Gratitude is also a potent weapon in overcoming the Head of Death. When discouragement and defeat seems to paralyze our faith and hope, we feel like lying down and quitting, but this is the time to yield ourselves to the Spirit of Grace and begin praising Him for everything He has already done for us. Gratitude and thanksgiving will soon overcome the threat of Lucifer.

The King has the power that will help us overcome the Head of Death which wars against this portion of the stature of Christ. The King possesses the seven Spirits of God: the Spirit of the Father (glory), of Humility, of Authority, of Holiness, of Life, of Truth, and of Grace. All of this tremendous ministry of the Spirit of God was extended to the Church of Sardis if they would repent and seriously desire to overcome the Head of Death.

B. THE SEVEN STARS

In the King’s right hand was still more power—the seven stars. We have already seen that the stars speak of angels. Each of the seven churches had an angel, a ministering spirit, to bless and help them. Since these angels (stars) were in the King’s right hand (symbol of power and authority), we understand that they minister only as He desires and commands.

Notice the four times that the Book of Revelation refers to the ministry of seven angels.

1. Minister to the Seven Churches

This is the first group of seven angels mentioned in the Book. “The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand...the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches” (Revelation 1:20). These angels are called stars because of the degree of glory and light that they possess. I Corinthians 15:40-42 teaches that at the resurrection we shall stand up in varying degrees of glory; some in the glory of the sun, others in the glory of the moon, and some in the glory of the stars, and even the glory of one star differs from the glory of another star. The seven stars, as related to each of the seven churches, vary in their degrees of glory.

2. Minister the Seven Trumpet Judgments

We read of these trumpet judgments in chapters 8, 9, and 11 of Revelation. These trumpets refer to the three-and-one-half year tribulation period. The trumpet signals the release of God’s righteous judgment upon the earth. As it was the ministry of the seven church angels to minister judgment to the saints in the seven churches, these also minister the literal judgment of God upon the earth. We shall study the trumpet judgments later, in both their literal sense as well as symbolically.

3. Minister the Seven Vails (Plagues)

The study of these angels takes us to Revelation, chapters 15 and 16, which we will cover later. We merely want to notice, in passing, that seven angels are seen ministering in different positions throughout the Apocalypse.

4. Minister in the Revelation of the New City

This is the final ministry of the seven angels. One of the seven angels, who seems to be a spokesman for the others, reveals the New City unto John. The vision of the New Jerusalem is not revealed until John first came through the other ministries of these angels at the churches, in the trumpet judgments, and in the vials of wrath poured out upon the earth. Only then was he ready to behold the glories and beauties of the New City.

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

This closes the revelation of the King in relation to the Church of Sardis. He possessed the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars. At His bidding, they were ready to war against the Head of Death that afflicted the Church of Sardis. We are now ready to view the ministry of Jesus Christ as Priest.

II. HE MINISTERS AS PRIEST

Death reigns in the Sardis Church. As we have already stated, the Sardis Church corresponds in position with the Table of Shewbread in the layout of the furniture in the Mosaic Tabernacle. The three tribes of Israel who marched in this northern position, marched under the emblem of the Eagle. As we eat of God's governmental Shewbread, we lay hold of the Eagle's nature of discernment. The ministry of the Priest was to inspect the sacrifice, and as such, He knows our works, for they are a form of our sacrifices.

...I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent...(Revelation 3:2,3).

A. RECOGNIZES THE GOOD

Actually, the Priest acknowledged no good in the Sardis Church. However, a few good things remained: traces of truth, a few who had not defiled their garments, some held fast to what they had received. But as the Priest viewed the overall picture of the Church, He was forced to say they were DEAD!

B. RECOGNIZES THE BAD

1. "I Know"

As Priest, Jesus Christ knows the truth because He is the Truth. He knows all error, all deceit, all things that are in opposition to Himself. Even as the Old Testament priest knew the condition of the sacrificial animal before it was placed upon the altar as an offering unto God, so our great High Priest knows all about our works. He will not accept any "mixed works" (works that are a mixture of flesh and Spirit) upon His altar. When our love relationship with Him is first, when He controls and directs all our works, then they are acceptable unto Him.

He said, "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." Here were people with an obvious profession, yet the Priest said, "You are dead." The word *name* means character and authority, and in going back to its root word, it is defined as notoriety, to gratify, to derive pleasure or advantage from, and to have joy. These professing Christians were so married to the world that they suffered no ill to their reputation. They seemed to have no battle, either from without or within. After all, were they not broad-minded, unbigoted, and ecumenical in spirit? Surely it was a distinct social advantage to be a member of this large and well known church. One could not help but notice the fine works of charity and their many deeds of benevolence exhibited in the interest of the community.

Although they had a fine reputation, the judgment of the Priest was, "You are dead." They did not have enough of the living Word of God inside of them to even provoke the anger of the enemy. Even Satan knew they were not worth fighting against. In fact, why fight? He had already achieved his purpose—death. Even though they still had the reputation of being alive, for there were still a few faint vestiges of the truth that had been handed down to them, it was all in the realm of appearances only. Generally speaking, the spirit of death had crept over the whole church. This was a church of hypocrites. Life was gone; only the corpse remained. Jesus dealt with hypocrisy in His day as

well.

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day. Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them. I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Matthew 7:21-23).

Again, the verdict of the Priest declares, “ye are workers of iniquity.” Although the people mentioned above professed many great works for God. Jesus does not acknowledge that their works are true works. Notice, it is THEY who say, and not Jesus who designates these as valid works whatsoever. Jesus Christ also cast them away from Himself, even as He did those in the Church of Sardis.

2. Watch

The Priest exhorts them to watchfulness, meaning to arouse from sleep, from disease, from death. This is why He first introduced Himself as King: “I am the One who has the seven angels in my right hand, and I will let them minister to you. I am the One that has the seven spirits of God and it lies within my power to send forth these spirits of God upon you.” He was saying here, even as He did in the epistle to the Ephesian Church, “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light” (Ephesians 5:14). Even though they were already dead, the Church of Sardis were still invited to rise up, shake themselves, resist the death that was upon them. Only in this way could their works come alive and be acceptable as a sacrifice unto God.

3. Strengthen

“...strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die.” The word *strengthen* means to turn about in the right direction. There was still some truth left among them, but the old truths were quickly dying out in their midst. If they would turn back to the old ways, the old truths, there was still some hope for them.

4. Works

“...for I have not found thy works perfect before God.” Since their works were dead, the Priest warns them that He is about to withdraw His Spirit from what small amount of living Truth they still had. When God withdraws Himself to this extent. His Word becomes a dead letter. Their works were already dead. Now they were about to lose the Spirit of Life and revelation from the remnants of Truth they still held.

After saying all this, the Priest makes one more plea. He stands before them, His hands outstretched, inviting the Church of Sardis to reconsider.

Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent...(Revelation 3:3).

There was no question about what they had received, for the Truth had passed down to them as a legacy from the beginning of the church age, but God was ready to take the Spirit and the life out of what they had. Now His last plea is, “Remember HOW you received it? You received it in the demonstration of the Spirit, in the quickening power of the Holy Ghost. It was no dead letter then, for it changed your life. Remember how thrilled you were? Remember the grace that moved in your heart? Remember the delight that was in your soul? Remember the love that went with it—the joy—the gratitude?”

We have the ability to remember when we are dead as well as when we are living. If our place is in hell, there is remembrance there. Although they are already dead, He tries to call them to remembrance. Remembering keeps us with the right spirit and attitude, for it generates gratitude of heart. Remembering takes us back to how we felt, acted, and thought when we received the Truth in the beginning, and it makes us feel humble. As we remember, we realize afresh the price Jesus paid—His life at Calvary. Remembering should push us down to our knees in love and gratitude before Him. No wonder Jesus Christ, the Priest, entreats, “Remember how you received...remember how you heard...don’t let go of it, but repent!”

Although Sardis refused to hear the message of the King and the Priest, they still had the message of the Prophet

to hear. If they failed to heed His promised blessings, they would surely hear and receive His judgments.

III. HE MINISTERS AS PROPHET

A. PROPHECIES JUDGMENT

Those in the Church of Sardis are still on the blessing side because they still have a bit of the Spirit of Life in the Word. Because there is still some revelation of the Truth in their midst, they are blessed of God, but their failure to repent causes the Prophet to move over to the judgment side.

Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee (Revelation 3:3).

He will come as a thief in the night to steal away His Spirit of Life and revelation of the Word. A thief comes silently, so silently that oftentimes we do not even know he has been there. Some ministers have trifled with the things of God until Jesus Christ has come like a thief and stolen the life and the revelation of the Word and they do not even realize it until it is too late. They are just like Samson who had life and power and blessing until God came and stole it away so quickly that he did not even know it was gone. There are Christians today who once loved to study the Word of God, drinking of its life and power, but because they have married themselves to the things of the world, they find themselves in a state similar to that of the Church of Sardis. They come back to that old precious Book, the Word of God, and it is a dead letter, a closed book. He will not share His life and revelation of the Word and the life and ecstasy of the Spirit with the Head of Death. One or the other has to go. Failure to repent, failure to overcome the Head of Death brings judgment. Quickly the Spirit of Life and revelation lifts and is gone.

When God does this, one becomes an apostate, classified among the ungodly who are destined for an even greater punishment in hell than the ordinary sinner who has never known the Truth.

B. PROPHECIES BLESSING

Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches (Revelation 3:4-6).

The appraisal is realistic, for the Prophet knows that only a very few will be able to stand against this Head of Death of fallen Lucifer. The problem began way back at the beginning, when the Church began to join herself in marriage union with her works, rather than marriage union with her Heavenly Bridegroom, Jesus Christ. And soon she opened herself to the Devil's priests (Nicolaitans), the Devil's prophets (Balaam) and teacher (Jezebel) with their devilish doctrines and practices. No wonder that the anointing of life and revelation lifted from the church, and death dominated the scene.

In spite of the death that was predominate in the church as a whole, a few had managed not to defile themselves, keeping their garments unspotted from the world. He promises a threefold blessing to those who overcome the Head of Death.

1. White Raiment

This is a garment of Light, of glory and beauty. White indicates its spotless purity, but more than that, the word is defined as radiated light. The garment is not a white robe or white linen in this case, but white raiment. The word *robe* means a long gown or garment, meaning one piece of clothing, whereas the word *raiment* means to put on inner garments, the putting on of various inner and outer pieces of clothing, like a vesture. The white robe is donned out in the Courtyard experience and has to do with salvation. The white raiment is acquired in the shoulder realm of the stature, found specifically at the Table of Shewbread and it pertains to reigning and ruling power. After ruling over one's own fleshly nature and learning how to come under the governmental rule of the Bridegroom, these

overcomers are then qualified to wear the white raiment which indicates their position of rulership in God's Kingdom. Before such a reward can be received, the Head of Death must be overcome. Only then will they receive their white raiment. Then will they have the blessed privilege of walking with Christ in the white raiment of comfort, glory, and honor.

2. Security

"I will not blot out his name out of the book of life..."

Jesus Christ possesses a book of life which is a register and roll of all those who have inherited eternal life and who have held on to His life and power of godliness in the midst of corrupt and evil times. Christ will not blot out the names of the chosen and faithful who have overcome the Head of Death. But those who have chosen the Head of Death, by their gross sins and open wickedness, will cause God to blot out their names.

3. Honor

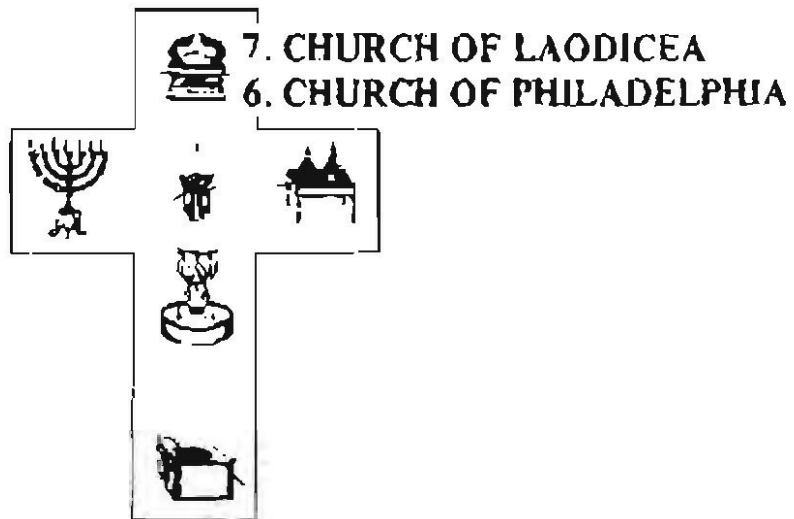
"...but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."

When the time arrives for God's chosen ones to stand before Him, Christ will produce the book of life and triumphantly confess those who were true and faithful before His Father and the angels. How great this honor and this reward will be when Jesus Christ loudly proclaims, "Behold, I and the children which God hath given me" (Hebrews 2:13).

The scene closes on the Church of Sardis with the customary appeal, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." This message also applies to you and me. Do we have an ear that is inclined toward Him? Do we hear what God's Spirit is saying here? How seriously do we heed His words?

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE CHURCH OF PHILADELPHIA (Revelation 3:7-13)



The position of the Philadelphia church is unique. In the Bible, Philadelphia is mentioned as the sixth church, and Laodicea is named as the seventh. When one looks at the drawing shown above, the eye sees instantly that the Laodicean church is above the church of Philadelphia. Yet in spite of the apparently contradictory elements, the Philadelphia church holds the highest and, therefore, most desirable realm of spiritual maturity in the stature of Jesus Christ. Since the Old Testament Tabernacle reveals in minute detail every aspect that can be found in the stature of Jesus Christ, the Living Tabernacle, we can expect to find in the Mosaic Tabernacle the principle that will alleviate all confusion concerning the exalted position of the Philadelphia church.

The highest and Most Holy Place in the Mosaic Tabernacle was occupied by the Ark of the Covenant which was actually two separate pieces of furniture (Exodus 25:10-22). The Ark itself was made up of shittim wood overlaid with pure gold. The wood speaks of the humanity of Jesus, and the gold speaks of His divinity. God commanded that certain holy things be placed inside the Ark. The writer of the book to the Hebrews mentions the things that filled the Ark.

And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant (Hebrews 9:3,4).

The covering for the Ark was called the Mercy Seat. It was completely separate from the Ark. The Mercy Seat contained no wood; it was made of pure gold. Beloved, God's mercy depends upon no flesh, not even the sinless flesh of His Son, Jesus Christ.

When the high priest entered the Holy of Holies, he could become acquainted with all the *external* aspects of the Ark, but in order to know the spiritual treasures hidden *inside* the Ark, he had to pass through the Mercy Seat, as it were, since the Ark's contents were beneath it.

In the natural marriage, it is possible for the wife to surrender her body without ever really giving herself to her husband. Although this type of marriage is never completely satisfying to either party, it does offer certain natural benefits to the wife, if the wife desires for her marriage to reach its fullest potential, then she must surrender inwardly to the headship of her husband. In this aspect spiritual marriage relationship is similar to the natural marriage. As we grow in spiritual stature up to the Philadelphia church realm, we get a taste of the outward marriage relationship. This measure of surrender and obedience brings the pleasures and blessings that go along with coming under the headship of our spiritual husband, Jesus Christ. Our lack of inward surrender makes it impossible for Jesus to open the Ark and reveal its hidden secrets to us. Patiently, He shows us our need for greater surrender and humility, but after experiencing the glory and exaltation of the outward marriage relationship. We may find it hard to humble ourselves. Spiritual pride takes us quickly from the Philadelphia church to the Laodicean church. We must overcome the same spiritual pride that caused the Laodicean church to say that she was rich and increased with goods and had need of nothing.

The Bridegroom desired that Laodicea humble herself so that He could share with her the holy secrets that were inside the Ark. By rejecting the humility of the Bridegroom, Laodicea let pride take her lower than the Bridegroom asked her to go. She became wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. Had it not been for the golden Mercy Seat that covered the Ark, all in the Laodicean church would have perished without having an opportunity to overcome the spiritual pride that filled their hearts. The mercy of God caused Jesus to stand outside the door knocking and saying, "...If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20). A single person, as it were, out of the Laodicean church may be the only one to hear the voice of her Beloved and open to Him. It is to this one who overcomes and enters into the fulness of marriage union with Him that He invites to examine the treasures found inside the Ark. It was because of the inward union entered into at the Ark of the Covenant, that God wrote the name of *wife* upon the Philadelphia church.

At the very beginning of her spiritual journey, Lucifer thrust his Head of Deceit at the espoused Bride, causing her to think that her works were more important than her first love. The church of Ephesus sinned by putting their love for the Bridegroom in subjection to their works. The Smyrna church, which was the Laver church, suffered the attack of the Head of Affliction and the Head of Blasphemy. In the Smyrna church, love ruled over works, while at Pergamos, the Head of Enchantment afflicted the church by making false doctrine sound enticing. If we keep putting our works above our love relationship with Jesus, eventually Satan places his throne right in the midst. At the church of Thyatira we find Jezebel propagating Satan's synagogue. The works at Ephesus were good works, but they were not in God's order. At Pergamos their works had begun to deteriorate into perverted works, a mingling together of true and false. The decadent progression continues at the Thyatira level. Now there is not only the Devil's prophets and the Devil's priests, but also the Devil's prophetess and teacher. At Sardis, the Head of Death afflicted the church. We must overcome all of these things before marriage union can take place. Overcome means to conquer, tread under foot. Spiritual warfare must take place before one can enter into marriage relationship with Jesus Christ. This same principle is emphasized in the Song of Solomon.

My beloved, spake, and said unto me. Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away...Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away...Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether (Song of Solomon 2:10-17).

The espoused Bride must come apart from the many activities of ministry. The Bridegroom calls her to the mountain of Bether, the place of separation and aloneness with Him. Only then, in her private prayer chamber, does she learn to keep love and works in the right order. Through separation unto the Bridegroom, the Bride's love relationship takes priority, and her works become secondary.

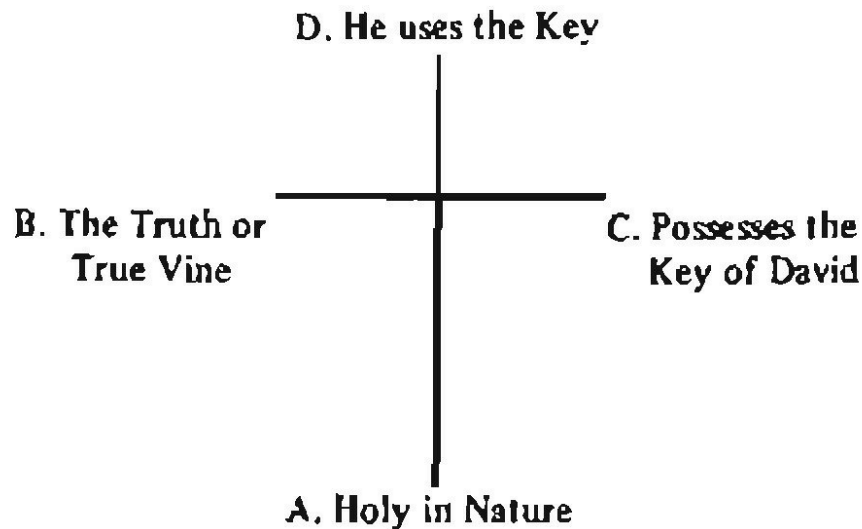
Now let us continue our journey up the stature of churches by studying the Church of Philadelphia (meaning brotherly love), which is the first church pertaining to the head realm. In each preceding church, we find the Resurrected Christ ministering as King, Priest, and as Prophet. First we will examine the powers, virtues, and dominion of Christ as King over the Philadelphia Church.

I. HE MINISTERS AS KING

And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth, and no man openeth; (Revelation

3:7).

This verse reveals a small stature concerning the possessions of the King.



A. HOLY IN NATURE

Our King is holy in nature; therefore, His rule and reign is also holy. Often we complain over things that come across our pathway because we do not realize the holiness of Jesus Christ our King. All of His power is based upon holiness. However, Lucifer's power is based upon a corrupt and perverted nature which can produce only cruelty. The same principle applies to human beings. Without the nature of Jesus and His holiness, power produces selfish cruelty, and it ultimately works for destruction. The King establishes holiness as the foundation of His power; then He proceeds to introduce some of that power.

God is holy and righteous in His dealings with us. We murmur and complain and accuse Him of being unjust until we learn that His motive toward us is pure. His guidance into fiery trials and temptations is a part of perfecting us, of bringing us into a closer union with Himself. Once we learn this truth, we take a great step upward in God. Instead of our fleshly cries "Why Lord? How long will this trial last?", we bow before Him in humble submission, fully convinced that ALL THINGS are working together for our good, hallelujah! Beloved, everything that happens to us is for our good and for God's glory.

B. THE TRUTH OR TRUE VINE

The revelation of the King continues by saying, "he that is true." Christ is all truth and, therefore, is incapable of error. Jesus Christ announced Himself as "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6).

We are sanctified by truth, for Jesus prayed to the Father, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). Christ is the Word (the Truth), and He promised to set us free by the truth—"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). The word *know* means to become one with, to be joined to (Adam *knew* his wife). In other words, the truth which we become one with, become joined to, sets us free. What a glorious privilege, beloved, to become one with the Truth, the living Word. It is the truth which we become one with that liberates us from our carnal nature with its sinful desires. What a freedom Truth brings as we join ourselves to it.

C. POSSESSES THE KEY OF DAVID

"He that hath the key of David..." The Lord Jesus Christ possesses a kingly key which opens the house of David and gives access to its treasures. The key of David differs from the keys revealed in chapter one where Christ is seen holding the keys of hell and of death (Revelation 1:18).

Let us stop to consider the implications of the key of David, since it is the key which unlocks the King's treasure house. David was an earthly king, ruling over an earthly kingdom. However, his rule is not yet finished, for he will be resurrected to rule the New Earth during the Perfect Age, or what is commonly called eternity. God promised King David an everlasting kingdom. To fulfill this promise, God will resurrect David and place him as king upon Israel's throne once again. The Scriptures confirming this truth are numerous, but here are a few that indicate the eternal nature of David's throne:

But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them (Jeremiah 30:9).

And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shall sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever (II Samuel 7:12,13).

And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever (II Samuel 7:16).

For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever: and thou, LORD, art become their God. And now, O LORD God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said (II Samuel 7:24,25).

Therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee: for thou, O Lord GOD, hast spoken it: and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed forever (II Samuel 7:29).

God will establish David's throne forever and He will resurrect King David to rule and reign upon that throne in the Perfect Age.

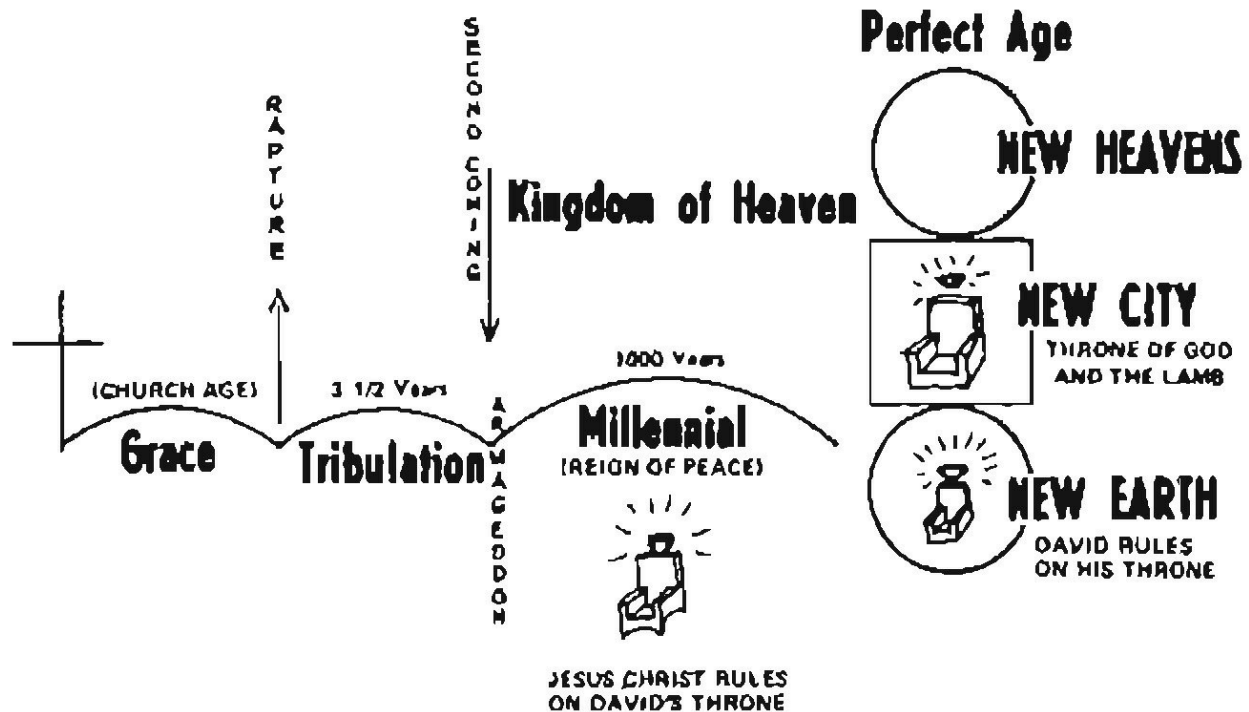
Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days (Hosea 3:5).

In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: (Amos 9:11).

And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd (Ezekiel 34:23).

And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them (Ezekiel 37:24).

God will fulfill every word that He has spoken. During the millennial reign Jesus Christ will be seated upon the throne of David in Jerusalem. Following this thousand year period, the New Heaven and the New Earth will be established, the old having been renovated by fire. Then King David will be resurrected from the dead and established to rule forever upon the throne in the earthly Jerusalem. Jesus Christ and His Bride rule on the earthly throne of David for only one thousand years; then they move to the New City. In eternity, the white raiment group will assist King David in ruling the New Earth. Those clothed in white robes dwell eternally in the New Heaven. We shall study these distinctions more thoroughly later.



The glorified King possesses the key of David. He has no need for this key in the New City, but because it is the key of David we understand that it pertains to the opening and shutting of things here on the earth. As King over all of His creation, Jesus Christ opens spiritual doors for us that no man is able to shut, but when He shuts these doors, then no man can open them. God used this principle by commanding the children of Israel to eat the Passover Lamb, a picture of the Crucified Christ, in the night season (Exodus 12:6-11). During the night season God opened the door, as it were, for Israel to lay hold of the Lamb with all the life and strength that it represented. In the morning He shut the door. Whatever portion of the Lamb remained was burnt with fire.

Spiritually speaking, this life is like one long night season which ends for us personally when we die or when the Lord raptures us out of this world. Our present life affords us our only opportunity to eat spiritually of God's Lamb. It is just in this life that we can experience the humiliation, the pain, and the suffering that Jesus Christ endured in order to be the spotless Lamb. The Crucified Christ left His footsteps of surrender, humility, and obedience in the world. As we walk through this life, we are privileged to partake of His surrender and humility, but on resurrection morning that privilege will cease. On resurrection morning the Crucified Lamb will be burnt as far as our being able to gain more spiritual stature. Whatever we fail to learn in our lifetime about the Crucified Christ will be lost forever to us personally.

Beloved, the door is open now. In addition to life being one long night, it is also made up of many individual night and day seasons spiritually, just as we have many natural nights and days. During spiritual night seasons, the light of God's presence seems to vanish. Our understanding is darkened. But if we learn to eat the complete portion of humility that God has for us in each particular night season, we will gain the necessary strength that we need to continue walking. While the door is open, let each of us take advantage of the individual night season through which we pass. Soon resurrection morning will be a reality, and the door to the Crucified Christ will be shut by the One who possesses the key of David.

Although the key of David refers primarily to an earthly rule, our spiritual King wishes to shut many doors of desire for worldly pleasures for us so that He may open the doors of His spiritual treasure house which holds treasures that aid us in growing in the spiritual stature of Jesus Christ.

Let us consider King Hezekiah, a king who ruled on the throne of David and who, therefore, possessed the key to the treasure house of David. Although Hezekiah erred greatly on the following occasion by foolishly displaying all the treasures and precious things of his house to the Babylonians, we can glean some good thoughts concerning the treasures themselves.

At that time Merodach-baladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah: for he had heard that he had been sick, and was recovered. And Hezekiah was glad of them, and shewed them the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour and all that was found in his treasures: There was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not (Isaiah 39:1,2).

Hezekiah's pride and love of exaltation caused him to display openly the wealth and power of his kingdom. He exemplifies what happens when Christians assume authority over the precious things that the Lord has given to them. Pride provokes them to take the key and open the Lord's treasures for *display purposes*, but they ultimately lose what they once possessed. So it was with King Hezekiah.

Then said Isaiah to Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD of hosts: Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left, saith the LORD. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and there shall be eunuchs In the palace of the king of Babylon (Isaiah 39:5-7).

King Jesus has the key of David in His hand with its power to open and shut. All the natural treasures found in Hezekiah's palace, house, and treasuries provide a picture of the riches that God has for us in the spiritual. Does the Word of God not say, "ALL scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is PROFITABLE for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:16,17)? If this portion is to be profitable to us personally by way of doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness, then we must draw from it the spiritual principles found therein.

The beauty of going on with Jesus, pressing in to know the marriage relationship of being made one with Him, is that He has many precious things in His treasure house that He will open unto us. Before turning to Deuteronomy 33 to see some of the precious things that the Bridegroom opens to His Bride, let us consider, by way of background, God's positioning of the twelve tribes of Israel around the Tabernacle in their wilderness journey.

Notice particularly the west side, the head realm side, where the Ark of the Covenant was found. Here camped the tribes of Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh—the latter two tribes issued from the tribe of Joseph. Remember how Joseph’s brethren sought to rid themselves of him by selling him into slavery? God intervened, however, and Joseph became a prince in Egypt. No one can hinder the purposes of God in our lives. If we endure the times of humiliation and slavery. God will bring us up into new ruling and reigning power. Although Ephraim was younger than his brother Manasseh, he was the captain on the west side, taking the lead over Benjamin and Manasseh. We need to understand this in order to appreciate the prophecy that Moses gave to Joseph and which was fulfilled through Joseph’s sons Ephraim and Manasseh.

And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the LORD be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath. And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, And for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, And for the precious things of the earth and fulness thereof, and for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush: let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren (Deuteronomy 33:13-16).

These precious things in the natural are pictures of the precious things in the spiritual that our Glorified King will open to us with the key of David.

1. Of Heaven

“...for the precious things of heaven, for the dew...” (Deuteronomy 33). Jesus, the master-teacher, utilized natural things to teach spiritual truths. Natural birth illustrates our spiritual birth, for example. In describing Himself, Jesus used such familiar objects as the shepherd and his sheep, the door, the bread, the water, and the wine. The principle of conveying spiritual understanding through natural pictures is declared plainly in Romans 1:20. “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.” The visible works of creation declare the power and divinity of the invisible Creator.

In the natural God sends rain and moisture from heaven. Rain is precious because it brings fruitfulness. God likens His Word to water because it brings fruitfulness into otherwise barren lives.

Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass (Deuteronomy 32:1,2).

Natural	Spiritual
Rain.	Word, Spirit
Drops.	Doctrine
Dew.	Reproof
Small Rain.	Correction
Showers.	Instruction in Righteousness

When the King uses the key of David to open the treasure house of the Bridegroom, He opens the blessedness of fruitfulness. He sends showers of blessing from heaven. Although great dearth may be around about us, our King is able to open His treasure house and supply all of our needs because He possesses the key. Certainly we have

experienced the blessing of His spiritual rain upon our dry earth. In answer to the prayer of faith, the Lord has also supplied the natural rain in the midst of dreadful drought. In the natural and in the spiritual, rain is a precious thing of heaven, May we never lose sight of He who holds the key of David, nor ever fail to appreciate the rain of the Spirit and the Word that He so faithfully sends.

2. The Deep

“...and for the deep that coucheth beneath...” (Deuteronomy 33:13). As we think of the deep in the natural, we think of the springs that bubble up from God’s great storehouse of water within the depths of the earth. When God sent the flood upon the earth in Noah’s day, the rain fell in a mighty deluge from the heavens, and the fountains of the deep were broken up to release their waters. In the spiritual sense, springs speak of humility (coming forth from the low place), and the wells of water represent life with its satisfactions.

Jesus demonstrated this very truth to the woman of Samaria when He asked her for a drink. She was amazed that He, being a Jew, would ask of her water, for the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans.

Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee. Give me to drink: thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water...Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw (John 4:10-15).

What a precious privilege to come to our King who holds in His hands the key of David, which enables Him to open up the springs of humility and the wells of satisfaction to us. When we are disgruntled or weary of life, we should call upon our Heavenly Bridegroom so that He may open up the wells of satisfaction. Cry out “Lord, I am thirsty and I want to be filled.” We do not thirst for the things of this world if we have been drinking at His wells of satisfaction. Sometimes we forget where our satisfying portion is found. So to remind us, He crowds us into a corner where we find only disappointment and disillusionment in our circumstances—people fail us, things go wrong, pleasures taste flat; we are surrounded by our frustrations and loneliness. Our Beloved plans all of this so that we will turn back to His springs of humility and His wells of satisfaction. He has blessings from the deep—life and satisfaction. If we will drink of His water, He guarantees “you will never thirst again.”

3. The Sun

“And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun...” (Deuteronomy 33:14). The sun also brings forth precious fruits for the treasure house of the King. Since Christ holds the key of David, He has access to these precious things and can unlock them to us. The sun speaks of the day season, the Shekinah glory of God, the mature stature of the Bride of Christ. It is also a picture of the full glory of the Resurrected Christ. In speaking of the differing degrees of resurrection glory in I Corinthians 15:41, Paul refers to the highest realm of glory as the sun glory. Our King has precious fruits for us which are brought forth by the sun glory.

In the natural realm we realize the important role that the sun plays in the ripening of fruits. Sun-ripened fruit tastes sweeter than fruit that is picked before the sun shines on it sufficiently. Likewise, there are sweet spiritual fruits of love and joy that are brought forth by the sun glory of the Resurrected Christ. Knowing that the sun symbolizes the highest realm of resurrected glory and of spiritual stature (which the Bride attains), we look with interest on the fact that these very treasures of fruit are found in the New City. The Tree of Life is fruitful enough to delight and satisfy any heart for all eternity.

Only the Bride of Christ will dwell with God and the Lamb in the New City in eternity. Chapters 21 and 22 of Revelation describe the New Jerusalem in detail, but at this point we are especially interested in the fruit found there.

And he shewed me a puce river of water of life; clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations (Revelation 22:1,2).

The Tree of Life has twelve spiritual fruits, and it yields its fruit every month. The Bible gives correlating Scriptures that explain the significance of these twelve fruits. In Galatians 5:22,23, Paul lists nine of them: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. The Song of Solomon gives the remaining three fruits: the nuts of sharing, the vine of surrender (Song of Solomon 6:11), and the figs of sincerity (Song of Solomon 2:13).

Fabulous feasting awaits the Bride of Christ throughout all eternity. Each month she will feast upon a new fruit. We have a taste of this privilege now. As we walk on with the Lord, He brings us into various stages of growth and into different spiritual dispensations. Sometimes God has us on a “month of love” wherein we partake of His love in a singular fashion, or perhaps He blesses us with love through our fellowmen. Perhaps then we move on to a special time of joy or peace; while later God brings us into a period of faith or longsuffering. Sometimes we may experience a month of the vine which symbolizes the surrender and obedience of Jesus Christ as He yielded Himself to die on the cross. The blood of the grape typifies the shed Blood of Jesus. We must partake of this fruit also. These all are the fruits of the Spirit which nourish and sustain the Bride of Christ on her earthly journey. Throughout eternity the same fruits shall continue to satisfy her. The King, who holds the key of David, must open to us the fruits that are brought forth by the sun.

The sun also represents glory. In Psalm 149:5 we read, “Let the saints be joyful in glory....” As saints of God we should be acquainted with this glory, for our King has the key of David. The government is upon His shoulders, and He can unlock the treasures, the precious fruits brought forth by the sun. Ezekiel projects an interesting thought concerning the Lord’s glory.

And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spoke (Ezekiel 1:27,28).

Ezekiel was seeing a vision of the LORD’S glory. Notice particularly the statement “from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward.” From these words we understand that the LORD’S glory is divided into two parts—upward glory and downward glory. The upward glory represents the glory which comes with exaltation, or resurrection life, or the day season, or the in pasture.* The downward glory symbolizes the humiliation, or the crucifixion, or the night season, or the out pasture. Both have to do with glory. They are similar, yet they differ. As we continue to press on to know Him, we learn to know each of these realms of glory. As we mature in stature, it matters little whether we are experiencing the upward or the downward glory, for each is glorious.

4. The Moon

“...and for the precious things put forth by the moon” (Deuteronomy 33:14). We have already seen that the King loosens precious things for us in the day season, the time of the sun, the upward glory experiences. He also loosens precious things that are produced only by the night season, the time of the moon. It is easy for saints to be joyful while experiencing the upward glory, for the sun is shining brightly, and God obviously is blessing. It is another thing, however, when we sit enveloped only by the light of the moon. It is humiliating to be forced to walk with little light spiritually. Yet it is possible to be joyful in this realm also. The Hebrew word for *glory* in Psalm 149:5 is the same word used in Ezekiel 1:27,28. If we can glory with joy in the upward glory, we can also do so in the downward glory.

It is a scientific fact that plants grow in the night season. The sun ripens the fruit, but there will be no fruit if there is no night season during which the plant can grow. As the sun shines upon the leaves, the plant manufactures chlorophyll. Then during the night season the chlorophyll is changed into grape sugar. In the night season the sweetness is sent to the whole plant so that the roots, the trunk, the branches, and even the fruit can grow.

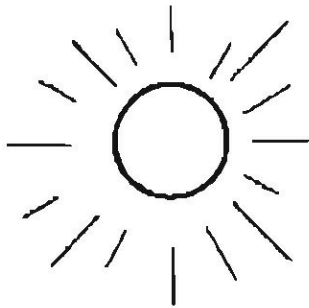
A Christian has to be sincere to pray, “Lord, open to me the precious things of the moon.” We all draw back from suffering and from the dark experiences of life, yet when our desire to know Him is great enough, we will welcome the season of the moon in our lives. It means something to go on for God, but the prize is worth any price!

Remember, it still takes the key of David to open these treasures to us. Jesus Christ is the King and He holds the

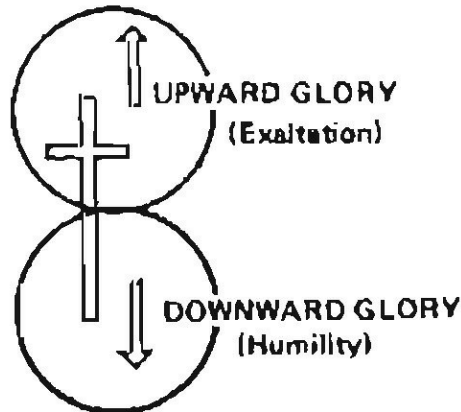
key. The government is upon His shoulders and He alone can unlock the upward glory of the sun, or unlock the downward glory of the moon. The glory is present both in exaltation and in humiliation. The Psalmist continues to exhort us saying “let them sing aloud upon their beds (Psalm 149:5). There is joy, victory, and triumph regardless of which degree of glory is shining upon us.

In the following illustration we see the relationship between the upward glory and the day season and the downward glory and the night season.

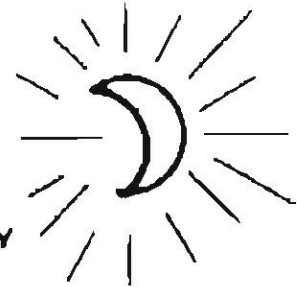
RESURRECTED CHRIST



SUN GLORY
Day Season
Upward Glory
Fruits



CRUCIFIED CHRIST



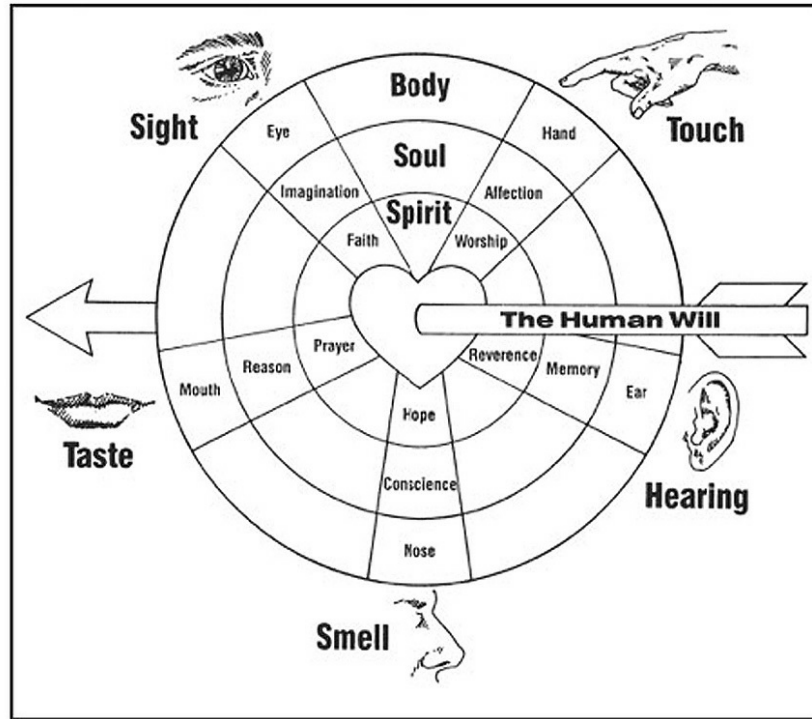
MOON GLORY
Night Season
Downward Glory
Fruits

5. The Mountains and the Hills

“And for the chief things of the ancient mountains and for the precious things of the lasting hills” (Deuteronomy 33:15). The study of the Song of Solomon gives the meaning of the mountains and the hills when it refers to the *mountains* of myrrh and the *hills* of frankincense. Myrrh speaks of suffering and humility, and frankincense is a type of faith. Our precious Bridegroom, the King, has the key that will unlock higher realms of humility and higher realms of faith. Notice, it takes mountains of humility to overcome the stature of flesh in us, but it takes only hills of faith. Even a small mustard seed of faith is powerful enough to move mountains of obstacles and oppositions to help us go on for God.

6. The Earth

“And for the precious things of the earth and fulness thereof, and for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush..,” (Deuteronomy 33:16). There are precious things that can come forth even from our personal earth. Man is a threefold being, created in the likeness and image of God, and as such, is body, soul, and spirit. James 3:6 refers to the “course of man’s being” which means a wheel. If we were to diagram the wheel of man’s being it would look like this:



The will of God does not call for the destruction of man's body, soul (mind), or his spirit. In fact, the very opposite is true, for God has placed some precious things in our earth. As we learn to yield ourselves to God's control, bringing our will under the command of the Word and the direction of the Spirit, He blesses and uses these precious things. He can use our natural gifts and abilities after they are sanctified and consecrated unto Him. He can use our soul with its capacities of imagination, affection, memory, conscience, and reason. He can utilize our natural capacities of the spirit evidenced by our faith, worship, reverence, hope, and prayer. These are precious things out of our earth that God will use if we just let them be filled with God. A bit of dust is of little value in itself, but precious things will come out of it if the right seed is planted there. The seed will grow if it receives the right amount of water and if the sun is permitted to shine upon it.

Reference is also made to "the good will of him that dwelt in the bush." Before the Shekinah glory of God came to dwell over the Mercy Seat in the Tabernacle, Moses had a vision of the dwelling glory in the bush out in the wilderness (Exodus 3). God could have revealed the fiery glory of His dwelling presence in a much more spectacular manner. He had all of the earth at His disposal, yet He chose to abide in an insignificant little bush, one that doubtless resembled countless other bushes on the desert. That particular bush had no prior claim to glory. The bush possessed no outstanding qualities that would have drawn Moses' attention until God's dwelling glory came to rest upon it. Even then the glory and the power to burn did not belong to the bush; it belonged to the God who dwelt in the bush.

Beloved, God's humility staggers the human mind. At first glance we might think that dwelling in a scrubby little bush out on the backside of the desert would be the ultimate in humility, but if we stop to consider that the bush never transgressed against its creator or rebelled against His headship and authority, then we realize how much greater humility God demonstrates when He comes to dwell in a human heart. The Apostle Paul said:

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us (II Corinthians 4:6,7).

God's dwelling glory was experienced in the earth. It first dwelt in the bush, then later in the cloud that rested upon the Mercy Seat in the Tabernacle. Now, as we pass through our wilderness journey in this earth, we can also know the precious privilege of having God's dwelling glory possess our earthen vessels. Many precious things of the earth await those who know their King. He holds the key of David which He alone can use to unlock the treasure

house. Let us seek to become better acquainted with the Bridegroom who has the power to open and close many things unto us.

Thus far we have seen the holiness of the nature of the King. We recognize that He is the True Vine, the Truth, and that He stands with the key of David in His resurrected hand ready to rule over our earth. If we overcome the world, the flesh, and the Devil, attaining to the head realm stature of the Bride, we will return with the Glorified Christ in His second coming and reign with Him on the earth. The Bride will have access to the key of David to assist her Bridegroom in His millennial reign upon the earth.

D. HE USES THE KEY

...he that openeth, and no man shutteth: and shutteth, and no man Openeth; (Revelation 3:7).

Jesus not only holds the key of David, He also uses it. In His hand lies the power to open or shut when He chooses. When He opens a door, no man can shut it, When He closes a door, no power can pry it open again. What great confidence this should create in us. If we are walking under His divine Headship, we have nothing to fear from man or from the spirit world. Did Jesus not say a similar thing to Peter “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18)? We have a King that possesses the key of David (which has to do with earthly rule), and He uses it to open and shut many things unto us.

II. HE MINISTERS AS PRIEST

It was the duty and responsibility of the Priest in the Old Testament Tabernacle to inspect the sacrifice. When the sacrifice was a clean and acceptable one, without spot or blemish, then it was offered up and received by God. The words *I know* in Revelation 3:8 indicate that the Priest is speaking and is ready to inspect the sacrifice offered by the Philadelphia church.

I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name (Revelation 3:8).

The High Priest, Jesus Christ, offers no criticism as far as her works are concerned because love is ruling over her works, The Philadelphia church and the Smyrna church were the only two churches out of the seven that kept their works subordinate to their love relationship with the Lord, Philadelphia kept her first love. Works that issue out of marriage relationship, the first love of Jesus Christ, are going to be pure works, works wrought by His will and in His way. This was true of the Philadelphia church, and because she kept her works under subjection to her love for Him, Jesus said that He would set before her an open door—an open door into the Bridal Chamber.

A. AN OPEN DOOR

Some teach that this open door characterized the “brotherly love” church period. Dispensationally speaking, this refers to the time when a great many missionaries went out with the Gospel into all the world. The open door may mean brotherly love when we have church history in mind, but viewing it from the aspect of personal growth in the stature of Christ, we see that it means much more. There is an open door into the King’s chamber, into that oneness of relationship with the King, which is open to those who have reached the head realm of spiritual maturation. Some people attempt to shut this door by rejecting the Bride’s message. But this is a revealed way, and once God opens a heart to the revelation of the prize of being in the Bride of Jesus Christ, nothing can detour that individual. We receive comfort from the Priest’s declaration which says that no man can shut the marriage door, no man can hinder us, no outside forces can stop us short of the prize.

Once the marriage union has taken place (so beautifully set forth in Song of Solomon chapter four), then the Bridegroom flings open wide the gates of her garden (the Bride’s heart), and He expects her to minister the substance that He has laid up within her. Chapter five begins with the satisfaction of the Bridegroom which He evidences when He invites His friends “...Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.” Later in chapter seven, we find the Bride and the Bridegroom jointly ministering:

Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages. Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth... (Song of Solomon 7:11,12).

How beautiful the words “Let us go forth” reveal a joint ministry. In the beginning of our journey with Jesus, we tend to boss our spiritual service. We busily engage in working “for Him,” our main emphasis being ministry. But, praise His lovely Name, as we press on and fall in love with Him, we begin to realize that the most important thing in this life is to know Jesus Christ. From that living union with Him flows ministry. The Bride’s greatest ministry is not in this life. Her greatest ministry will be fulfilled during the Millennial reign of Christ and during the Perfect Age. The gates of the New City will never be closed because throughout eternity Jesus Christ will be ministering through her gates. Rest assured that our Bridegroom will help us fulfill our ministry now, as well, if we maintain the right relationship with Him.

B. LITTLE STRENGTH

“...for thou hast a little strength...” In the original Greek this verse reads “thy strength is small.” It seems strange, does it not, that after having attained such stature of growth, the Philadelphia church is seen as having small strength. The small strength in this case refers to the stature of the fleshly man and not to her spiritual stature. In order to reach the head realm of spiritual growth, our fleshly strength must become small. Our Pride of Revelation must diminish; our Pride of Redemption must diminish; and our Pride of Satisfaction must diminish. When this happens, God sets the open door to marriage relationship before us just as He did for the Philadelphia church.

The Apostle Paul exemplifies this principle in II Corinthians where he acknowledges the same smallness of strength that is mentioned in connection with the Philadelphia church. Let us consider some facts about the “thorn” that troubled Paul.

It is not expedient for me to doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities. For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth; but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me. And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure (II Corinthians 12:1-7).

1. Reason for the Thorn

Paul is speaking of the visions and revelation of the Lord that he received while caught up into paradise where he heard words not lawful for a man to utter. The word *revelations* means to take off the lid or the cover. While Paul was caught up into glory, God had taken the cover off, as it were, giving Paul the privilege to look into the mysteries and the secret things of God. The abundance of such revelation is very exalting; therefore, God gave Paul a thorn in the flesh to keep him humble. God brought him to this place of small strength, lest he become puffed up. A thorn has tremendous pricking power-power to keep the Apostle deflated in spite of the fantastic revelations God had set before him. This was true with the church of Philadelphia. She stood before the open door into the throne room of God. She stood on the threshold of the glory of the King’s treasures. How needful it was that she be made aware of her nothingness in herself—of her small strength.

2. Place of the Thorn

The thorn was in Paul’s flesh. It was not a case of imagination or mental torment, because this affliction touched his body with suffering.

3. Identity of the Thorn

The thorn was a messenger of Satan sent to buffet Paul in his flesh. The word *buffet* means to rap with the fist, to be pounded, hit. The beating which Paul took in his flesh, through Satan's messenger, beat him down to such small strength that Paul could walk through the open door into the marriage chamber.

We fail to realize how independent we really are. Often we gird ourselves with our own desires and are motivated by them. We perform most of our activities without consulting the Lord until He permits the Devil to come against us to buffet us. Actually, the Lord is trying to push us into a place of small strength, a place where we will acknowledge "Dear Lord, I don't know how to go out or how to come in. I cannot redeem anything. I am helpless here at the foot of Your cross." How wonderful it is to come to the place of small strength, for there we find the open door into the glory and the strength of the Lord.

4. Prayer Concerning the Thorn

For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong (II Corinthians 12:8-10).

a. Besought

In the beginning we are all like Paul. Failing to understand God's motive for bringing us to the place of small strength, we begin to beseech God for deliverance when a thorn in the flesh buffets us. Three times Paul prayed that the Lord would remove his thorn in the flesh, because of the lack of strength his condition displayed before others, making him appear too weak to overcome his enemy. After all, was he not the great apostle to the Gentiles? Had he not served the Lord faithfully for a number of years? What would be the reaction of all those to whom he had preached and written his epistles? Paul was embarrassed to find himself in the place of little strength, unable to overcome the adversary. We all resent the position of humility and naturally cry out for deliverance.

b. Gave Word to Him

Paul sought the Lord three times, asking for deliverance in order to be restored to his usual strength, but the Lord spoke, promising him strength to continue on in his small strength. Paul learned the secret of small strength—that it is God's strength which is made perfect in our weakness. Surely we do not learn this lesson at one time, but if we can only grasp this principle, we can put it to good use in every situation of life.

Let us take an example of this. What can we really do when we see someone very dear backslide on God? There is only one thing to do, and that is to get down on our knees before the Lord and say "My strength is small. I cannot reach that person's will, I cannot touch his heart. I cannot convince that mind. I am as helpless as a newborn babe." After we confess the smallness of our strength, God will open a door into His strength. When His anointing begins to move upon us, we receive strength physically and spiritually. Then what a joy it is to walk through the door of the King into the glory of His presence where we cry out our need before Him. As we pray and intercede over a loved one, we can finally commit him into God's hands. Then wonderful relief comes, for the burden is lifted. Then, lo and behold, the Lord redeems the situation. The individual repents and finds his way back to God. If the person had come because of our wise counseling, or because of our pleadings, or because of our threatenings, it would appear to be our own achievement. But when our strength is small, God receives the glory for His work of redemption.

The principle of "small strength" applies when we are seeking to overcome a particular area of our carnal nature. We must get small within ourselves, recognizing that we are totally incapable of coping with it. "Jesus, I am unable to overcome in my own strength. This flesh is too big for me to conquer, so I depend upon You." How precious and real it is to "become small on the inside" so that we can hear the voice of the Priest say, "I see thy works. I have set an open door before you. March on into the King's throne room and receive the reigning power that you need over your flesh." Pride produces confidence in the strength of our own ability to conquer. Therefore, God sometimes allows all of our fleshly efforts to overcome the depraved desires of our carnal heart to fall flat. Through failure we are reduced to small strength; we must admit that flesh cannot conquer flesh. In that position of weakness, we

become strong to trust Him, hallelujah! Oh, the wondrous mercy of God to patiently deal with us by creating situations in life that bring us low at His feet in “little strength.”

Paul was told “My strength is made perfect in weakness.” This means that God’s strength is brought to maturity in our weakness. This weakness is not in the spiritual man, for there is no sin or weakness in the spiritual man. He is speaking about our fleshly man which He seeks to bring down into smallness of strength. As soon as we realize the nothingness in ourselves, then the strength of the Lord takes over. What a great secret God gave to Paul that day and to us also.

c. Glory

“...Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me...” (II Corinthians 12:9). We need to practice the principle of glorying in our infirmities. What are our normal reactions to our “small strength” experiences? Do we become disheartened and want to quit? Or do we acknowledge the truth and humble ourselves before the Lord, waiting for Him to manifest His strength? Once we are aware of this secret, we can do as the Apostle Paul. We can glory in our small strength. We can say, “Lord. I know that You have an open door. I know there is a new throne room experience of the King awaiting me. I glory in my infirmities—in my weaknesses.”

d. Pleasure

The ability to take pleasure in infirmities is contrary to the way of the flesh. Unless we understand the spiritual principles here, we find it hard to believe Paul’s sincerity. Paul said, “Therefore...” (as a result of praying three times, then receiving the Lord’s Word, and learning to glory in small strength) “I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong” (II Corinthians 12:10). Paul made the surrender to stay in the position of small strength in order to wait for the perfect strength of the Lord. He began to take pleasure in his weaknesses. The strength to take pleasure in weakness is found in the river that flows out from under the throne of God. Spiritual babes weep bitter tears when they face humiliating circumstances, whereas those who have grown enough to drink from God’s river of pleasure of humility take exquisite joy in the infirmities, reproaches, and humiliations that come into their lives. The pleasure of humility brings a degree of thrill and delight to the soul that is incomparable to other pleasures.

The pleasure of humility is such a great principle that it is worthy of further examination. Paul designates five areas in which we can experience the pleasure of humility.

1) Infirmities

In the Greek, *infirmities* means feebleness of body and mind, to be sick, to be frail, to have disease. It is difficult to suffer physical infirmities because they try our patience and faith. It is equally trying to be feeble and afflicted in mind. We suffer many attacks in the mental realm that are most painful to bear. Infirmities present an opportunity to confess our small strength and acknowledge our need, knowing that His grace is sufficient. His grace enables us to glory in the humble position of little strength.

2) Reproaches

The word *reproach* means to be insolent, to be overbearing, to insult, to give an injury, to harm, to hurt, to accuse, to blame, to rebuke, to censor, to scorn.

People reproached Jesus during His life on this earth, and we certainly share similar experiences. It is most difficult to take pleasure in the reproaches of people, but if we are sincere in our desire to go through the door of the King, and if we really want the Priest to open that door to us, we will humble ourselves and bear the reproach. It is possible, through God’s grace, to even take pleasure in reproaches for Jesus’ sake.

3) Necessities

Necessities speak of constraint. We usually do not mind doing the things that we choose to do, but we resent doing the things that we are forced to do. Paul learned to take pleasure even in the necessities that were pressed upon

him, and so can we.

4) Persecutions

The word *persecutions* means to pursue, to follow, and to press forward. The Bible says that the godly will suffer persecution, so persecutions are not foreign to our expectations. We can do more than bear persecutions, we can learn to rejoice and take pleasure in them. We know that as we suffer these things glory awaits us if we will humble ourselves and acknowledge our small strength.

5) Distresses

Distress means narrow room, a narrow place, a place of calamity. Paul said, “I learned to take pleasure in all these things—even in my distresses.” Paul suffered many things for the Gospel’s sake, so he had ample opportunity to put into practice the truth that he preached. In II Corinthians 11:22-28 Paul lists some of his experiences which include the following:

In labours more abundant
In stripes above measure
In prisons more frequent
In death oft
Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one
Thrice beaten with rods
Once stoned
Thrice suffered shipwreck
A night and a day in the deep
In journeyed often
In perils of waters
In perils of robbers
In perils by mine own countrymen
In perils by the heathen
In perils in the city
In perils in the wilderness
In perils in the sea
In perils among false brethren
In weariness and painfulness
In watchings often
In hunger and thirst
In fastings often
In cold and nakedness
And beside those things, the care of all the churches

Suffering these problems the Apostle Paul could still say “I take pleasure in all this, for I am suffering these things for Jesus’ sake, and I have learned that when I am weak, then I am strong in His strength” (II Corinthians 12:10).

C. KEPT MY WORD

Notice the respect and the love that the Philadelphia church has for the Word of God. The words, “Thou hast kept my word,” convey the idea that “You have meditated and pondered the Word in your heart until it has become a part of you, and it has brought you up in stature to the place of spiritual maturity.” Those who grow up into the head realm of spiritual stature always manifest a great love for the Word of God; it becomes their main theme, their guide, their delight.

D. NOT DENIED MY NAME

Name means nature, The Philadelphia church possessed not only the stature of the Word, but they also manifested the nature of Jesus. Their actions and conduct had not betrayed nor denied His Name, His nature. The word *deny* means to reject, to contradict, to disavow, to refuse. In the foundation of the stature we find blood, fire, and water which through the Name of Jesus, are gifts to all believers. For example, salvation, the forgiveness of sin with its penalty of death and hell, is ours through faith in the Blood and Name of Jesus Christ. The Baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire is ours through faith in the Name of Jesus. At the Laver, we experience the Name, Death, and Life of Jesus. The Philadelphia church held on to all of the Name that is found in the courtyard. Then she moved up to the Altar of Incense, the place of prayer, where she entered into intercession and travail through the Name of Jesus. After this, she learned to walk in the light of wisdom from the Golden Candlestick and to eat the governmental bread at the Table of Shewbread. It took all of these spiritual experiences to bring the Philadelphia church up to the head realm into marriage relationship with the Heavenly Bridegroom. The stature of Jesus Christ, as pictured in the Old Testament Tabernacle, is the revealed will of God for all believers. The Name of Jesus (nature, character, authority) is revealed around His will. All the way up the spiritual stature, we find a progressive revelation of His Name—His nature. His Name had brought the Philadelphia church to the head realm, and now she must hold on to that Name.

III. HE MINISTERS AS PROPHET

We have seen the ministry of Jesus Christ as King and as Priest. Now He comes forth as Prophet, prophesying both judgment and blessing. The Philadelphia church suffered the attack of the same two heads that the Smyrna church suffered, namely: the Head of Affliction and the Head of Blasphemy. Although she is a head realm church, she is still being assailed by the Heads of fallen Lucifer. Besides this, she had to overcome a particular class of enemies—those “...which say that they are Jews, and are not” (Revelation 3:9). God’s Word tells us that a true Jew is one who has received circumcision inwardly, not just outwardly. True circumcision (to curtail the flesh) is of the heart. Some in the Philadelphia church made great profession, trying to pass themselves off as being spiritual, but they were living a lie. God’s spiritual Philadelphia church must contend not only with spiritual pride in the lives of others around about her, but she must also overcome this same enemy within her own heart. Our carnal nature tries to pass itself off as truly spiritual, calling itself a “spiritual Jew,” claiming to be circumcised, when it is still uncircumcised flesh.

A. PROPHECIES JUDGMENT ON ENEMIES

Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie: behold. I will make them to come and worship before loved thee (Revelation 3:9).

The Prophet prophesies judgment against her enemies, whose guilt is great. Have they not seen the witness of the Philadelphia church as she demonstrated her love, her good works, her power, and her reality? Even though the Bridegroom has been in their very midst, still they have chosen to reject and to persecute His Bride; therefore, fourfold judgment is spoken against them.

1. Make Them to Come

It will be a great humiliation for these professing Jews to come to the Bride and acknowledge the truth. The day is coming when the truth shall be openly manifested, and the empty professors who plagued and persecuted the Bride will be exposed as they really are in the presence of the Bride herself.

2. Worship

“...I will make them to come and worship before thy feet...” (Revelation 3:9). In Scripture, God uses the natural marriage relationship to depict a oneness of relationship (two being made as one). The same thought is implied in the union between the Heavenly Bridegroom and His Bride. The Prophet prophesies of the time when the enemies of the Bride will be compelled to bow in worship before her feet. They will not worship a creature, as such, but instead

will worship the Truth that is resident within the Bride of Christ. Since Christ is worthy of worship, the Bride, because of her union with Him, must also share the veneration afforded Him.

3. Bow

Every living creature will bow down and acknowledge the Truth sooner or later. We can choose to bow our hearts and wills now, or else we will be forced to bow later. Not even those in hell escape from bowing their knee to God. How much better it is to voluntarily praise and worship God now than to spend eternity in the Lake of Fire where all will be forced to divulge the truth and acknowledge that Jesus Christ is KING of kings and LORD of lords.

4. Know

“...and to know that I have loved thee.” Scoffers may laugh the Bride to scorn now, but the time will come when the Lord will cause them to know that there is such a prize as being in the Bride of Christ. They will have to concede that there is such a thing as being married to Jesus Christ, When the Bridegroom acknowledges His Bride at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, all will know of His love for her.

Let the enemies rage, let them mock and scorn. Their ridicule does not affect or change the truth that marriage relationship awaits those who attain the level in spiritual growth of the Philadelphia church.

B. PROPHECIES BLESSING

Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown (Revelation 3:10,11).

1. Keep

Jesus promised to keep the Philadelphia church from the tribulation period because she had kept the “word of His patience.” The Word reveals the exemplary patience of Christ in all of His sufferings for man. In order to keep His Father’s Word of redemption, Jesus Christ suffered greater humiliation and pain than it is possible for us to know or appreciate this side of eternity. Yet He never rebelled against the Father’s will for His life. Jesus never said “Father, I don’t mind going to the cross, but do I have to be called a devil by that bunch of self-righteous Pharisees? Father, I don’t mind dying, but is it necessary for me to take all of this abuse? They are lying against me, spitting on me, forcing thorns into my brow, and beating my back. I am in agony. Is it necessary for me to spend my last moments listening to these two thieves argue between themselves about whether I am guilty or innocent? Can’t I die for the sins of the world in peace?” No such conversation came from Jesus. He patiently accepted every suffering that went along with keeping the Word of God. Jesus is still waiting patiently for the Father to avenge Him and exalt Him to the eternal position of glory and honor that He gained during His earthly journey.

Every man comes into this world with the mark of pride upon his heart and mind. Even after hearing the Word of Life and accepting Jesus Christ into our heart, we still, in many ways, are repulsed by humility. It takes time for God to conform us into the image of Christ by engraving the thoughts of humility upon the fleshly tables of our heart. Many sufferings will come to us as we follow the footsteps of humility that Jesus walked all the days of His life. But, if we keep His Word, we will find the patience that it contains. We will cease to strive against circumstances that God deems necessary for our spiritual growth.

True, suffering comes along with keeping His Word, but after the suffering comes the exaltation. God’s law is forever established; His law says that we suffer first, and then we reign. Before exaltation comes suffering. God’s Word will try our patience, for the suffering that results from our trials proves the sincerity of our desire and the determination of our purpose. If we really want the Word of God, we will patiently press through the period of suffering in order to attain the exaltation that the Word brings. The Philadelphia church did this. She had kept the Word of His patience, proving the sincerity of her desire to be in the Bride of Christ.

Because she has kept His Word, Jesus promises to keep her “from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth” (Revelation 3:10). The hour of temptation is the tribulation period, the time when God allows the anti-Christ to arise and try the whole world to see who will walk after God and

who will walk after the anti-Christ. He will keep those of the Philadelphia church by catching them away in the rapture of the overcoming saints, and thus they escape the Great Tribulation that shall come upon all the world. At the rapture the dead shall be raised first. All the saints of past ages, who during their lifetime grew to the Philadelphia level of spiritual stature, will be resurrected in the degree of sun glory. The resurrected overcomers who gained less spiritual stature will be clothed accordingly. The overcomers who are alive at His coming will be caught away, clothed with their particular degree of glory, forever to be with the Lord. All overcomers from the beginning of time, who have faithfully walked according to the light that they possessed, will be raptured at His secret coming in the air. They will be clothed with whatever degree of glory that they attained during their earthly journey. The whole wedding party will be present at the wedding—the guests, the friends, the relatives, the queens, the concubines, the bridesmaids (virgins), the best man, and of course, the Bride.

2. Come Quickly

In so many words, the Prophet said “Hold on to what you have attained, for I am coming quickly and will take you through the open door into the marriage chamber. You have come into the head realm and have earned a crown of ruling power. Hold fast that no man take thy crown.” The Apostle Paul was aware of the need to hold on to the spiritual treasures that God had already given, for he said, “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (I Corinthians 9:27). The word *castaway* means to be disapproved, disapproved from being in the Bride of Christ.

3. Pillar

“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out:” (Revelation 3:12). A pillar speaks of something immovable, firmly established. Continuing in His prophecy, the Prophet assures the Philadelphia church that she can be the Bride of Christ, for the open door stands before her. He promises to make her a pillar in the temple of God if she passes through the marriage door. According to Revelation 21:22 the personal temple of God and the Lamb is the only temple in the New City.

And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it (Revelation 21:22).

We will study further on being a pillar in the temple of God in a following chapter. But for now, we simply want to note the fact of this prophecy—a promised blessing to the Philadelphia church.

4. Write

Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches (Revelation 3:12,13).

Fourthly, Jesus promises to write three names upon the Philadelphia church. This writing was a part of the blessing that He promised to them because they had not denied the Name of Jesus. We will simply mention these three names now. Later in a following chapter, we will discuss them in detail. The three names which He promised to write were:

a. Name of My God

This name has to do with the fulness of the Godhead: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The name of God has to do with His creating power (Genesis 1:1).

b. Name of New City

He promised to write “wife” upon her, for New Jerusalem is the name of the Bride of Christ (Revelation 21:9,10).

c. New Name

Name means nature. We must grow in spiritual stature first in order to provide a place for the inscription of the New Name or New Nature of Jesus.

The word *write* means to tear, and to wound. From the definition of this word, we understand that it will be through suffering that the Bride will be joined to the name of God, the name of the New City, and the new name of Jesus.

In His closing words to the Philadelphia church, the Prophet uses the personal exhortation “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches” (Revelation 3:13). This message is still of great personal interest because the seven churches show how to grow up into the stature of Jesus Christ. If we hold faithfully to the Name of Jesus and overcome the enemy, we will know the blessings that He promises to this church.

* B. R. Hicks, [*The Threefold Nature of Man*](#), (Jeffersonville, Indiana, 1969).

CHAPTER EIGHT

A PILLAR IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD (Revelation 3:12)

Jesus Christ gave the overcomers in the Philadelphia Church a promised blessing, “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out:” (Revelation 3:12). This promise was given because they had not denied the Name of Jesus and the nature of it.

We learned from Revelation 21:22 that there was no temple in the New City, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. The Lamb will be there; God will be there with all the fulness of His presence and His Shekinah glory. What possible purpose, then, could there be for a pillar in the New Jerusalem?

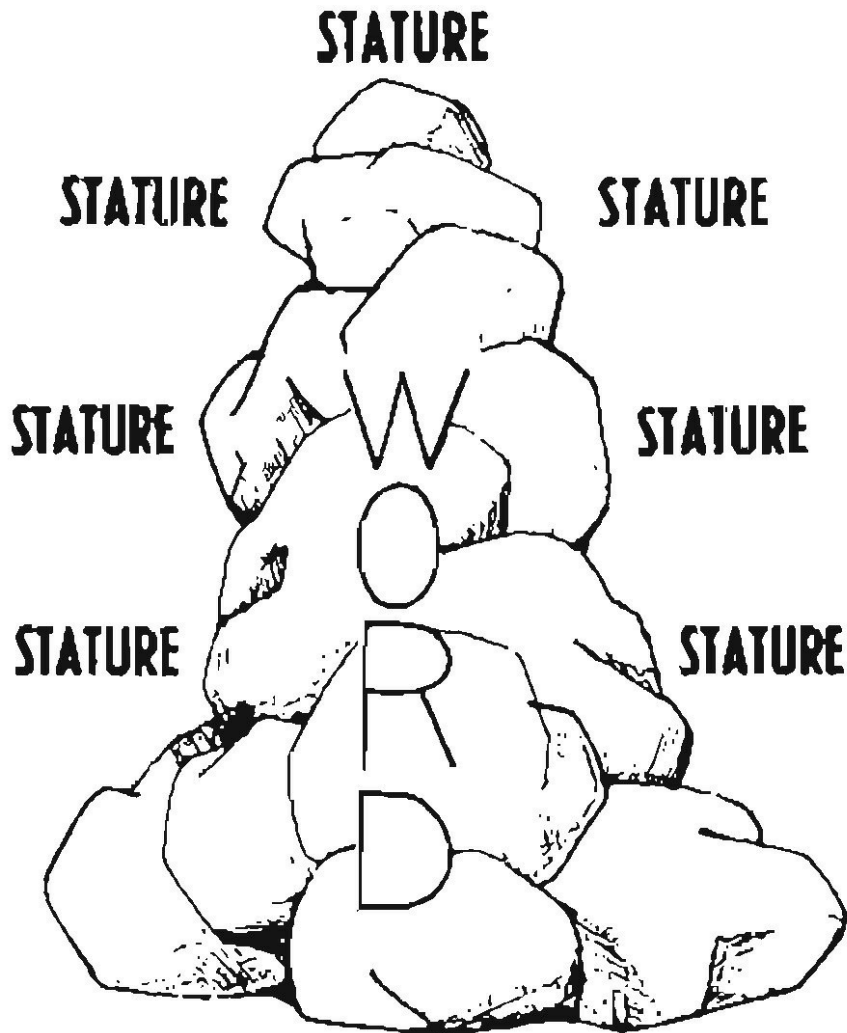
The Word of God is its own commentary; therefore, we do not need to resort to man’s darkened understanding for the exposition of it. If God states a truth in one place in the Word, we can be confident that He has explained it somewhere else in the Word, either as a shadow and type or as a fulfillment of it. If we will become as babes and sucklings, He will unfold the mysteries and secrets of the Word. Has He not sent the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, to guide us into ALL truth?

Jacob comes to mind when we think of pillars, for he erected pillars on four different occasions during his lifetime. In studying Jacob’s experiences, we see that in each case the pillar was a witness to the truth, a witness of the Word of God. God does not need us to support His presence or His glory in the New City, but the Bride shall stand there as a living witness, a living pillar, a living monument of the Word of God that has been laid within her. As a pillar, the Bride stands as an immovable witness of the Word of God.

Let us study the four occasions in the Life of Jacob when he raised up a pillar to bear witness of the Word of God given unto him.

I. THE WORD OF THE FULL STATURE (Pillar erected at Beth-el)

And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep (Genesis 28:11).



Jacob was fleeing to the land of Mesopotamia, charged by his father and mother to take himself a wife there. He was also fleeing from the anger of his brother, Esau, because he had managed to outsmart him and obtain the birthright. So, he lay down to rest, taking a few stones upon which to pillow his head.

And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou best, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shall spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of (Genesis 28:12-15).

If we understand the principles of God's Word, this vision becomes clear. Jacob saw a ladder extending from earth to heaven. This ladder could be none other than the cross of Jesus, the cross of our Mediator. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (I Timothy 2:5). Jacob received a revelation of the stature of Jesus Christ who bridges the gap between sinful man and a holy God. In due time, Jesus gave Himself a ransom for us all.

And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of

heaven. And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Beth-el: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first. And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shall give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee (Genesis 28:16-22).

Taking the very stones that his head had rested upon, Jacob set them up as a pillar, as a witness of the Word of the stature that had been given to him in this place. Because these stones had heard the Word of God also, they were a fitting witness of Jacob's experience. In recent years scientists have declared that stones and other inanimate objects actually retain the sounds to which they have been exposed. They claim that absorbed sounds of spoken words can be released from stones. This must be why Jesus said in response to the Pharisees' demand that He command His disciples to be still "I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out" (Luke 19:40). Those very stones had heard the spoken Word, and if human beings failed to declare the Word, then the stones that heard the Word could cry it out.

Jacob raised up the pillar of stone (a witness of the spoken Word of God) and anointed it with oil (a symbol of God's Spirit) declaring "This will be God's house." In God's house we find the Word and His Spirit. Jacob named the place where he erected the first pillar. Beth-el. Beth means house in Hebrew: El means God, House of God.

The overcomers of the Philadelphia Church were privileged to enter into marriage union with the King who in turn, promised to make the Bride a pillar in the temple of God. As a pillar, she would stand as an immovable witness of the Word of the fulness of the stature of Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul reminds us, "For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (I Corinthians 13:12). In that day of exaltation, we shall be known as we are known. We will not need to convince anyone that we have come all the way up in the stature of Christ, for that will be clearly evident. The Bride stands as a pillar—a witness of the Word of the stature that has been laid within her. She possesses the Word from the Brazen Altar and the Word from the Laver. There will be the Word from the Golden Altar, the Word from the Candlestick, the Word from the Table of Shewbread, finally there will be the Word from the Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy Seat—full stature Word.

No wonder the Devil hates the Word and hates the Bride's message. No wonder he does everything he can do to talk us out of it. He knows that one day the Bride will stand as a living witness in the temple of God throughout eternity, while he will be relegated to the lake of fire forever.

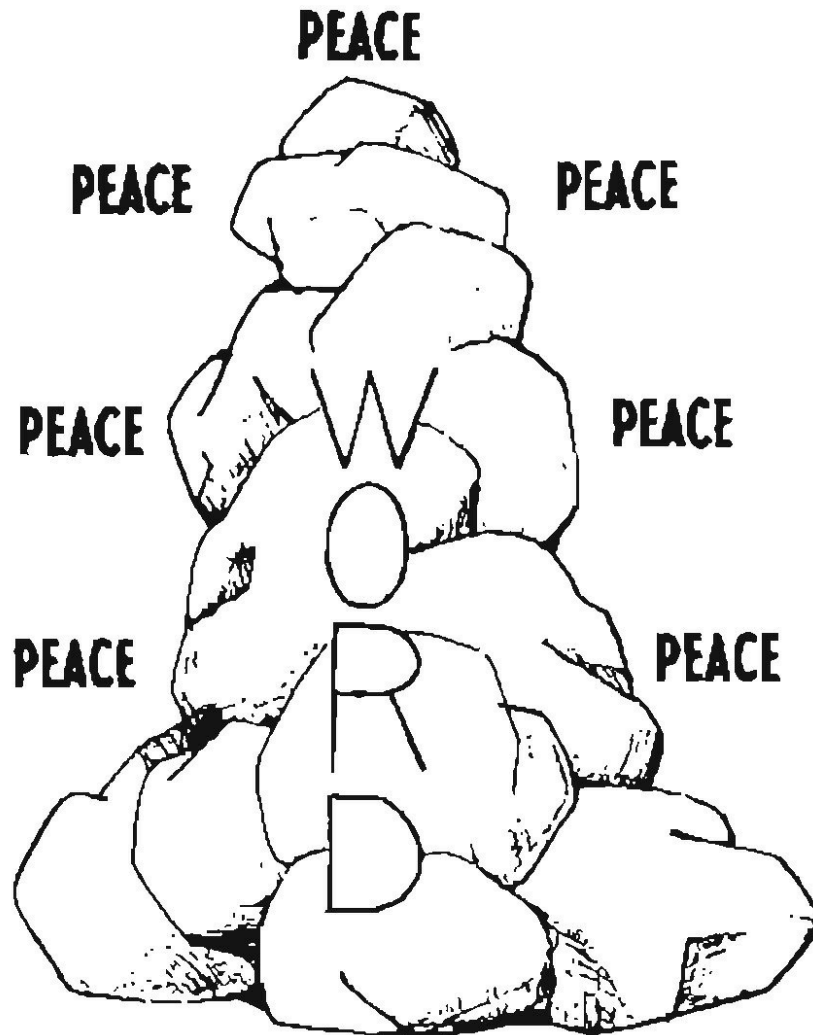
This is why we intercede and travail, why we crucify the flesh and resist the Devil. This is why we fill ourselves with the Word of God. We know that God is preparing a people to be a Living pillar in the temple of God, in the New City.

God's Word declares that we are living epistles read of all men. How can they read an epistle if there is no Word there?

Do we begin again to commend Ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart (II Corinthians 3:1-3).

God, by His Spirit, is writing His Word on the fleshly tables of our hearts. The Bride will stand as a pillar, a living epistle and witness of all the Word of God that has been inscribed upon her heart. How vital it is that we be doers of the Word of God, and not hearers only. If we are to experimentally know the Word of God, it must be quickened and inscribed upon our hearts. So, to be a pillar means to be a witness. Jacob's first pillar was a witness of the Word of the stature that he received at Beth-el.

II. THE WORD OF PEACE (Pillar erected at Galeed)



Jacob journeyed on until he reached his destination, Padanaram, in the land of Mesopotamia. Seven years Jacob labored for his Uncle Laban for the hand of Rachel in marriage. But Uncle Laban tricked him, giving him Leah instead of Rachel. Jacob did get the lovely Rachel for a bride as soon as Leah's time was fulfilled, but Laban added another seven years of service to Jacob's time (Genesis 29:27-30). In spite of the fact that Laban changed his wages ten times, Jacob prospered to the point of provoking jealousy among Laban's sons. God spoke to him, telling him to return to Canaan's land.

I am the God of Beth-el, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred...Then Jacob rose up, and set his sons, and his wives upon camels; And he carried away all his cattle, and all his goods which he had gotten, the cattle of his getting, which he had gotten in Padanaram, for to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan (Genesis 31:13-18).

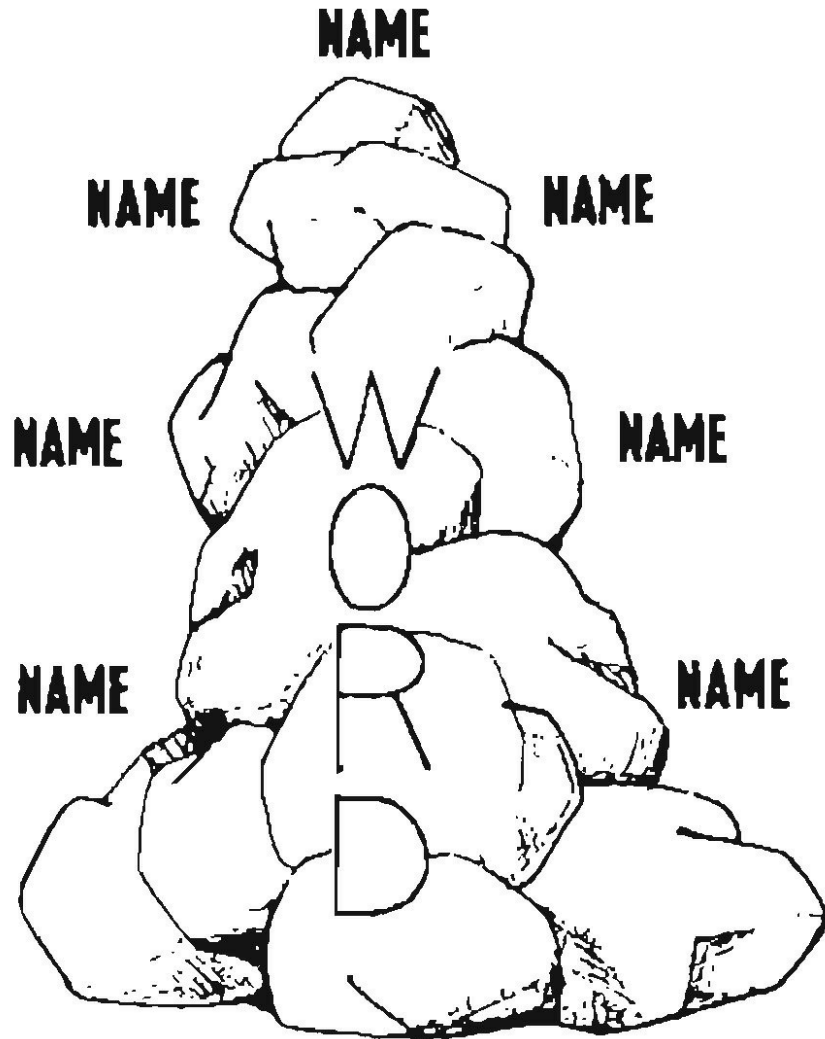
Three days later Laban heard that Jacob had fled. Following in hot pursuit, Laban overtook Jacob. Being warned by God to do no violence to Jacob, Laban talked the matter over with Jacob until they finally reached an amiable agreement. Following their argument, they decided to raise up a pillar of witness of their words that day.

Now therefore come thou, let us make a covenant, I and thou; and let it be for a witness between me and thee, And Jacob took a stone, and set it up for a pillar. And Jacob said unto his brethren, Gather stones; and they look stones, and made an heap; and they did eat there upon the heap. And Laban called it Jegar-Sahadutha: but

Jacob called it Galeed. And Laban said. This heap is a witness between me and thee this day. Therefore was the name of it called Galeed; And Mizpah; for he said, The LORD watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another. If thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt lake other wives beside my daughters, no man is with us; see, God is witness betwixt me and thee. And Laban said to Jacob, Behold this heap, and behold this pillar, which I have cast betwixt me and thee; This heap be witness, and this pillar be witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and that thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me, for harm (Genesis 31: 44-52).

Once more Jacob raised a pillar, which bore witness of the covenant of peace established between him and his Uncle Laban. We can have the same words of peace inscribed upon our hearts as we go on for God. "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9). What a happy state it is to be a peacemaker. We live in the midst of so much bickering, backbiting, jealousy, and fussing of every kind. It is no small matter to be a peacemaker in such circumstances. But the Bride of Christ will be a peacemaker, and she will stand as a pillar in the temple of God declaring the Word of Peace that God has inscribed upon her heart. In that day, the Lord will spread His skirl of glory over His Bride. A mortal body renders her unable to bear the fulness of that glory in this life, but in eternity she shall stand forth in her glorified body, and be able to bear the glory in its full magnitude. Each portion of the Word that she possesses has its own measure of glory with It (which glory is withheld for now), but then it shall be fully revealed. There will be the glory of the Christ, the glory of the Lord, the glory of the Word, and the glory of the Rock. We could go on and on. Little do we realize what the spreading out of the glory of God will be like at that time.

III. THE WORD OF THE NEW NAME (Pillar erected at Beth-el)



Jacob was still on his journey to Canaan, anticipating his reunion with Esau. Word was brought to him that Esau was advancing toward him with four hundred men. Jacob had no idea of what kind of reception awaited him. Jacob made arrangements to present Esau with a most impressive gift from his herds. The animals were sent ahead. Last of all, Jacob sent his wives, their women servants, and his eleven sons over the ford Jabbok. Jacob, alone, remained behind. During Jacob's lonely night's wait, a man came who wrestled with him until the dawn.

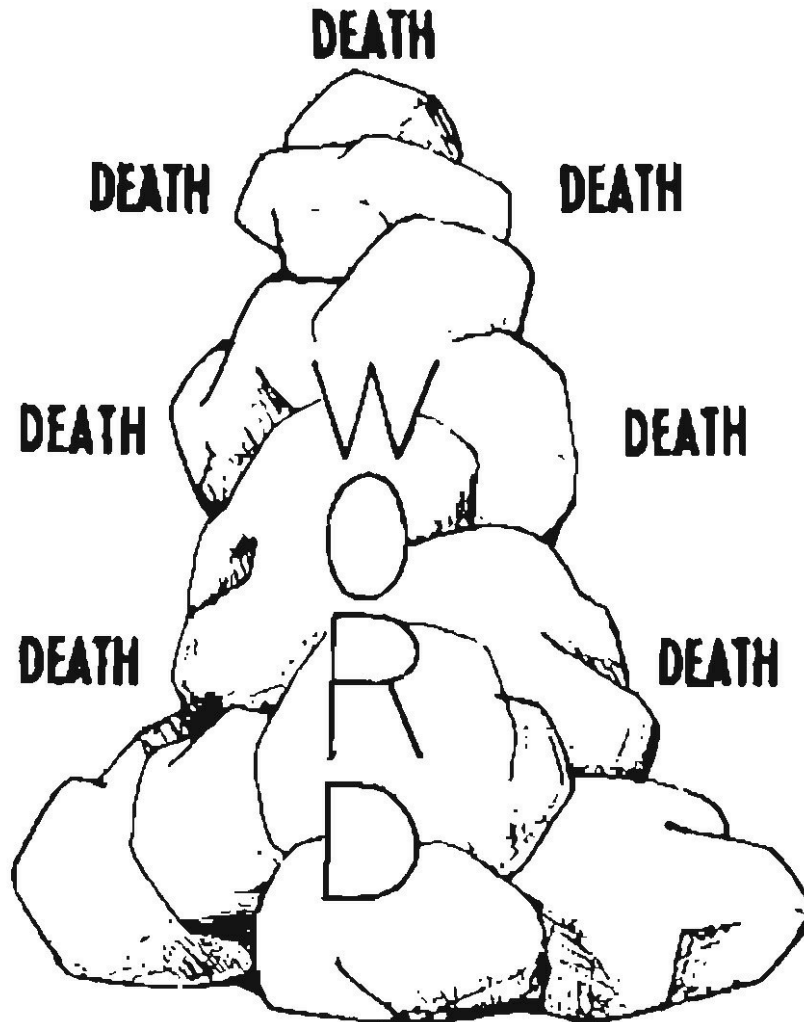
And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said. Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed (Genesis 32:26-28).

The change of name did not take place that day, but Jacob received the seed of promise of it. As he continued confessing the new name, the name of Israel, that name was finally made his. Some time later, the Lord spoke to Jacob to return to Beth-el.

And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padan-Aram, and blessed him. And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob; thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel...And God went up from him in the place where he talked with him. And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, even a pillar of stone: and he poured a drink offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon. And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, Beth-el (Genesis 35:9-15).

Here we see the fulfillment of the promise of a changed name; “he called his name Israel.” So Jacob built another pillar at Beth-el. This time the pillar witnessed the Word of a new name. When the Bride stands as a pillar in the New City she is going to have the new name of her Husband on her also (Revelation 3:12).

IV. THE WORD OF DEATH (Pillar erected at Ephrath or Bethlehem)



And they journeyed from Beth-el; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labor. And it came to pass, when she was in hard labor, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shall have this son also. And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Ben-oni: but his father called him Benjamin. And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem. And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave; that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day (Genesis 35:16-20).

As far as Scripture is concerned, this apparently is the origin of the tombstone. A tombstone (a pillar) is a witness of a person's life and his death. For this reason Jacob built this pillar as a monument and a witness of the death of his beloved wife, Rachel.

The Word of death will be written upon the Bride of Christ. She will bear witness of the many times she experienced personal crucifixion to the self-life in the out pasture experiences. She will stand as a pillar of the truth of death, of the many times she has put off the flesh—dying out to her will in order to become one with God's will. Even as her heavenly Bridegroom lived, died, and was resurrected to live in eternal glorification, so she, too, walks

in His footsteps, of death, resurrection and finally glorification.

If we want to be a pillar in the temple of the Lord, we must not draw back from the sufferings and the crucifixion. The day of reward will come. Those who grow all the way up in the stature of Jesus Christ and win the prize will be given the privilege of being a pillar in the presence of God and the Lamb. They will stand as immovable and fixed pillars, inscribed with the living Word of God upon them, bathed in the overflowing and overshadowing of His glory, even as the Shekinah glory overshadowed the Word as it rested in the Ark of the Covenant in the Old Testament Tabernacle.

Jesus Christ gave the Philadelphia Church the promise, “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God.”

CHAPTER NINE

THE WRITINGS OF THREE NAMES (Revelation 3:12)

Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name (Revelation 3:12).

We have progressed in our study of the churches in the Book of Revelation to the Church of Philadelphia. The Philadelphia Church is the only church upon which He promised to write three special names: (1) God, (2) New City, and (3) His new name. It is interesting to note that the Old Testament High Priest, a picture of Jesus Christ, also had three names written upon him. It is not accidental that Jesus Christ is seen in Revelation 19 with three classes of writing upon Him. In this chapter He bears a name on His head, on His vesture, and on His thigh. As we study these three classes of writing, we shall come forth with a better understanding of the three names which will be written upon the Bride of Christ.

“...and I will write upon him the name of my God...” (Revelation 3:12). The word *write* means to break, to fracture, to wound, and to engrave. The Prophet said “Because you have not denied My name, I am going to write the name of God, the name of Deity, upon you.” Jesus Christ had this experience. Throughout His earthly journey, He devoted Himself to doing the will of the Father. To fulfill the Father’s will He was crucified and went down into death, hell, and the grave. After three days, He came up with resurrection life, and we know that He was deified because the Apostle Peter said: “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). Now, Jesus is seated at the right hand of God the Father in heaven. If we crucify our fleshly man and grow up in the stature of Jesus Christ, taking on His likeness and image, we, too, can know union with Him and share in His deity.

I. NAMES WORN BY OLD TESTAMENT HIGH PRIEST

Let us consider the Old Testament High Priest who carried three names upon his person, and who in shadow and type represented Jesus Christ.

OLD TESTAMENT HIGH PRIEST



A. HOLINESS TO THE LORD

The High Priest carried upon his forehead the inscription, Holiness to the LORD. The forehead pictures the mind with its understanding and ability to think. Holiness to the LORD speaks of separation.

And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. And thou shalt put it on the blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre; upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be. And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD (Exodus 28:36-38).

When Aaron, the high priest, wore this name, "Holiness to the LORD," he was then able to bear the iniquity of the holy things. It seems strange to think that holy things have iniquity. What are the holy things referred to here? Numbers 15 sheds some light on the Old Testament sacrifice which relates to this subject.

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land of your habitations, which I give unto you, And will make an offering by fire unto the LORD, a burnt offering, or a sacrifice in performing a vow, or in a freewill offering, or in your solemn feasts, to make a sweet savour unto the LORD, of the herd, or of the flock: Then shall he that offereth his offering unto the LORD bring a meat offering of a tenth deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of a hin of oil. And the fourth part of a hin of wine for a drink offering shall thou prepare with the burnt offering or sacrifice, for one lamb (Numbers 15:1-5).

In this Scripture, God gave instruction concerning the offering that was to accompany the sacrifice of a lamb, a picture of Jesus Christ, THE Lamb of God. We need to understand where sin is in holy things. Once this knowledge is opened to us, we will marvel that God has patience with any of us except for the fact that we know our High Priest is wearing a crown—Holiness to the LORD. Jesus wears this crown and so will His Bride.

Three things were to accompany the sacrificial lamb: oil, flour, and wine. Exact measurements of each were specified, and we know that these exact specifications were fully met in God's Lamb, Jesus Christ. This was not true, however, with the offerings brought by ordinary man. The individual's humanity made it impossible for him to bring the precise and exact measurement in the most minute degree. Having done his best to measure out the tenth deal of flour, the fourth part of a hin of oil, and a fourth part of a hin of wine, the man carried the offering along with the lamb to the high priest. Man never measured out the lamb; God created it so He measured out the lamb. The high priest inspected the lamb, and after finding it free of spot or blemish, he received the flour, the oil, and the wine. Although the one offering had done his best to comply with the stipulated amounts, it was not good enough because it was not exact. Only God can measure the exact requirement of the bread of His flesh (for the flour types the bread of the body of Jesus); only God can measure the required measure of wine of His resurrected Blood (the wine is a picture of the resurrected Blood of Jesus); only God can measure the oil of the Holy Ghost (the oil types the Spirit of God).

Let us emphasize this point once again. God places stringent requirements upon a sacrifice in order for it to be acceptable and pleasing unto Him. The exactness of these requirements can never be met by man. This inadequacy constitutes the "iniquity of the holy things" to which the LORD referred in Exodus 28. What possible solution can be found to this dilemma? The study of the Old Testament high priest gives the answer.

The high priest takes the sacrificial lamb with its accompanying requirements of the flour, the oil, and the wine, and goes into the Holy Place to present it before the LORD. The offering is acceptable; the stringent requirements are met because the high priest wears upon his head the crown proclaiming, "Holiness to the LORD." The crown establishes the ruling power of the priest. The imperfect sacrifice passes through the hands of the priest with his ruling power, and it becomes an acceptable and perfect sacrifice. In other words, the crown upon the priest's head is declaring, "I am ruling over this sacrifice. I am making up for the lack of oil, the lack of the flour, the lack of the wine, I am bearing the iniquity of this sacrifice."

Keep in mind that Jesus Christ is our great High Priest. Surely He was crowned with "Holiness to the LORD," for He exemplified separation, consecration, and sanctification in every aspect of His earthly life. Did the Devil not come to tempt Jesus, urging Him to pour out some of the flour, the wine, and the oil of His life unto him? Jesus withstood the temptation declaring, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matthew 4:10). Jesus had holiness written upon His forehead, and when He arose victorious on the resurrection morning, He was MADE Lord and Christ; He was deified.

Have we poured out the oil of the Spirit before God as He wants us to? Have we brought the wine of the blood of surrender, obedience, and joy of resurrection life? Have we brought the strength that the flour of His flesh imparts? Before we can bring it we must first eat and drink: "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him" (John 6:56). How imperfect are the offerings that we bring to Him. If God gave us what we deserved, surely we would not be enjoying the abundance of mercy, grace, Word, Spirit—blessedness in every way. But, One who is seated at the right hand of the Father has mercy on us. He wears a crown of Holiness to the LORD, which enables Him to make up the lack on our part; therefore, He is able to pour out His blessings upon us, undeserving as we are. How imperfect is our praise; how small and limited is our Jove. How lacking is our appreciation and gratitude to Him; how tainted and biased are our prayers. Yet, imperfect as all our sacrifices are, they are received and accepted by the Father because our High Priest is crowned with Holiness to the LORD. He makes up for all the imperfections, He hears the iniquity of the holy things.

If we are going to be like Jesus, we, too, must get this same crown of "Holiness to the LORD" upon our heads.

We need to know the separation that holiness brings to our minds, our thoughts, our understanding. How many times do we *make up* for what another person lacks? If in our estimation, somebody is falling short do we point out our brother's failures to others, or do we get on our faces before the Lord, standing in behalf of our brother, and make up for his lack? When people do us wrong, surely we are not to gnash upon them out of our fleshly nature. How much better to have upon our minds the crown of "Holiness to the LORD" that allows us to deal with them out of the Lord's mercy, kindness, and forgiveness.

Although we are running ahead of ourselves a bit, may we call to your attention one more interesting fact. The Name of God will be written upon the Bride's forehead. The name *God* comes from the Hebrew word *Elohim*, a uniplural noun, meaning that God is one, and yet within that unity there is a plurality. Although the noun for God is plural in form, it takes a singular verb in Hebrew which proves that it is a uniplural noun. This simple fact concerning the uniplurality of the Name of God does more than let us know the unity of purpose, thought, and plan that exists within the Godhead: it speaks of humility beyond mortal comprehension. Within Himself, God is complete; none can add to His perfection. Consider, then, the humility demonstrated by the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost when they accepted a human being named Jesus into the very Godhead. Divine love will humble Itself even more when Jesus Christ takes His Bride unto Himself. During His lifetime, the man Jesus walked without sin. He kept His human will in perfect subjection to the Christ. But the Bride of Christ will not be able to say that she always kept her will in the low place. She will have to say with the Psalmist, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm 51:5). Not even after she came to know the Bridegroom, did she always walk in surrender and subjection to His Will.

Any love short of divine love would say, "I gave you a chance to gain the greatest prize of all time and eternity, but you missed it, I'm tired of fooling with such a stubborn, rebellious, stiffnecked human being. I'm through with you." Yet Jesus never said this to His Bride. Instead, He continued to patiently manifest such love to her soul that eventually He melted her once hard and proud human will. At last her will became fused forever with the will of Jesus Christ. For this reason, she is admitted into God's personal family. It could never happen apart from God's unfathomable love and humility. In the Perfect Age, the Bride will dwell in the New City with her Bridegroom. On her forehead will be written what is equivalent to "Holiness to the LORD," for she bears the name of God which she gained through union with Jesus, the One who has been made Lord and Christ. She will be privileged to serve God and the Lamb (Revelation 22:3). Her ministry is similar to that fulfilled by the Old Testament high priest and of Jesus Christ Himself.

The New Earth will be ruled in the Perfect Age by the kings and priests of God who wear white raiment as their eternal dress, whereas the white robed ones will have their eternal abode in heaven. Only the white linen group, the Bride, dwells in the New Jerusalem. But the kings (of the white raiment ones) will be permitted to enter into the City with their praise and worship (Revelation 21:24), and secure leaves from the Tree of Life for the healing of the nations (Revelation 22:2).

The ones who have grown up to the shoulder realm of the stature of Jesus Christ wear white raiment in eternity. We may ask why this group is permitted to enter the New City, whereas all others are excluded except the Bride. This is possible because of the ministry of the Bride. Imperfect though their stature be, imperfect though their praise and worship be, the Bride makes up for the lack, for she wears the Name of God upon her forehead. She ministers, as did the high priest, to make up the lack in the holy things.

Without a doubt the Bride of Christ is the greatest of all attainments, a prize above all others. The foundational substances of blood, fire, and water are free gifts to all who will receive them. With these gifts we have all that we need to help us grow up into the head realm of the stature of Jesus Christ, attaining full maturity of stature and a oneness of relationship with Him. Some Christians are content to possess the gift of the Blood, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the gift of Water Baptism. These experiences are equivalent to the Courtyard experiences of the Tabernacle. Any growth beyond that point comes by personal effort: seeking, prayer, crucifixion, and intercession, for example. We shall study these thoughts more thoroughly later, but it seemed necessary at this time to mention the future ministry of the Bride as it pertains to the holy things.

Before we can wear the name of God on our forehead, we must grow up to the head realm, to the Philadelphia Church level, and overcome the enemies that war in that position. If we desire to win the prize, we must labor and war now. It is in this life that we lay hold of the spiritual stature and the degree of glory that shall be ours forever.

B. NAMES OF TRIBES OF ISRAEL WORN ON SHOULDERS

In studying the Old Testament high priest, we have seen that he carried on his forehead a name—Holiness to the LORD. He also carried the names of the tribes of Israel on his shoulders. Six names were inscribed upon the onyx stone worn on the right shoulder, and the other six names were inscribed on the stone worn on the left shoulder.

And thou shalt take two onyx stones, and grave on them the names of the children of Israel: Six of their names on one stone, and the other six names of the rest on the other stone according to their birth. With the work of an engraver in stone, like the engravings of a signet, shall thou engrave the two stones with the names of the children of Israel: thou shalt make them to be set in ouches of gold. And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod for stones of memorial unto the children of Israel; and Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD upon his two shoulders for a memorial (Exodus 28:9-12).

Shoulders represent government; therefore, the high priest carried the government of the twelve tribes of Israel upon his shoulders. The burden of the office rested upon the shoulders of the one who wore the insignia of the office. “And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open” (Isaiah 22:22). “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...” (Isaiah 9:6). Both Scriptures are prophetic of Jesus Christ who is our great High Priest and clearly show the implication of the shoulders in relation to government.

Whether Israel was under the leadership of judges or kings, all were subordinate to the government of God as it was passed through the high priest. On his shoulders rested two large onyx stones. The word *onyx* means to blanch, to take the color out of something, and to make lustrous. Visualize these two beautifully polished, blanched stones on the shoulders of the high priest as he walked under the light of the Golden Candlestick. These stones picked up the light, giving the impression that light was shining forth through them. This pictures the light of God’s governmental power. How can there be any wise government apart from the light of God’s government? When governments are ruled by the darkness of Satan, it is little wonder that they end in chaos. As long as Israel walked under the light of God’s government, she walked in victory.

C. NAMES OF TRIBES OF ISRAEL WORN ON HEART

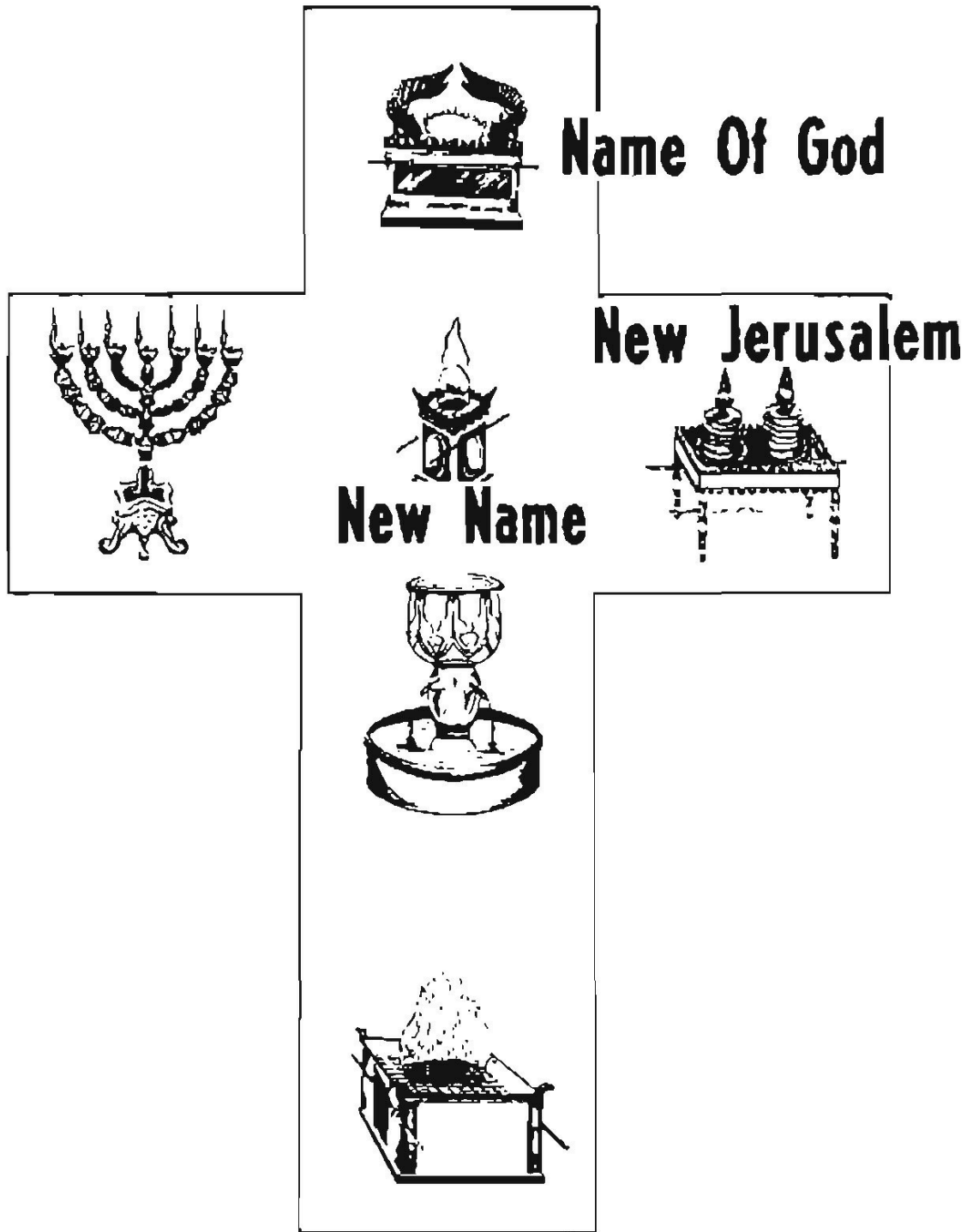
The third place that the high priest carried the inscription of a name was in the heart area where the breastplate rested. Twelve stones, each bearing a name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel, were fastened onto the breastplate. Inside the breastplate were two mysterious stones called the Urim and Thummin, which in the Hebrew means lights and perfections. When the high priest stood before the veil to ascertain the mind of God, the lights and the perfections of the Urim and Thummin caused the visible stones of the breastplate to light up, thereby confirming to the high priest the will and mind of God. In this manner, God bore witness of His divine will to the priest so that Israel, as a nation and as individual tribes, might walk in the revealed will of God.

And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment with cunning work; after the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; of gold, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine twined linen, shalt thou make it. Foursquare it shall be being doubled; a span shall be the length thereof, and a span shall be the breadth thereof. And thou shalt set in it settings of stones, even four rows of stones; the first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle; this shall be the first row. And the second row shall be an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. And the third row a figure, an agate, and an amethyst. And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper; they shall be set in gold in their inclosing. *And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet; every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes* (Exodus 28:15-21).

II. NAMES WRITTEN ON THE BRIDE

We have seen the three places that the high priest carried the names: on his Forehead, on his shoulders, and on his heart. Even so, the Prophet declared that three classes of writing would be written upon the Bride. Since the Cross represents the stature of the Living Cross, Jesus Christ, we will let a cross represent the stature of the Bride of Christ, for she grows until she, too, attains the fullness of spiritual stature.

BRIDE OF CHRIST



A. THE NAME OF GOD

And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on mount Sion and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their forehead (Revelation 14:1).

The first name, the Name of God, was to be written upon the forehead of the Bride. We shall not concern ourselves with the exposition of the preceding verse at this point, but we will only call attention to the fact that the Father's Name, the Name of God, was written in their foreheads. Later, as we study this verse, we will be able to see clearly that it is a revelation of the Bride of Christ. The number of people mentioned in chapter fourteen are not the same 144,000 that is mentioned in chapter seven; the 144,000 in chapter seven are the sealed ones of the twelve tribes of Israel, 12,000 out of each tribe.

In Revelation 22, we see the Bride mentioned again as having the Name of God written on her forehead.

And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads (Revelation 22:3,4).

We have seen the threefold writing that was promised to the overcomers of the Church of Philadelphia. The first was the Name of God which is to be written upon her forehead. Because the word *name* means nature, character, and authority, we understand that this outward inscription implies a great deal. The Bride has holiness and separation inscribed upon her mind, upon her thinking, upon her understanding, just as the high priest had Holiness to the LORD inscribed upon the crown that he wore. She has welcomed each experience of suffering and humiliation as another opportunity to have the name of God inscribed upon her. Each tear, each wound, has been the means through which that Name is engraved deeper upon her mind. Only the Bride of Christ will be privileged to bear the Name of God upon her forehead throughout eternity, for only she has suffered to have it engraved in her mind in this life.

In Revelation 3:8, Jesus declares that she had not denied His Name. In order for the Bride to wear these three names in eternity, she must let these names (natures) become her nature in her present earthly journey. In Israel's journey from Egypt to Canaan's land, her first acquaintance with the Name was at the Red Sea. The rod bearing the invisible name of Aaron, the high priest opened the waters for Israel; this is a picture of Jesus going into death for everyone. Jesus told the Philadelphia Church "You have not denied my Name." Many Christians, even some who have received the Holy Ghost, refuse the Name of Jesus in the baptismal waters of His death. Although some deny and reject the Name, it is a precious experience to become acquainted with the wonderful Name of Jesus Christ.

We deny His Name (nature) in various ways. By refusing to forgive, we deny the Name of Jesus, for His nature is forgiveness. We deny the Name when we fail to love one another, because His nature is love.

Jesus Christ promised to write the Name of God upon the Bride's forehead. The Name *God* comes from the Hebrew word *Elohim* which refers to His creating power: "In the beginning God [Elohim] created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). In eternity, the Bride will be endued with creating power. She begins to make use of that creating power while she is still in this life. Through union with Jesus Christ, she sees spiritual truth brought to birth in her own life as well as in the lives of others.

B. NEW JERUSALEM

Secondly, we see that the Prophet promised to write the name of the New City upon the Bride. The New City is built of jasper stone, sapphire, sardius, emerald, and other stones. These stones all refer to various aspects of the nature of the Rock who is Christ, the Word. Before the Old Testament priests could minister in the tabernacle, they were bathed in water from the Laver which had come from the Rock. According to II Corinthians 10:4, that Rock was Christ who is the Living Word. This baptism of the Word (Rock water) was hand applied by Moses (Exodus 28). After this Word baptism, the priests returned daily to the foot of the Laver for a fresh supply of humility waters from the Rock. Jesus promised to write the name of the New City upon His Bride, proving that she had lived in the Word of God and taken on the very nature of the Rock, Christ, the Living Word.

At the Red Sea, or baptismal waters of death, Israel, God's natural Bride, first became acquainted with the Name of Aaron who was a type of Jesus. Later, in Exodus 17 when Israel was in the wilderness, we see the joining of the Name Aaron, or Jesus as it were, with the Rock, Christ, who is the Word. Moses smote the Rock with the rod which bore the name of the High Priest, a picture of Jesus. Through that smiting, the Name of Jesus was joined to the Rock, Christ, "...and hast not denied my name." What a precious Name to love and uphold. He will write the Name,

New City, upon His Bride because she has taken on the nature of the Word, the Rock, Christ.

C. NEW NAME

“...and I will write upon him my new name...” The Bride of Jesus Christ is promised a new Name, a portion of His nature which she has never previously experienced. In the Old Testament dispensation God revealed Himself through three primary names:

1. God (referring to His creating power).
2. Lord (Master, Husband. Bridegroom, speaking of His possessing power).
3. LORD (Jehovah, or the self-existent One who reveals Himself, referring to His revealing power).

While in His earthly journey, Jesus never revealed Himself, but rather the Father revealed Him. When Peter said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,” Jesus replied, “Blessed art thou. Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 16:17). Since Jesus’ ascension, the Father and the Holy Ghost continue to reveal Him. “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you” (John 16:13,14). We see that Jesus never revealed Himself. Although He now possesses all power in heaven and in earth, He still does not reveal Himself. But, in Revelation 19, when He comes to set up His millennial reign, we see Him with a new Name: LORD OF LORDS. Then He will reveal Himself to the whole world.

He promised to write His new Name upon the Bride, and that new Name is LORD, or the self-existent One who reveals Himself. In other words, she also will have power to reveal herself. What a prize, hallelujah! How our flesh longs for others to know us; we weep so many fleshly tears because people misunderstand us. But our day of revelation is coming. If we will sell out, pay the price to follow Jesus Christ, then because we have been made one with Him, we will share in His glory and exaltation. We must learn patience. Today is the day of humility and surrender; but if we become His Bride, then He will write that new Name upon us, and we shall have power to reveal ourselves.

Beloved, almost everyone who hears about the three names that will be inscribed upon the Bride will immediately say, “I want those names.” It sounds exalting to be called “God,” to be called “New Jerusalem,” to be called “LORD,” and certainly this is true, but most people forget God’s law concerning exaltation. The wise man said, “Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and *before honour is humility*” (Proverbs 18:12). Jesus confirmed this principle when He taught the parable of the ambitious wedding guest, by saying, “For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and *he that humbleth himself shall be exalted*” (Luke 14:11). Jesus went beyond telling others to humble themselves; He practiced humility in His own life. In Philippians we read of the complete humility of Christ Jesus.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, *he humbled himself*, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Philippians 2:6-8).

Immediately after reading of how Jesus humbled Himself, we read:

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth: That every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:9-11).

If Jesus had to humble Himself before being exalted and given a name that is above every name, then who are we to think that we can have the Bride’s three names without traveling the same route?

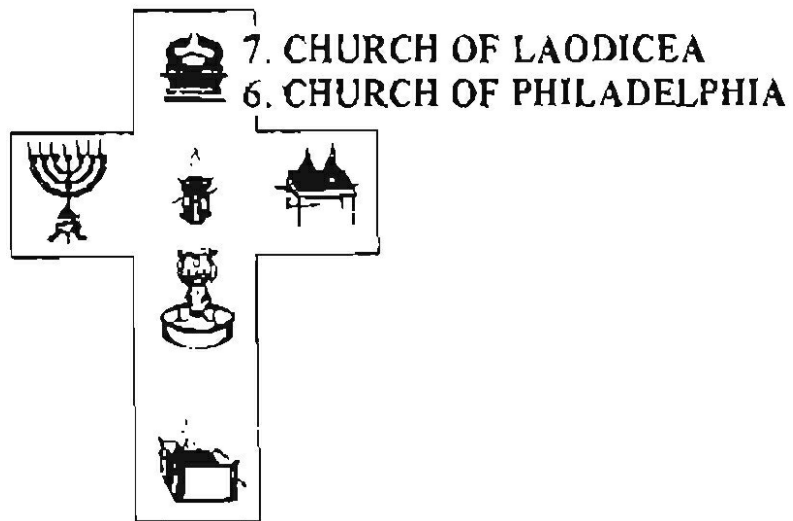
We need to understand what we are asking when we say, “Lord, write those names on me.” In the Greek, the word *write* means to grave, to write, to describe in writing. The word *grave* lets us know, at least in part, the suffering that we can expect as the writing takes place. The word *grave* means to dig, to excavate, to carve or shape

with a chisel, sculpture, to carve or cut (as letters or figures) into a hard surface, to impress or fix (as a thought) deeply.

The writing of the three names does not take place all at one time, but the Bride suffers over and over as each of the names is chiseled, a detail at a time, a little deeper into her being. Those with a clear vision of the prize can say even now, "...I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).

CHAPTER TEN

THE LAODICEAN CHURCH (Revelation 3: 14-22)



We now come to the Laodicean Church, the church that holds the position equivalent to the Mercy Seat in the Old Testament Tabernacle. Although each church experienced God's mercy in an omnipresent manner, as it were, the overcomers of the Laodicean Church became personally acquainted with His mercy.

Marriage, in either the natural or in the spiritual realm, is a holy estate and not to be entered into lightly. God takes each covenant that He makes with us very seriously, and in turn, He expects us to fulfill our spiritual obligations wholeheartedly. In spite of her exalted position, Laodicea passed into such a lukewarm state spiritually that she was about to be spewed out of the Lord's mouth. The Bridegroom knew that a spouse who had only half-heartedly come under the Headship of His Ark would certainly disesteem the covenants and treasures that He had hidden inside of that Ark. Jesus Christ reserves these secrets for the one who surrenders completely body, soul, spirit, mind, and will to Him.

King David surely had a revelation of the secrets and mysteries that God had hidden inside of the Ark, for he cried "Who shall ascend INTO the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?" (Psalm 24:3). Where is God's holy hill, and how do we ascend INTO it? The holy hill is at the top of the stature of Jesus Christ. The head of the stature of Jesus Christ was pictured in the Old Testament Tabernacle by the Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy Seat. We have also seen that the Ark of the Covenant was a picture of the Philadelphia Church; and we will see that the Mercy Seat is a picture of the Laodicean Church. On our first Journey up in stature past the Ark of the Covenant, or the Philadelphia Church, we do not enter into the inside of the Ark. But we become acquainted with the gold on the outside of the Ark, which is a picture of the divine headship of Jesus Christ. As we submit ourselves willingly to His headship in our lives, He will lead us up to the Mercy Seat or the Laodicean Church, which is the door, as it were, to the inside of the Ark where the covenants of the Word are. The Laodicean experience will test and try us to see if we will be faithful, and in so doing, be worthy to enter the inside of the Ark. It is inside the Ark, or inside the holy hill, that we find the Word that will bring us into perfect unity with God, unity with the Sabbath Day (Jesus Christ) and unity with man.

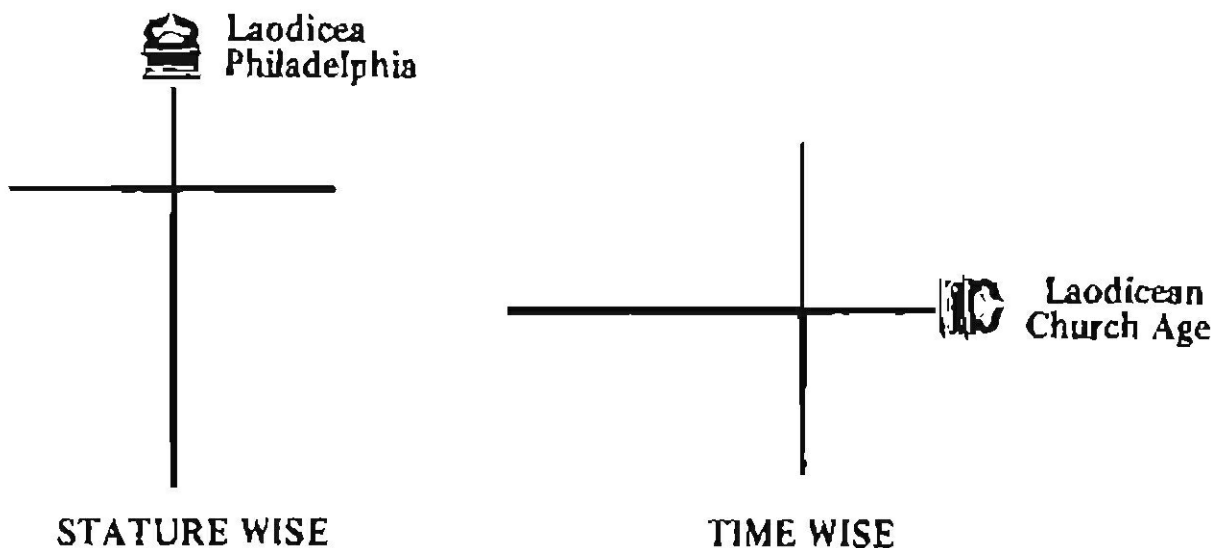
We can ascend up TO the Ark, or the holy hill, without ascending INTO it. We ascend INTO the holy hill, the Ark, only by coming up to the Mercy Seat and passing down through the Mercy Blood that covers that seat.



**Must climb through the Laodicean dispensation
to learn the Mercies of God. Then we enter into
the Covenants found inside of the Ark.**

Only those who pass through this experience and hold onto their love for the Bridegroom enter into the exquisite delight and thrill that comes with inward marriage relationship. Throughout eternity the Bride will know without a doubt that she did nothing to merit the blessed privilege that is hers. Constantly, her mind will be covered, as it were, with the golden Mercy Seat.

In addition to the personal aspect that the Laodicean Church holds for each individual, it is also representative of the last church period prior to the coming of the Lord. We are presently living in the Laodicean Church age.



Up to this point, each church has presented a new revelation of Jesus Christ as King, as Priest, and as Prophet. The pattern of study remains consistent in the Laodicean Church. Lucifer wars against this church with his Heads of Ignorance and Rebellion.

I. HE MINISTERS AS KING

And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God (Revelation 3:14).

The King is introduced first for the purpose of giving courage, faith, and hope in the face of the honest appraisal and criticism which will follow. The predominant characteristic of the Laodicean Church Age is lukewarmness—she is neither cold nor hot. We need special perseverance to stand against the spirit of relaxing, but encouragement comes when we realize that our King stands ready to assist in the battle. He gives a fourfold revelation of Himself:

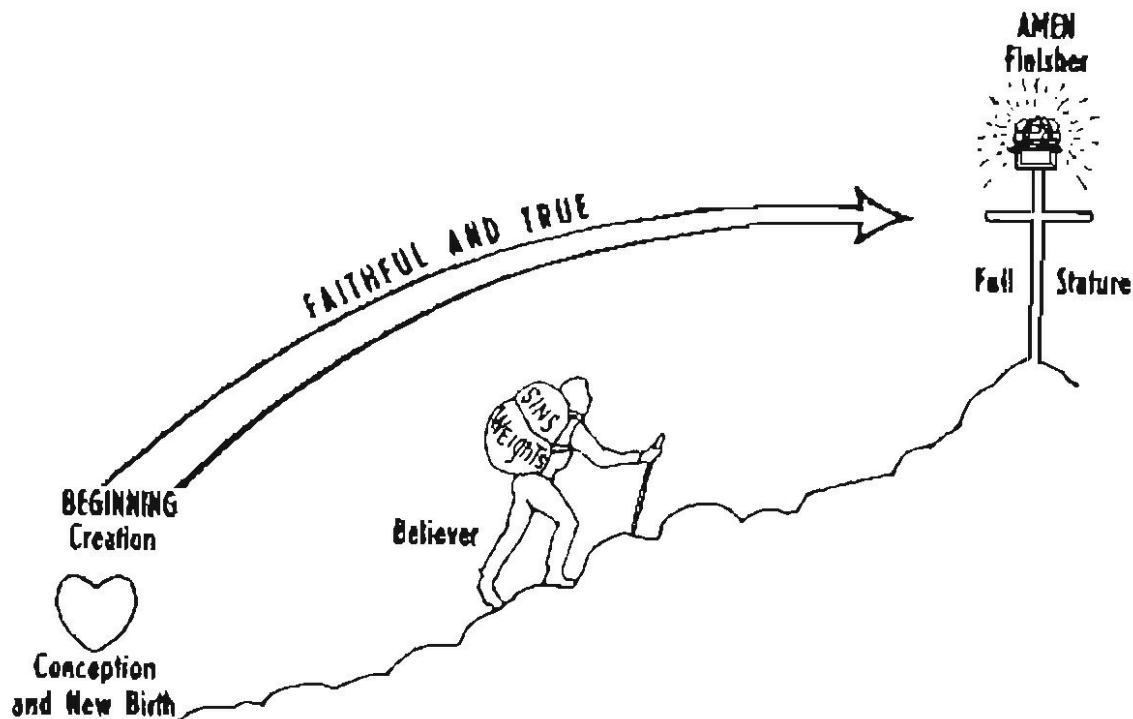
Amen, the Faithful, the True, and the Beginning of the Creation of God. We will find it easier to grasp what He is saying here if we study it in its spiritual order. Revelation is not always given in chronological order, and purposely so, for these truths are hidden from the wise and prudent but revealed unto babes. To understand this portion of the Word, we must divide it in spiritual order, so we begin with the fourth phrase: “the beginning of the creation of God.”

A. THE BEGINNING OF THE CREATION OF GOD

Jesus Christ is the beginning of the creation of God, both literally and spiritually. The beginning of His spiritual work in our hearts took place when we received Him as our personal Saviour. What a glorious day when we arose from our knees with the living thrill of personally meeting Jesus Christ. We do not doubt that wonderful experience, for we were there when it happened, praise His Name! As Christians, we seldom struggle in doubt over our spiritual beginning, for we were personal partakers of the grace of God that translated us from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. We realize that some people, when pushed and tormented by the Devil, actually doubt their beginning experience of salvation through the Blood of Jesus Christ. Usually, however, Satan does not attack on that particular point because of the reality of such an experience. But since we live in a day of lukewarmness, we need to be reminded that Jesus Christ is the beginning of the creation of God. We were lost in our sins, miserable and undone, without hope, until one day Jesus found us, praise His Holy Name! Gratitude wells up within our hearts as we recall that blessed day, the day we met Him and He began His spiritual work within us.

B. THE AMEN

Jesus Christ is not only the beginning of the creation of God within us, but He is also the ending, the Amen (so let it be). At times we become fearful and are beset by doubts concerning the end of our spiritual journey. The enemy frequently attacks the believer on this point; therefore, we must accept by faith the “Amen,” the ending of our journey, the same as we accepted the beginning. We must believe that He is the author (the beginning) and finisher (the Amen) of our faith. “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith:” (Hebrews 12:2). He also promised, “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him...” (Hebrews 7:25). He can save to the uttermost, to full and complete stature: “...that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God” (Colossians 4:12). The One who has begun a good work in us will perform it (Philippians 1:6).



Since this journey is basically a walk of faith, the Devil wars against our trusting in Jesus Christ as the Amen, the Finisher, the Completer—the One who has called us unto the uttermost. If we fall down spiritually, our persistent enemy is right there with his taunts and fears. Once we have caught a vision of the Prize, of the Bride of Christ, he is quick to ridicule the possibility of our ever attaining such an exalted position. When we feel a bit battle weary, he comes to encourage the weariness, hoping that we will ease up, relax, and begin to lose out with God. After all, he is our adversary, and he works tenaciously to hinder the purposes of God in our lives.

A Hebrew scholar once said, “To fall down is not dead.” As Christians we fall; we fail; we blunder at times; but this is no excuse to just lie there and give up; after all, such an one is not dead. We need to arise and start again, keeping in mind that we have a King who is not only the author of our faith, but He is also the finisher of it. He is our great AMEN!

C. THE FAITHFUL WITNESS

We go through times when we do not feel like praying, or our interest in the Word of God, and in the things of God seems to have ebbed to a new low. What do we do then? The King has the answer. He reveals Himself as the faithful witness.

When it seems all our desires and aspirations have fled, then our King, the FAITHFUL WITNESS, reaches out a hand toward us. His very nature is faithfulness. When we are low in spirit, our Faithful Witness will begin to reveal Himself and some of the treasures that are reserved for us, He knows just what it takes to motivate us again. He knows the solution to our need for the moment. He is faithful.

D. THE TRUE WITNESS

We all experience times of depression. In fact, a Christian’s walk is one of mountains and valleys—up and down. We grow and exercise our spiritual muscles as we climb over high mountains and walk through dark valleys, spiritually speaking. When we are down, our King will come to us and bear witness of the Truth. The truth is that we can make it through to the prize, regardless of the stumbling blocks set in our way. He is our faithful and true witness. Let us be grateful for every dispensation He takes us through. Each serves its purpose to bring us up in greater stature. Beloved, let us be grateful for every circumstance that forces us to cast ourselves upon Him, for then He can reveal Himself as our Faithful and True Witness. He will rejuvenate the experiences of the past and also give us something entirely new in our present experience.

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us (Hebrews 12:1).

We have a “cloud of witnesses” standing all around us, bearing witness to the fact that they made it through (these are the witnesses mentioned in Hebrews eleven that walked by faith and are now in heaven). Besides this, we have the faithful and true witness of our King to help us through to the Amen of our journey. He bears witness to us of the weights and the sins that beset us on our way. His witness may come to us through a friend, a sermon, a circumstance, or a failure, but once we recognize that He is speaking to us through it, we can humble ourselves by confessing our need to Him.

In this Laodicean age of lukewarmness, the revealed King stands before us, praise His Name! What courage and faith it ought to inspire in our hearts. He is our beginning; He is our ending; and while we are journeying along, He is our faithful and true witness. He witnesses to us about our weights and our sins that we might confess them and let Him crucify and cleanse us from them, thus insuring our spiritual progress and growth. These weights of life and the sins that beset us nurture a lukewarmness of spirit. Confession of our sins, of our weights, of our lukewarmness brings forgiveness, for He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

II. HE MINISTERS AS PRIEST

The work of the Priest is to inspect the sacrifice; He generally speaks of the good first and then the bad, but in this case, He can find nothing good to say about the Laodicean Church.

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot (Revelation 3:15).

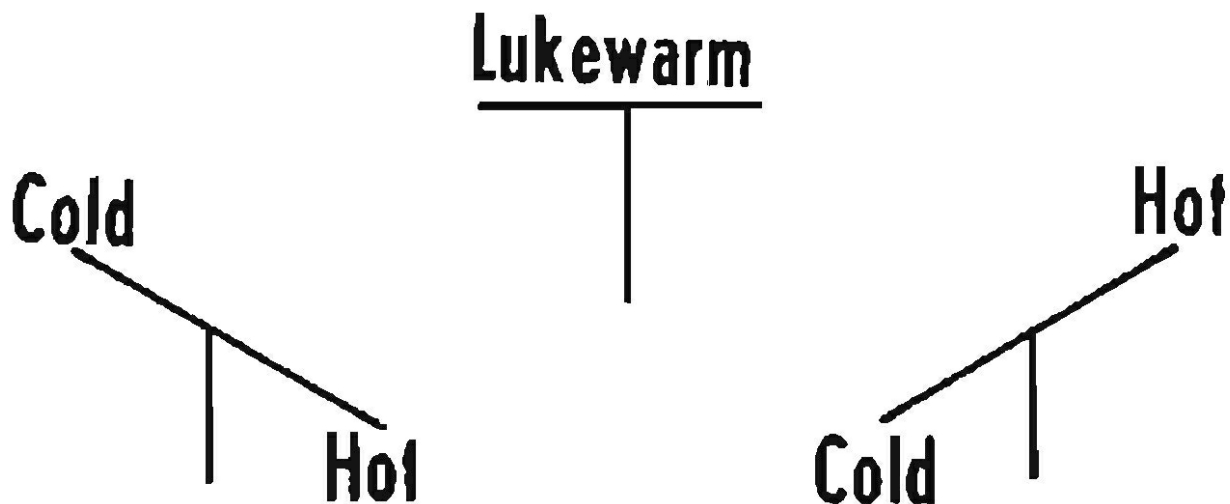
In the Book of Psalms we find an interesting fact here concerning the two aspects of God's breath—hot and cold.

There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under his feet. And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness his secret place: his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies. At the brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed, hail stones and coals of fire. The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail stones and coals of fire (Psalm 18:8-13).

We see God's hot and cold breath evidenced in Scripture in a number of places. As we study God's Word, we learn that the hot aspect of God's breath has to do with exaltation, glory, and blessing. The cold breath of God has to do with humility and crucifixion. We shall see more of this as we progress further into the Book of Revelation. Nevertheless, this explains the condition the Priest found in the Laodicean Church. They were lukewarm—neither hot nor cold. Jesus said to this church "I would that you were living in either the cold chilly waters of death and humiliation, or on the hot glory side of exaltation." They were neither cold nor hot, simply lukewarm. God does not tolerate a persistently lukewarm condition. He will spew such out of His mouth.

Before the present time began, Lucifer stole some of God's fire and corrupted it. However, he never did obtain for himself any of the cold. The word *hot* means to glow, to be fervent, to boil with passion. With this stolen fire of God, Lucifer is able to stir, inflame, and kindle the passions of men for his own corrupt and perverted purposes. But he knows nothing about the cold experimentally, the humility side. There is one sense in which we cannot separate the breath of God, for if we take the hot breath we must also take the cold breath. God has established an unchanging principle—humiliation comes before exaltation. First comes the suffering and then the crown. However, fallen Lucifer has perverted God's order. He subtly offers man the excitement of all kinds of glorious and passionate things, but temporarily by-passes the cold that must come along with it. Nevertheless, God's principles cannot be changed. The cold that Lucifer thought to by-pass will eventually come upon him. Lucifer, along with all of those whom he deceived, will experience ultimate humiliation throughout eternity.

The word *cold* means to breathe voluntarily but gently. It is like the chilly breath that greets one on a frosty morning—not like the blast of a blizzard. The cold breath of God comes gently, but it has power to rid our personal earth of many things. In the natural, a good frost kills many germs and bugs, for example. God's cold breath destroys many undesirable attitudes and dispositions that are unlike Christ. We must have the cold breath, as well as the hot breath of God, if we are to grow up and become like Him.



As we go on with the Lord, our spiritual experiences will alternate between the hot and the cold sides of the breath of God. The same truth is presented to us in John 10 where the Good Shepherd "putteth forth his own sheep," leading them out to the out pasture experience of crucifixion (cold breath). Then He leads them to the in pasture of

greater revelation of the Word and a season of rest and exaltation (hot breath). “I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture” (John 10:9). This is “going on” in God; this is the process we experience in growing up in God. Either position is equally pleasing to the Lord, but He is not pleased when He finds a soul that is lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, for lukewarmness breeds deadness, emptiness, and a total lack of concern.

Just as fallen Lucifer, there are many people that would receive the breath of God if they could by-pass the cold aspect and have only the hot side. But this is impossible, for God’s breath includes both aspects; and in Christ Jesus we take all or nothing.

Here is another interesting thought: the Bride of Jesus Christ will have two garments which bear evidence of her experiences with the breath of God. Her linen garment comes from the hot breath of God, and her jasper dress of light around the New City from the cold. We shall speak further of this as we progress in our studies.

How sad it is that at the close of the Church Age, the Priest finds nothing for which He may commend them, all of His words deal with the fault that is found among them—their lukewarmness. They were experiencing neither His hot breath nor His cold breath; therefore, spiritual apostasy was in their midst.

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art luke warm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: (Revelation 3:15-17).

The Prophet speaks prophetically of His judgment to those who are lukewarm. “I will spue thee out of my mouth.” Then the Priest continues to examine their works in further detail. The qualities that He finds in the Laodicean Church are certainly descriptive of the day in which we live.

A. REBELLIOUS PROFESSION

As already mentioned, fallen Lucifer’s Head of Rebellion was against the Laodicean Church. We see this rebellion expressed in the following description.

1. Rich

Full marriage union with Jesus Christ involves more than outward conformity to His will. Spiritual pride grows quickly in the heart that knows only the outward aspect of the marriage relationship. It is possible to accept and obey the will of God without loving that will. When God put Laodicea into positions that would force her to acknowledge her need for greater inward surrender and obedience, she rebelliously declared, “I am rich.” This statement was true up to a point. If she compared herself with those who knew little or nothing about walking under the headship and authority of Jesus Christ, the Living Ark, then she was indeed rich. She had been able to see and examine the golden beauty of the Ark; she had felt the glory of His presence and had seen the cherubims of mercy that covered the Ark. Yes, she had many rich experiences in comparison to others. But she was poor as far as knowing all the rich treasures that Jesus had reserved inside the Ark for the One who would surrender inwardly to keep humbling her heart as much and as often as the Bridegroom deemed that she should.

2. Increased with Goods

Surely Laodicea was counting the spiritual goods that she had accumulated in the course of her spiritual journey. Since the Priest did not commend her for the wise use of these goods, we can conclude that she, rather than the Bridegroom, had assumed authority over them.

In the book of Ezekiel, God brought a serious charge against Israel when she took the things that God had given her and used them to exalt herself before the heathen nations. God began His case against Israel by reminding her of the extreme poverty in which He had found her.

...Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy Father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite. And as for thy nativity, in the day thou wast born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to

supple thee; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all. None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the lothing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born. And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood. Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood. Live (Ezekiel 16:3-6).

It would be difficult to picture any greater spiritual poverty than the poverty that Israel knew when God passed by. If He had not spoken the Word of Life, Israel would have miserably perished in the pollution of her own blood. The next several verses of Ezekiel 16 tell how God blessed her spiritually so that she grew and became beautiful. In tune, God spread His skirt of love over her to cover her nakedness; He entered into a covenant with her and took her unto Himself. He washed and anointed His Bride; He clothed her with beautiful garments and decked her with ornaments and jewels. He provided her with the finest food. At this point the Bible says, “And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God” (Ezekiel 16:14).

Israel had a perfect opportunity to witness to the world about the goodness of her spiritual Husband, yet God had to say:

But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown, and pouredst out thy fornications on every one that passed by; his it was. And of thy garments thou didst lake, and deckedst thy high places with divers colours, and playedst the harlot thereupon: the like things shall not come, neither shall it be so (Ezekiel 16:15,16).

It matters not how many *goods* that we possess; if we use them to exalt ourselves, they can bring us nothing but misery, shame, and separation from our spiritual Husband.

3. Need Nothing

Laodicea rebelliously declared, in so many words, “I need no help from God. I am independent and totally self-sufficient. I have enough, I don’t need the treasures inside of the Ark; therefore, I need not humble myself any more.” The Head of Rebellion causes people to become totally satisfied in themselves.

Beloved, if we would always remember how desperately that we needed the Lord when He first spoke the Words of Life to our soul, we would realize that our need is even greater today because our stature is greater. Nowhere in time or in eternity will we ever be in such a state that we can afford to say, “Jesus, I no longer need You.”

B. IGNORANCE

The Heads of Rebellion and Ignorance both war against the Church of Laodicea. Rebellion and ignorance go together; we rebel because we are ignorant. When the light of understanding comes, it is easy to deal with our rebellion.

Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: (Revelation 3:17).

Let us note the condition in which their ignorance placed them.

1. Wretched

To be wretched is to be contemptible and despicable. One can actually be utterly wretched, but when the Head of Ignorance comes against us, we are ignorant of our wretched condition. We then blame our condition on everyone and everything, failing to realize that our lukewarm relationship with God is the core of our whole problem.

2. Miserable

The word *misery* means pitiful, in pain, to be in a painful condition. Many experience misery over their sins, but

the Head of Ignorance keeps them deceived, so they fail to realize their need for God.

3. Poor

We are ignorant, of our spiritual poverty when we are lukewarm because we ignore the faithful and true witness of Jesus Christ. Lukewarmness produces ignorance of our real condition. The riches of God's Word, His treasures of love, joy, and peace can be ours: and yet, sometimes we are poverty stricken because of our lukewarm hearts.

4. Blind

The Head of Ignorance takes advantage of a lukewarm heart and blinds our eyes to the Word of God. So many pearls of truth lie hidden because the eyes of our understanding are blinded. We are also blind to our own faults; sometimes we think that we are, further along on our journey than we really are. Blindness hinders us in the race, causing us to stumble and fall.

5. Naked

The word *naked* means to be bare and without any covering. The lukewarm can find no place to hide from God, for "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:13).

So we see the Heads of Rebellion and Ignorance being thrust against the Laodicean Church. If the enemy can keep people ignorant of God's way, then he has defeated them, bringing them to a state of rebellion against God. All this is descriptive of the day in which we live, for dispensationally speaking, we are in the last church period, the Laodicean age. Individually, we may be in other positions of the stature in our spiritual journey, but we still fight this Laodicean battle because we are living in this dispensation time-wise. We have to contend with all the lukewarmness which goes along with this age, plus the particular battle that has to do with our individual place of growth. The Laodicean Church is in the head realm, and the emphasis of the battle is directed toward the minds of men. The Heads of Ignorance and Rebellion particularly work against our minds.

The High Priest continues speaking and begins to counsel them in view of their desperate situation. He takes the position of a lawyer, giving the Laodicean Church His legal advice, help, and instruction.

I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and while raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see (Revelation 3:18).

Even though this church is found in the head realm, they had lost their linen and their raiment covering. Laodicea was Like Israel in the sixteenth chapter of Ezekiel. Although Israel had been brought to Canaan's land and had been clothed with linen and other beautiful clothing, she had lost all of these things when she committed spiritual whoredom against God. Israel's spiritual adultery caused God to prophesy to her that He would allow her lovers to strip her of her clothes and leave her naked and bare.

Laodicea stands in a similar position. The Heads of Ignorance and Rebellion had stripped her of her white raiment and linen. Spiritual growth is an individual matter, not a collective one. The shame of our nakedness, the same shame that Adam male and female acknowledged in the garden, is first covered by the white robes which are presented as a gift when we accept Jesus Christ and His shed Blood for our sin. Those who grow up into the shoulder realm of the spiritual stature receive the white raiment; however, those who press on into the head realm receive the white linen. The only way we will receive white raiment or white linen is to buy it. To *buy* means to gather, a process of exchange, to purchase, to redeem. We buy from God as we give ourselves, our wills, in exchange for His golden self, His will, His faith, "...buy of me gold..." As we offer our self-life to Him in exchange for spiritual substance, we will receive His gold en faith, His divine faith—the faith of the Christ that has already been tried in the fire.

As we repent, pray, and seek to do His will, we begin to possess the true riches of God that are found in the full stature of God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. What adequate and glorious garments have been provided for our covering.

“Anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.” To *anoint* means to rub in. We need the oil of the Spirit of God upon our vision, upon our faculties of sight. We have so much sand and grit of this world embedded in our eyes that it takes a thorough rubbing to loosen it and rid ourselves of it. Jesus tells us that it is hypocritical to concern ourselves so much with the mote in our brother’s eye when we are failing to take care of the beam in our own eye. If we are honest with ourselves, willingly confessing our needs to the Lord, He will heal our eyesight, and allow us to see even as He sees.

III. HE MINISTERS AS PROPHET

A. PROPHECIES JUDGMENT

So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth (Revelation 3:16).

What a terrible judgment! The backslidden wife is to be spewed out of His mouth in rejection unless she repents. He judges after the heart and not after the outward appearance or the words of the mouth. Jesus Christ not only judges those who have known Him as the Bridegroom, but He also judges those who have never known this union with Him. For example, we see the same terrible thing happening to a group of professors who were imitators, appearing to be the servants of the Lord, but who actually possessed no reality of relationship with the Lord.

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day. Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Matthew 7:21-23).

To the casual reader it may seem to be unjust judgment on the part of the Lord to deal so harshly with these people who professed to have done so many good things in His Name. But notice, the emphasis is upon the fact “many will say.” Simply saying it does not make it so. These are false claims. The Lord judges rightly when He designates them as “workers of iniquity,” because He is a just and righteous judge. Their claims of righteousness are empty professions, undoubtedly raised in defense as they stand before the Lord to give an account of their lives. Jesus preceded His words of judgment here by His lesson on recognizing the nature of a tree by its fruits. A good tree must bring forth good fruit because its nature is good; likewise, a corrupt tree produces corrupt fruit. So then, the Lord knows the excuses that we will present in the day of judgment, and they will carry no weight with Him. “Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire” (Matthew 7:19). Even so He will say, “I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” Thus, His judgment to the professing class of people is the same as the judgment passed upon the Laodicean Church to whom He said, “I will spue thee out of my mouth.” The Prophet does not stop with the judgment. He continues by enumerating the blessings that the individual overcomer can expect.

B. PROPHECIES BLESSING

Jesus Christ is excluded and “pushed out” of the Laodicean Church age as a whole, but He is still knocking at the heart’s door for the benefit of those individuals who will respond. In spite of the prevailing lukewarm condition of the age, there is still hope and the promise of personal attainment.

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches (Revelation 3:19-22).

1. I Will Come

2. Sup with Him

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law (Galatians 5:22,23).

d. Self-Denial
(Temperance)

b. Surrender
(Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness,
Goodness)

c. Revelation
(Faith, Meekness)

a. Appreciation
(Love, Joy)

Our very first offering to Jesus ought to be our appreciation for all He has done for us. We owe a great debt of gratitude for whatever we have experienced spiritually, for whatever degree of growth that we have attained. When we begin to spread our appreciation before Him, then the fruits of love and joy begin to grow in our hearts. Certainly we do not produce these fruits if we are busily moaning and complaining and nurturing the miseries of life. If this is what we are spreading on our table, naturally we will be wretched, miserable, and utterly blind. But if we want to grow the fruits of love and joy, then we must continually spread forth our appreciation to our Beloved Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ.

b. Surrender

Our communion with the Lord begins with appreciation, from which we progress into surrender to His will and way. Surrendering to do God's will brought suffering and crucifixion to Jesus. There is no way to escape suffering in this life, in or out of the will of God, but true surrender esteems the reward as worth the cost. Although our surrenders will deepen and become more all-encompassing as we grow in stature, each degree of surrender will produce true fruits of the Spirit. Surrender produces peace and longsuffering. Through any storm that rages, surrender brings a real calm within the breast. And with surrender comes the grace to suffer long. Longsuffering will still the cries of the flesh when it asks, "Why Lord?...how long Lord?" Surrender also begets gentleness and goodness. A heart that is yielded to the will of God can be gentle toward others. It also manifests goodness, for a surrendered will is clothed with the fragrance of humility and beautifully displays the goodness that flows from the nature of God.

c. Revelation

When we are spreading a table for the Lord to feast upon, we can set before Him the revelations we have already received. There is power in rehearsing past revelations of truth, which encourage the growth of faith, which in turn, produces meekness. As we remind ourselves of the things God has already revealed to us, we are strengthened in our knowledge of the nature of our God, of the principles of His operations, of His mighty works, of His forgiveness—we could go on and on. As we drink of the truth that we already know, we are humbled, and his humility expresses itself as meekness before men.

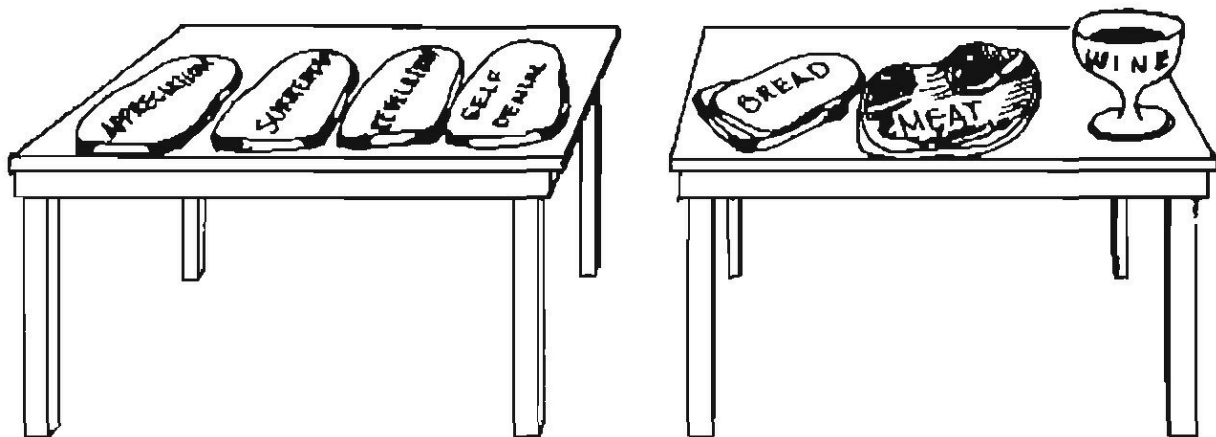
d. Self-denial

Jesus provides the perfect example of the principle of self-denial. He came to serve, even to the point of offering Himself as a sacrifice upon the cross. The mantle of servitude is now passed on to us: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him" (John 13:16). Self-denial is necessary to serve others, and as we minister to the needy, we are also ministering unto Jesus. Whatever we do for the Lord carries a price tag, but self-denial produces the fruit of temperance or self-control. Without self-control or temperance, we can never serve others. Opportunities to serve others never come at a convenient time; therefore, we must have self-control and self-denial to minister as the needs arise.

We spread appreciation, surrender, revelation, and self-denial on our table for the Lord to feast upon. We have categorized the nine fruits of the Spirit which Jesus will feast upon in our lives.

3. Sup with Me

Jesus comes first to our table, then He spreads a table before us. On His table He always serves something new that we have not eaten of before. There will be the new meat of the Word and the new wine of the Spirit. If He is not spreading such a table for us, beloved, then it is because we are failing to spread the table before Him first. He expects to eat of our appreciation, our surrenders, our revelations, and our self-denial. If not, then there is no table spread before us either.



4. Reign with Him

The Laodicean period is the hardest area in which to overcome, for having come so high in growth and stature, it is easy to become spiritually proud and feel that we have already attained the heights and can be complacent. But there are yet great battles to be won; we must overcome the Heads of Rebellion and Ignorance plus the spirit of lukewarmness that prevails here. The overcomers at this church level are in the Bride of Christ, and they shall reign and rule with the Bridegroom throughout eternity. The Bride overcomes the many obstacles in her journey, even as He overcame all of His; therefore, she will reign with Jesus Christ even as He was rewarded with rulership with His Father.

The following chart summarizes our studies of the churches, what they overcame, and their rewards.

SUMMARY OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES

CHURCH	OVERCOME		REWARD FOR OVERCOMER
	WILD VINE	HEADS-LUCIFER	
1. Ephesus	Relaxing spirit Works over Love Nicolaitans	Deceit	Eat of the Tree of Life in the paradise of God
2. Smyrna	Synagogue of Satan	Affliction & Blasphemy	Crown of Life Not hurt of the second death
3. Pergamos	Satan's throne Doctrine of Balaam Nicolaitans	Enchantment	Eat of hidden manna A white stone with a new name
4. Thyatira	Satan's Prophet Doctrine of Balaam	Enchantment	Power over the nations Rule with Rod of Iron The Morning Star
5. Sardis	Spiritually Dead	Death	Clothed in white raiment Not be blotted out of Book of Life Confess name before His Father

6. Philadelphia	Synagogue of Satan	Affliction & Blasphemy	Pillar in temple of God Write upon him: 1) Name of my God 2) Name of City 3) My new Name
7. Laodicea	Lukewarmness	Ignorance & Rebellion	Sit with me in my Throne

This closes the messages to the seven churches. These lessons are meaningful to us because the revelation of each message says “HE that hath an ear, let HIM hear what the Spirit saith to the churches;...” Thus we understand that spiritual overcoming and growth is an individual matter. Each person must lay hold of the stature of the Living Word of God for himself in order to know the reality of growing up in God and reaching spiritual maturity.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

DEGREES OF REWARD

From our studies in the previous chapters, we have learned that there are definite eternal rewards reserved for believers at each level of experience and growth in spiritual stature. Those who continue to grow in the nature of Jesus Christ must overcome many opposing forces, but the ones who overcome more, receive greater rewards. Our degree of surrender to do God's will determines the amount of spiritual growth that the Lord will help us attain. The Apostle Paul had a vision of the ultimate goal in God when he said, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect be thus minded..." (Philippians 3:14,15).

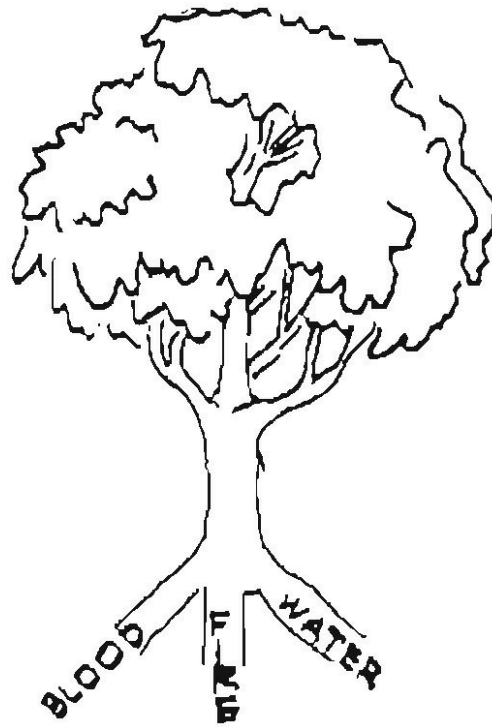
There is a prize—the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. The Bride of Jesus Christ will deny the self-life, crucify the flesh, and fast and pray. This is why we seek to know Him as our Brazen Altar, appropriating the Blood of the sin offering, the Blood of the whole burnt offering (or consecration), and the Blood of the peace offering. This is why we seek to know the fire of the Holy Ghost with His power, His gifts, and His sanctifying work; and why we press on into the Laver to take on His Name, enter into His Death, and come forth in the newness of His Life. This is the reason we come before the Golden Altar of Incense, entering into travailing prayer, intercessory prayer, and asking prayer. This is why we delight in the light of the Golden Candlestick, gaining its wisdom, understanding, and knowledge. This is the reason that we covet to know Him as our Table of Shewbread, where we partake of the strength of the Bread and receive the unveiling of the hidden mysteries of the Word. This is why we constantly press onward and upward into the stature of Christ—that we might finally come into the Holiest of Holies and know a oneness of relationship with Him at the Mercy Seat and at the Ark of the Covenant with its judgments and covenants. There is a prize, and that prize is being made One with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The Bride is an incomprehensible prize, staggering to the human mind. The hint that mortal man could reach such heights would be inconceivable except for the knowledge that we obtain through God's revealed Word that the Bride is God's provision for His Son that together they might share in God's eternal purpose.

Why else would Paul have expressed such urgency of desire? He was already a Christian believer, and he had already rendered faithful service to His Lord at the risk of his life and the setting aside of his creaturely comforts. The record makes these facts clear. Nevertheless, he said:

Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may WIN Christ. And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may KNOW HIM, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead (Philippians 3:8-11).

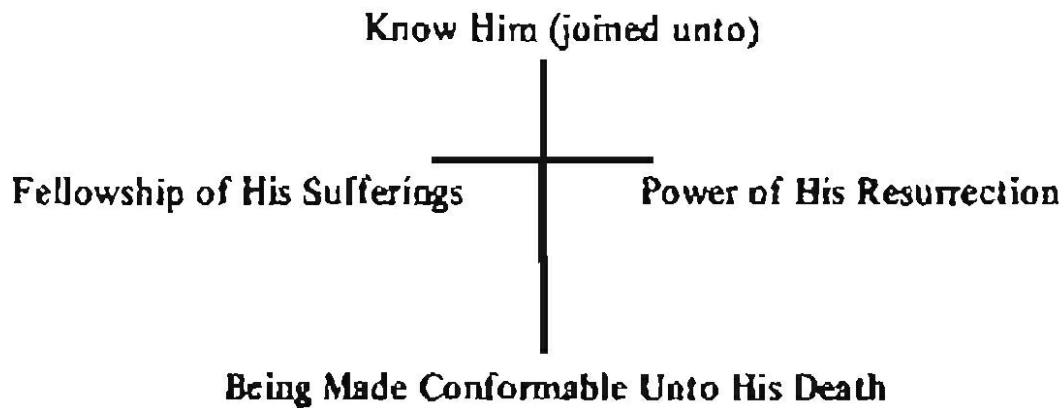
At this point in his life, Paul knew that he had not yet attained the prize, but by forgetting the things that were behind, he kept reaching for the things ahead, pressing toward the mark. Relentlessly, he pursued the PRIZE—THE HIGH CALLING—IN CHRIST JESUS!

The Apostle Paul already had his spiritual foundation well laid. He had laid hold of the spiritual experiences which were typed by the Blood, Fire, and Water in the Courtyard of the Old Testament Tabernacle, yet Paul yearned to KNOW HIM. The word *know* is the same word used in reference to marital union; therefore, it carries the thought of being made one. Beloved, the Blood, Fire, and Water is a gift to us. Whatever we possess beyond that point comes through our own works of faith. The foundational experiences are the substances with which we can grow up into full stature. They are like the roots that support and nourish a tree in its upward growth.



Each day we must apply the Blood, Fire, and Water by faith to our own flesh in order to reach new heights and depths in the stature of the Lord Jesus Christ. Growing up in God is strictly a personal matter involving personal effort and dedication.

Let us look at the stature of Paul's desire, for it shows us the things for which our own heart must cry if we hope to be in the Bride of Jesus Christ.



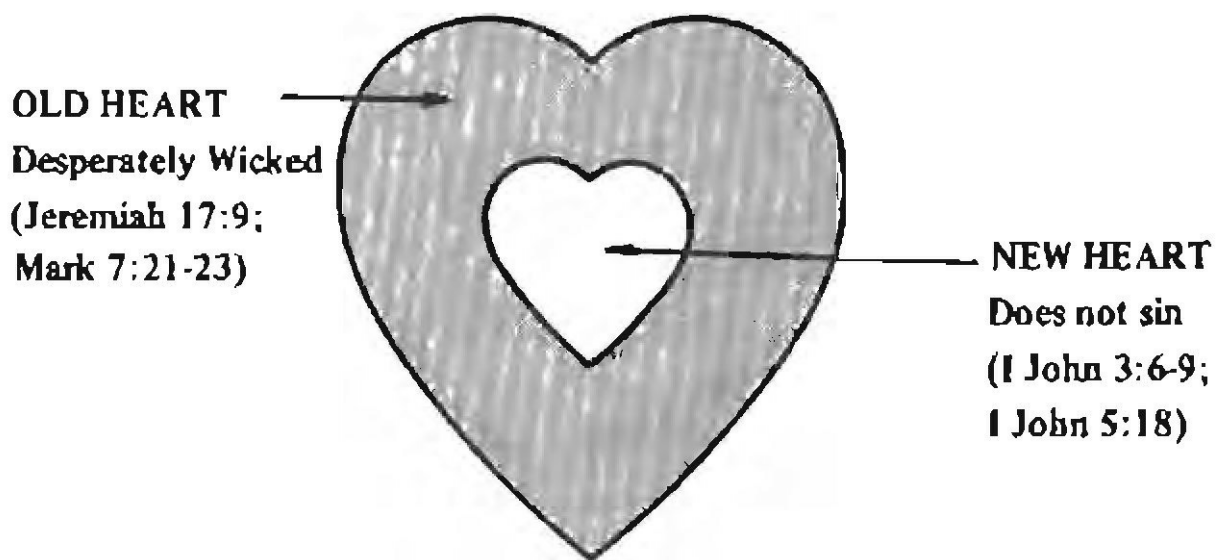
The Bride of Christ will be conformed to His death and share in His sufferings—His sufferings of humility, denial, obedience, and surrender, even the surrender for the Cross. If we are to walk in His footsteps, we must deny ourselves daily and take up the Cross. In the Greek, the phrase, “attain unto the resurrection of the dead” actually reads, “attain unto the resurrection *out from among the dead*.” All overcomers, the whole wedding party, will be caught away at the rapture; however, within those raptured ones will be a special group called the Bride of Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul exclaimed “If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead—if by any means I might be one of those special ones called the Bride.”

In order to grow up into the stature of Christ, we must, by experience, know the way of the Cross—the Crucified Way. The very word *growth* implies the existence of some degree of immaturity. Paul conveyed this thought in his epistle to the Ephesians.

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:...But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ (Ephesians 4:11-15).

After His death, resurrection, and ascension, Jesus Christ gave to the church, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers for the perfecting of the saints. If the saints were already perfect, there would be no need for these ministries. Beloved, we are called to *grow* unto a perfect man, praise His sweet Name!

Before we can grow, we must first humble our hearts and acknowledge our spiritual need. When Adam male and female sinned, the human heart became totally corrupted. God could find no clean spot, as it were, where He could plant a seed of righteousness which could be brought to fruition by His care. Every human being is born with a depraved nature. However, when we accept Jesus Christ as our Saviour, He creates a new heart, a new nature, a new man within us. Our new heart is spiritual, created in righteousness and true holiness (Ephesians 4:24).



Our new heart, perfect in the same way that a newborn baby is perfect, must grow and possess all the territory occupied by the old carnal heart. Through this new creation, this new heart, God begins His process of cleansing, sanctifying, and crucifying our carnal, corrupt nature. His desire is to bring oneness between our fleshly man and our new man. As our old man is cleansed and sanctified, it is joined in oneness of relationship with the new man, who is joined in oneness to Jesus Christ Himself; thus, through our new man we are privileged to experience marriage union with Jesus Christ.

ONENESS OF RELATIONSHIP

Old Heart

New Heart

Heart of Jesus Christ



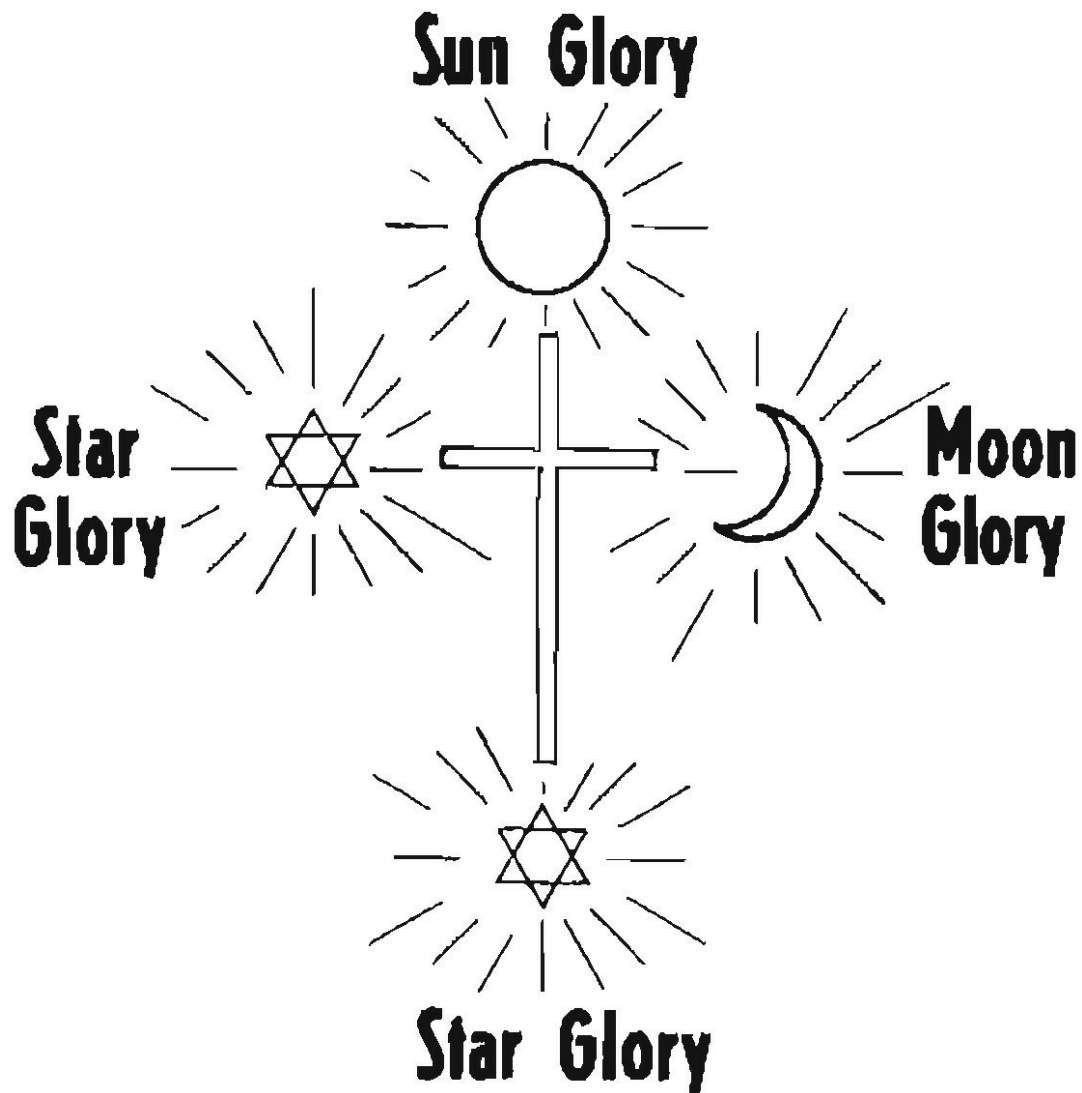
Although the new heart is very small in the beginning, it is perfect as far as it has grown. As the new nature, the spiritual man, is fed and nurtured by the Spirit and the Word, it grows and reaches new degrees of maturity. The new heart is not carnal nor corrupt; it is perfect in each stage of growth, though it has not reached full maturity. As the new nature becomes stronger, the old one becomes weaker, until at last the old nature can no longer assert its authority and control as it did in the past.

Paul admonished the Christians at Ephesus to grow up to their Head, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Even spiritual babes have no problem being joined to the Headship of Christ when it means blessing and exaltation, but one must have attained a degree of spiritual growth to accept and love His Headship when it brings suffering and humiliation into our lives. Growth is natural and normal if we abide by the rules of good spiritual nutrition (faithful prayer and Bible study), and thereby maintain spiritual fitness. Growth is absolutely essential if we hope to obtain the prize at the end of this spiritual journey.

Resurrection morning will reveal exactly how much stature and glory we have attained during this Life. While walking in the footprints of the Crucified Christ, we gain stature and glory that will be ours eternally. In the Book of Corinthians Paul tells us what the resurrection will be like.

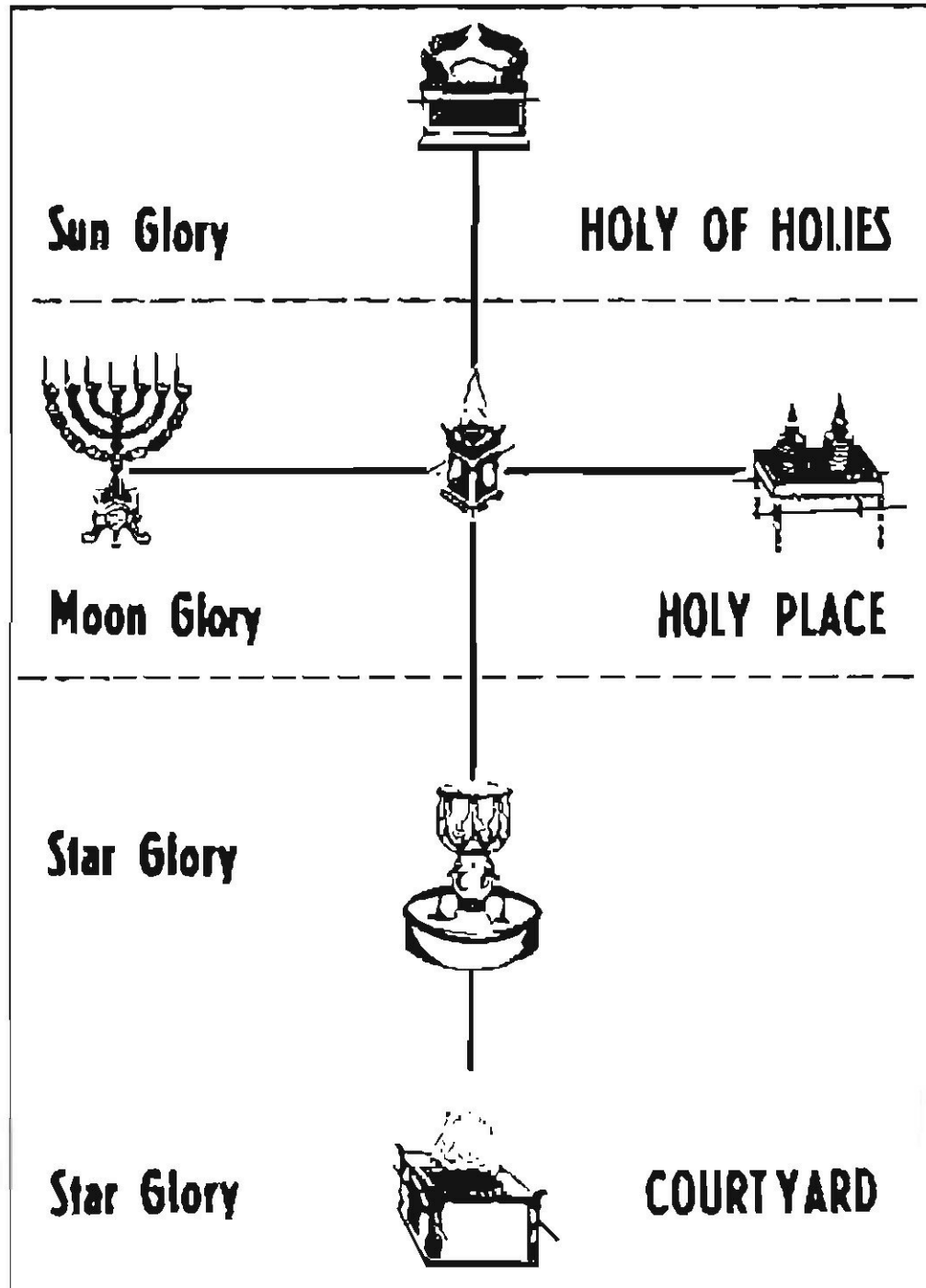
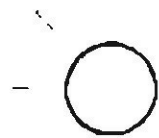
There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So ALSO IS THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption (I Corinthians 15:41,42).

This Scripture compares our resurrected bodies with degrees of glory. On resurrection morning, every believer will arise with a resurrected body that will shine with one of these four degrees of glory.



In eternity some Christians will shine like little stars; others will shine with a little brighter star glory. Some Christians will have gained enough of the stature of the Lord Jesus Christ to shine with the glory of the moon. Then there will be those who have grown into full spiritual maturity, having their wills joined in marriage union to the will of Jesus Christ. It is this final class of Christians, the Bride, who will possess the highest degree of glory—the glory of the Sun.

Since the Mosaic Tabernacle gives the most complete picture of the stature of Jesus Christ, we can expect to find the same degrees of glory reflected there. If we divide the degrees of glory according to the Tabernacle pattern, they appear this way.



Jesus Christ dealt with the matter of stature when He gave the parable of the laborers in the vineyard which is recorded in Matthew 20. Although the laborers of the first hour had agreed to work for a penny a day, they accused the householder of injustice because he paid those who went to work in the eleventh hour the same wage that he paid them—a penny. Their pride of revelation argued that they were worthy of more than the eleventh hour laborers, but they failed to realize that those who went to work in the last hour had worked as hard and had accomplished as much in one hour as they had in the whole day. Therefore, the householder was justified in paying both groups the same wage. The moral of the parable reveals that God rewards according to spiritual stature, or in other words spiritual growth, rather than according to the length of time spent in the vineyard.

Many people delight in telling how many years they have been in “The Way,” but a close look at their lives discloses that they have never grown beyond spiritual babyhood.

In the very beginning of his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul acknowledged the fact that the church possessed all of the spiritual gifts.

I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; That in everything ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, in all knowledge; Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: *So that you come behind in no gift*; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 1:4-7).

After reading these verses, one might think that the Corinthian Church was a church of spiritual giants; but this was not true, for in chapter three, Paul called them spiritual babes (I Corinthians 3:1-3). Thus we understand that the gifts of the Spirit are exactly what God calls them—gifts. God does not bestow spiritual gifts on us *because* we are spiritually mature. On the contrary, the gifts are given to help us grow to maturity.

Spiritual maturity is much more than being able to operate spiritual gifts, as wonderful and glorious as they are. Spiritual maturity is evidenced by our ability to speak and behave with the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ during the trying circumstances of life. For example, the disciples were given power to heal the sick, raise the dead, and cast out devils; but how did they act when the final crisis came? They went to sleep; they forsook Jesus. Peter was the one who made such loud boasts about loving Jesus more than all the rest. When later he found that he could not use his fleshly sword to redeem the situation, Peter went so far as to curse and deny that he even knew the man who had been his constant companion for over three years.

How did Jesus Christ, the mature One, behave when He was faced with death in the garden? Jesus made the ultimate surrender—“and he said. Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away the cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt” (Mark 14:36). He surrendered to die alone in the garden rather than to lift one finger of His omnipotent power to save Himself.

While the innocent One hung between heaven and earth, He looked down upon those who had stripped Him, mocked Him, spit upon Him, beat Him, and nailed Him to the Cross. Man’s natural reaction would be to loathe and despise the ones who had inflicted him with humiliation and pain, but Jesus cried “...Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do...” (Luke 23:34). One glimpse of Jesus Christ shows us that we have room for greater spiritual growth.

Beloved, we are living in the eleventh hour; the coming of the Lord is at hand. Let us take full advantage of the moments that are left to us by crucifying our fleshly nature and laying hold of the glorious nature of Christ. In eternity, when the rewards are given, it will do no good for us to tell how many years we served in the vineyard or how many gifts we possessed. Regardless of how many souls we have led to the Lord, or how many years of ministry and service we have rendered to Him, the Word of God still declares that we are all “unprofitable servants.” The Lord will be looking for stature, for spiritual growth, because our reward is based on spiritual maturity, not on years of service.

There is another clear example in the Word of God of the three distinctions, or phases, of growth. God called the children of Israel out of Egypt (the world) to go to Canaan’s land, Beulah land, marriage land. Her spiritual growth is revealed by the three names which God called her. As Israel progressed in her journey, God recognized her first as a Son, then as a Church, and finally as a Wife. In Egypt, Israel was called a Son.

And thou shall say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, *Israel is my son*, even my firstborn (Exodus 4:22).

When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and *called my son our of Egypt* (Hosca 11:1).

In Egypt, Israel first experienced the blood for redemption from death (Exodus 12). She had not gone far in her journey until she came to Etham (Exodus 13) where God gave her a second spiritual experience, that of the cloud and fire. The cloud and fire which led and protected Israel is a type of the baptism of the Holy Ghost (I Corinthians 10:1-4). Israel’s third experience came when she crossed the Red Sea (Exodus 14). This experience is comparable to outward baptism in the Name, Death, and Life of the Lord Jesus Christ, The foundational experiences of blood, fire, and water took Israel out of Egypt. At this stage of her journey Israel possessed the star glory that Paul mentions in I Corinthians.

During the wilderness phase of her journey, Israel was called a Church. Here she was Lifted up to the degree of moon glory, as it were.

This is that Moses which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me: him shall ye hear. This is he, that was in *the church in the wilderness* with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us: (Acts 7:37,38).

In the wilderness, Israel ate Manna and drank water out of the Living Rock (the Rock was Christ, the Living Word of God, I Corinthians 10:1-4). It was at this time that God revealed His commandments and gave the blueprint for building the Tabernacle; however, in spite of all of these spiritual experiences, Israel was not known as the wife of God until after she reached Canaan's land.

For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name... (Isaiah 54:5).

Thou shall no more be termed Forsaken: neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate; but thou shall be called Hephzi-bah [My delight is in her], and thy land Beulah [married]: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married (Isaiah 62:4).

In order to reach this exalted place, spiritually speaking, Israel had to cross the River Jordan. While standing in the midst of Jordan, the priests held the Ark of the Covenant upon their shoulders and Israel passed under that Ark as a demonstration that she was taking the Ark to be her Head. By agreeing to walk under the Headship of the Lord, Israel entered into spiritual marriage relationship with God, and as His Bride she walked in the light of His full Sun glory.

Thus we see that the three phases of Israel's spiritual growth mirror the various degrees of glory that the Apostle Paul mentions in reference to the resurrected body.

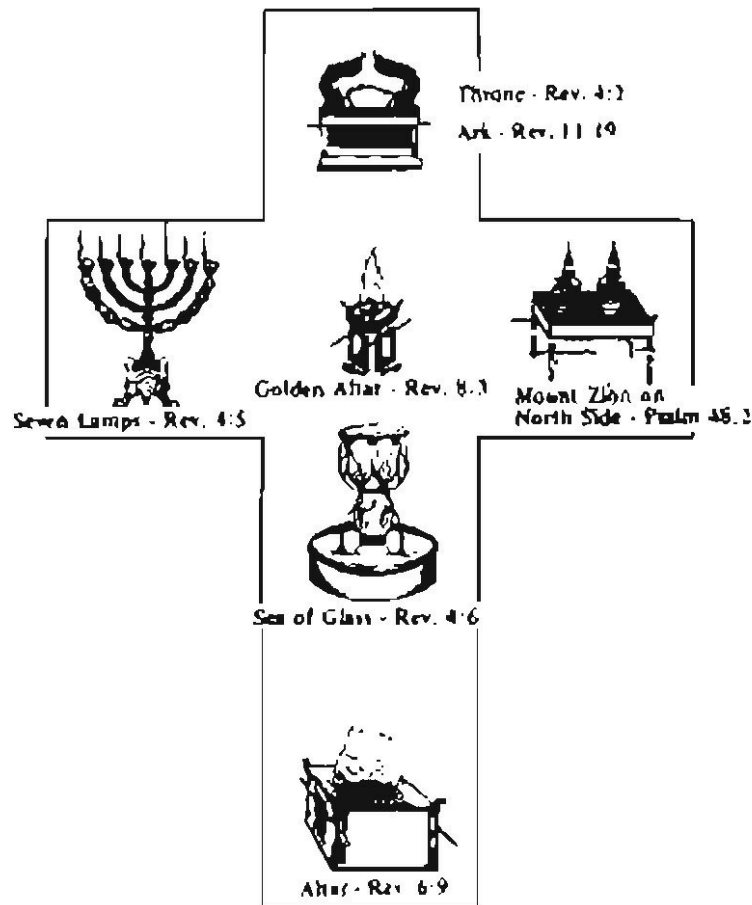
The resurrected body is also likened to a house (an abode, a dwelling place) and to clothing (something which we must put on or wear).

For we know that if our earthly house [body] of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heaven. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so that being clothed we shall not be found naked (II Corinthians 5:1-3).

The Book of Revelation describes three distinct kinds of clothing worn by the saints: White Robes, White Raiment, and White Linen. This spiritual apparel is exceedingly important, for our eternal abiding place is determined by the resurrected garment that we will wear.

In order to fully appreciate some of the things found in the Book of Revelation, we should mention that God has a Heavenly Temple which is laid out in the form of a cross. This is obvious from the fact that the literal Mosaic Tabernacle was identically patterned after the one in heaven. God told Moses four times to make certain that he constructed the earthly tabernacle according to the pattern that was shown to him on the mount (Exodus 25:9; 25:40; 26:30; and 27:8). Every detail of the Mosaic Tabernacle was important, for it represented the stature of Jesus Christ in shadow and type. God's heavenly Temple is important, for it reveals the various stages of spiritual growth. It also shows the present location of spiritual Mount Zion. On the top of Mount Zion is the New City which will come down out of heaven having the glory of God. Perhaps a diagram of the Heavenly Temple would be helpful at this time.

Heavenly Temple



Many people confuse the New Jerusalem with heaven. They think that all believers, regardless of their spiritual growth or maturity, will spend eternity in the New Jerusalem. However, careful study of God's Word refutes this teaching. As we pursue this study, we will clearly see that God has three eternal abodes for believers. This fulfills the principles laid out in the Old Testament. The Tabernacle had a Courtyard, a Holy Place, and a Holy of Holies. The Courtyard was open to the whole nation of Israel, while only the priests ministered in the Holy Place; and of the priests, only the High Priest entered into the Holy of Holies.

Many truths in the Book of Revelation are woven around the stature of the Heavenly Temple, and this is particularly true in the study of the three degrees of clothing worn by the saints in eternity.

Let us look now at the various garments mentioned in the Book of Revelation, for they hold the key, as it were, to our eternal abode.

I. WHITE ROBES

John saw two groups of souls with white robes. In the Greek, the word *robe* means a long gown worn as a mark of dignity; the word *white* means light. The resurrected body is, therefore, a garment of the light and glory of the Word of God.

And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy

and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And *white robes were given unto every one of them*; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled (Revelation 6:9-11).

Notice that these souls did not have their robes, their resurrected bodies, at the beginning of the vision. They were crying to the Lord from under the altar. This position in itself lets us know the immaturity of their stature. Then when they speak, their words confirm that they are still spiritual babes. In so many words they were saying, “How long is this trial going to last? How long will you wait. God, before doing something about my problem?” These were the words of people whose faith had never matured. They still wondered “Is God powerful enough to resurrect our bodies from the grave and join them with our souls and spirits? Will He be good enough to clothe us with the portion of His glory that we obtained back on earth?” Beloved, He who resurrected Jesus Christ from the dead is good enough and powerful enough to resurrect everyone who has ever trusted Him for salvation. Praise His Name forever!

John watched as the babes were given their white robes and were told to rest for a season. In chapter seven, John saw another group wearing the white robes of salvation.

After this [the sealing of the 12 tribes of natural Israel] I beheld, and, lo, a *great multitude*, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, *clothed with white robes* and palms in their hands: And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb...And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him. Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them while in the blood of the Lamb, Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes (Revelation 7:9-17).

Some teach that the great multitude mentioned in this chapter are those who are saved during the tribulation period, but this is impossible since John saw this vision at the beginning of the tribulation rather than at the end of it. When John saw them, they were already wearing their white robes, proving that they had already received their glorified bodies. These are redeemed people wearing the white robes of salvation.

Verse 15 says that the great multitude stood *before* the throne of God. The word *before* means in the face of, in the eyes of. In the natural it is possible to stand before a house and still not be standing IN the house. Jesus promised that the overcomers of the Laodicean Church would sit with Him IN His throne (Revelation 3:21). In eternity God will move His throne to the New City (Revelation 22:1). Only the Bride will share this degree of unity with the reigning power and authority of the Bridegroom.

Verse 15 also clearly establishes the eternal abode of the white robed group of believers.

Therefore are they before the throne of God, *and serve him day and night in his temple*: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them (Revelation 7:15).

God’s temple is in heaven; therefore, we know that the white robed group will serve Him day and night in heaven. Since heaven has no natural sun and moon, the expression “day and night” cannot refer to a solar day and night such as we have on the earth. Beloved, the Bible is its own best commentary. In Revelation 14:11, we see that the terminology “day and night” means FOREVER. “And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they had no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name” (Revelation 14:11). Thus, we can understand that the ones who wear white robes never leave heaven; they will stay there forever and ever. God will dwell among them by His omnipresence in the same way that He dwells in the world today. These white robed ones will weep (Revelation 7:17) because they have missed the prize of being in the Bride of Jesus Christ: nevertheless, God’s mercy will lead them to living fountains of waters.

II. WHITE RAIMENT

And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, *clothed in white raiment*: and they had on their heads crowns of gold (Revelation 4:4).

Here we see a group of believers wearing white raiment. The word *white* again indicates the glory, light, and radiance of their garment, but the word *raiment* is a different Greek word from the one used to identify white robes. The word *raiment* means to put on an outer and an inner garment. Thus we understand that the white raiment group goes further in the process of clothing themselves. They wear not only the outer robe of dignity, the robe of salvation; they also wear an inner robe of power. According to an eastern custom, the more clothing which one wears, the greater the wealth and position of that individual. This is true in the spiritual realm also. The white raiment ones have pressed on further in stature and have attained greater wealth and position of authority and prominence.

Since the elders wore crowns upon their heads, we know that they held exalted positions. God's rule for receiving exaltation was given by King Solomon in the Book of Proverbs.

The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom: and *before honour is humility* (Proverbs 15:33).

Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and *before honour is humility* (Proverbs 18:12).

During their earthly journey, these saints laid hold of the humility of Jesus Christ, the raiment which clothed them with power to rule over the fleshly dispositions and desires of their own hearts. The humility that they exercised in their personal lives will make it possible for them to be trusted with ruling power and authority over those who will dwell on the new earth in physical bodies.

The Scripture stating that the new earth will be the eternal abode of the white raiment group is found in chapter five.

And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:8-10).

From this Scripture, we see that the white raiment group includes not only the twenty-four elders (a symbolic number), but also the four beasts (this is also a symbolic number). John describes these beasts in Revelation 4:6-8, which we will study in greater depth in chapter 12 of this book. Although we have no specific Scripture which tells us that the garments of the beasts are white raiment, yet we can logically conclude this from their placement around the throne and their ministry on the New Earth. During eternity the kings will have the privilege of *entering* into the New City (Revelation 21:24-26), but the New City will not be their *dwelling* place. In Revelation 5:10, the kings and priests (the beasts and the elders) say plainly, "We shall reign on the earth." This group has grown in spiritual stature to the shoulder realm and are therefore entrusted with governmental ruling power.

III. WHITE LINEN

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

The white linen exceeds the white robes and the white raiment in the same way that the glory of the sun outshines the glory of the stars and of the moon. The word *linen* comes from a Greek word meaning radiant, limpid, magnificent, sumptuous (in appearance), bright, clear, gay, goodly, gorgeous, white. It goes back to a root word which means to beam, to radiate brilliancy, *to give light*.

Beloved, it is one thing to POSSESS light; it is another thing to be able to GIVE light. The white robed group and

the white raiment group possess light for themselves, but they could not impart their light to others. For example, the white robed group possessed a single robe of salvation; they could not give that robe to another without stripping themselves. The white raiment group possess a garment of salvation and a garment of power, yet each of their garments was personal. Only the Bride of Jesus Christ will be able to GIVE light, for only she will be joined in perfect marriage relationship with the One who is the Light of the world.

When one glimpses the glory and beauty of the Lamb's Wife, a desire to be a part of the Bride immediately fills the heart. The Bible tells us that the Bride made herself ready. It also lets us know that her fine, white linen wedding dress was woven by her righteous thoughts, deeds, and attitudes. The Bride did not receive her wedding dress of glory by gift. The Bridegroom's gift to the Bride was her white robe of salvation that was formed through the foundational experiences of Blood, Fire, and Water. As she applied the Blood, Fire, and Water to her fleshly nature, her stature grew until she gained the white raiment of power. Clothed in the garments of humility power, she ruled and reigned over inward attitudes and dispositions that grieved the heart of her Bridegroom, and her stature continued to grow and mature. The Bride did more than learn ABOUT the pure, holy, righteous principles which govern the decisions and judgments of her spiritual Husband. Her own heart was so perfectly joined to His heart, that she practiced the same degree of humility and righteousness that she found in Him.

The Bride's righteousness manifested itself, first, toward her spiritual Bridegroom. While on earth, she learned to keep a right attitude toward God. She kept her thoughts, her words, and her behavior right, even in contrary, humiliating situations. Secondly, she learned to exercise righteousness toward those with whom she lived and ministered.

Jesus Christ is coming back particularly for His Bride; however, all the overcomers from the white robed group and the white raiment group will also be caught away at the rapture. As at natural weddings, there will be many others present in addition to the Bride and the Bridegroom at this spiritual wedding. When the trumpet sounds, the dead in Christ shall rise first; then those who are living shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. All overcoming saints, whether dead or alive, will be raptured to partake in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb in heaven.

There will be guests at the wedding (Matthew 22:1-10), and virgins (in eastern weddings bridesmaids were called virgins. Matthew 25:1-13), and the friend of the Bridegroom (comparable to the best man in our weddings, John 3:29). Everyone will shine with his garments of resurrected glory. Some will be wearing white robes; some will be wearing white raiment; but there will be only one who will be wearing white linen. The Lamb has only one Bride; she is singular and unique.

There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number. My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her. The daughters saw her, and blessed her; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her (Song of Solomon 6:8,9).

Psalm 45 gives another description of the Bride of Christ in the person of the king's daughter. The virgins, her companions, are mentioned, plus other honorable women; yet there is one who prepares herself more than the rest. It is she who is brought unto the king.

At the end of the tribulation period, and after the wedding supper is finished, Jesus Christ will return to sit upon the throne of David and commence His millennial reign upon the earth.

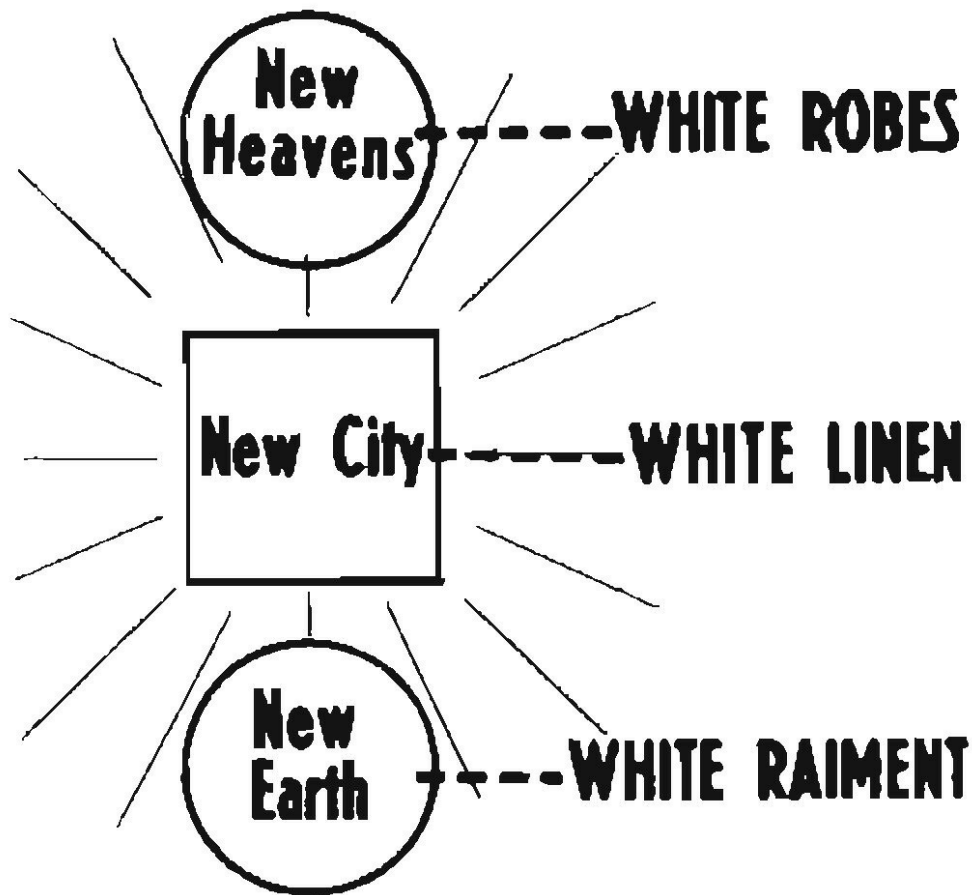
And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war...And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean (Revelation 19:11-14).

Many years before Christ came to the earth and took on a physical body, the Prophet (Joel) prophesied the Lord's return with His mighty army (Joel 2:1-11). The above Scripture states that the armies that return to the earth with the Lord at this time will be wearing white linen. Therefore, we know that this can be none other than the Bride herself. During Moses' time when Israel broke camp to move to another site, the different tribes formed ranks around the tabernacle and marched forward in the form of a cross. They also set up camp in this formation.* This is the same order the Bride will use when she returns with her Bridegroom when He establishes His righteous government on the earth.

This concludes our study on the three types of garments which resurrected believers will wear as described by

John in the Book of Revelation. We have learned that these garments display the degree of glory each believer has attained through his spiritual experiences and growth in stature while on this earth. We have also seen that the garment one will wear at the resurrection determines his eternal place of abode.

The Three Eternal Abodes Of Believers



Those who wear the white robe of salvation will remain in heaven throughout eternity (Revelation 7:15). Those wearing the white raiment garment of ruling authority will not return to the earth until after Christ's thousand year reign has ended. At that time, King David will again sit upon his throne (Jeremiah 30:7-9; Ezekiel 34:23; Ezekiel 37:24; Hosea 3:5; and Amos 9:11), and as kings and priests the white raiment group will share in the rule and reign of the New Earth. The Bride of Jesus Christ is the only one who spends eternity in the New Jerusalem in the personal presence of God and the Lamb.

Surely, the Bride will shout throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity that the sufferings of this life were not worthy to be compared with the glorious privilege of looking upon His face and being able to serve Him personally. God grant that each day will find every heart earnestly laying hold of spiritual stature, ever pressing upward, striving toward the Prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

* B. R. Hicks, [*Precious Gem in the Tabernacle*](#), (Jeffersonville, Indiana, 1961).

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS AND THE FOUR BEASTS (Revelation 4:1-11)

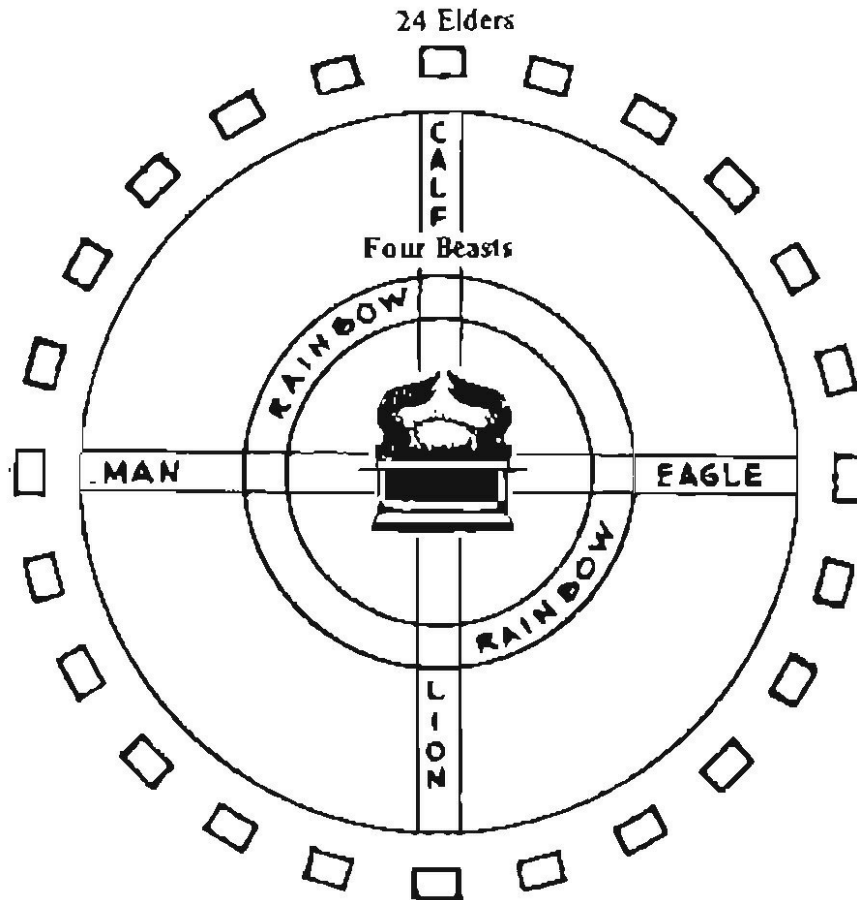
God gives a very impressive introduction to chapter four by opening the door to heaven.

After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter (Revelation 4:1).

What an invitation God extended to a mortal man! John is accosted personally by the trumpet Word of the King. We have already seen from the study of the trumpet Word that the voice of the trumpet prepares us to hear. It also places us in the right position (in humility at His feet) in anticipation of the revelation that is about to take place. In the first three chapters of the Book of Revelation, the King ministered as King, as Priest, and as Prophet in the midst of the seven churches. He continues to minister in these same three capacities as He invites John to come closer for a look into the future. The King alone has the power and authority to invite John to “come up hither.” John approaches the very throne of God where he receives a vision of the Lamb through the intercessory ministry of the Priest. Then the Prophet speaks saying, “I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.” Immediately, John is caught up in the Spirit, and God begins to unfold greater revelation.

And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold...And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle (Revelation 4:2-7).

God unveils His stature in the form of a cross, but He uses the wheel formation to reveal His works. In these Scriptures, we see the familiar circular formation of a wheel in heaven. The hub of the heavenly wheel is the throne of God; the spokes are the four beasts, and the rim is formed by the twenty-four elders.



Let us study the stature in this portion of Scripture.

IV. THE SPOKES - FOUR BEASTS

II. THE ONE ON THE
THRONE - GOD

III. THE RIM - ELDERS

I. THE THRONE

I. THE THRONE

Since God's throne was the first thing to catch John's attention in the vision, let us notice the details that he recorded about the throne.

A. THRONE SET

The word *set* means to lie, to be stretched out, laid up, to lay, be appointed. The word *set* lets us know that God's throne was established and settled forever; the word *set* also suggests the thought of humility. One understands that

in order to lie and to be stretched out, he must assume a position of prostration, which in one sense, the throne of God has done. How can mortal man understand the depths of God's condescension when He made His throne accessible to us all through His Son? Furthermore, He has made it possible for mere human beings to be joined to that throne of power and glory. Such humility goes beyond human comprehension.

B. OUT OF THE THRONE

And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings, and voices:...(Revelation 4:5).

John saw lightnings, thunderings, and voices proceeding out of the throne. God's natural creation types His spiritual creation, therefore, we can learn something of the spiritual significance of lightning and thunderings by considering these natural phenomena.

1. Lightnings - Separation

Natural lightning splits the clouds. We hear the loud clap of thunder when the clouds roll back together. Thus, lightning is a picture of God's Word of separation, and the thunder is a picture of His Word of union. Since God's natural lightning always precedes His thunder, we can be sure that the same principle applies spiritually. If we hope to experience new union with Jesus Christ and with His will, we must accept His Word of separation whenever and however it comes into our lives. Sometimes as we are lifted up in the Spirit in prayer and praise, God shows us new areas of our pride. At other times, God uses our friends or loved ones to expose our hidden attitudes and dispositions. Whether He speaks to us personally or through others, this is still God's lightning Word of separation striking our carnal heart.

Beloved, we need a new vision of Jesus Christ in order to really see our spiritual condition. After the Prophet Isaiah saw the LORD high and lifted up, he cried out, "Woe is me! for I am undone..." (Isaiah 6:5). Seeing the humility and surrender of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane exposes the pride and rebellion of our hearts. Viewing Him upon the cross in such utter love and forgiveness reveals our wretched nature with its unforgiving spirit. Even as the Apostle John was caught up in the Spirit to the very throne of God where he saw lightnings (separations), so also must we be lifted up in the Spirit to behold new separations which He desires to work in our lives. During the process of separation, cleansing takes place, praise His sweet Name. Our soul and spirit, our heart and will, our very being is separated from the pride and rebellion of our fleshly nature by the cleansing power of the Blood of Jesus Christ, by the Fire of the Holy Ghost, and by the Waters of His Name, Death, and Life.

2. Thunderings - Union

Just as natural lightning precedes the clap of thunder, so also does spiritual separation precede a deeper union with Jesus Christ. After we experience cleansing through the process of separation, then we are prepared for a new union with Him and His divine will. This is a process of growth. We must be separated and cleansed from our carnal attitudes, ideas, pride, and rebellion before experiencing the glorious thrill of a new union with Jesus Christ. Union with Christ makes us one with His love, one with His humility, one with His mercy, and one with His patience; therefore, it brings lasting joy and delight to the heart.

3. Voices

Out of God's throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices, which are the voices of the Bride. God's spiritual order for growth in the stature of His son is: first of all separation, secondly union, and then He gives us a new voice of love. Following Isaiah's confession of "Woe is me, for I am undone," a Seraphim ministered cleansing to the prophet with a live coal from off the altar. After experiencing this, Isaiah heard the voice of the LORD saying, "Who will go for us?" Then Isaiah, having a new union with the will of God, could say with a voice of love, "Here am I, send me." Many Christians today are endeavoring to offer themselves for spiritual ministry without the necessary preparation. Only after experiencing separation and union, can we say with a new voice of love, "Jesus, here am I, send me."

C. BEFORE THE THRONE

...and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God (Revelation 4:5).

1. Lamps of Fire

Throughout the Bible God uses the number seven to denote completion. For example, God rested on the seventh day to show that He had completed His natural creation. Later, just before the work of redemption was completed, Jesus Christ spoke seven last sayings from the Cross.

Likewise in the Mosaic Tabernacle, the Golden Candlestick holds seven lamps which represent the complete light of wisdom, understanding, and knowledge found in Jesus Christ, who is the greater and more perfect Tabernacle. John saw the heavenly Candlestick in the heavenly Tabernacle and declared its seven lamps to be the seven Spirits of God, or in other words, the complete Spirit of light and truth. In chapter five, John saw the Lamb with seven eyes and said that these were the seven Spirits of God. So, if the lamps are the seven Spirits of God, and the eyes of the Lamb are the seven Spirits of God, then we can rightly conclude that the Lamb possessed God's complete Spirit of Wisdom, understanding, and knowledge.

And I behold, and, to, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth (Revelation 5:6).

Thus we see that the seven lights which John saw in heaven are consistent with the principles that God set forth in the Old Testament, proving God is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

The Prophet Isaiah, speaking of one who would have these seven eyes, or seven spirits of wisdom, was prophesying of the Spirit of complete wisdom which would rest upon Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. We see these seven Spirits explained in the eleventh chapter of Isaiah:

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: (1) And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, [the Spirit of the LORD, the Self-existent One who reveals Himself, is used in connection with God's work of redemption], (2) The spirit of wisdom [of humility], (3) and understanding [to separate, distinguish], (4) the spirit of counsel [to give advice] (5) and might, [mastery, victory], (6) the spirit of knowledge [ascertain by seeing], (7) and of the fear of the LORD; [reverence] (Isaiah 11:1,2).

Beloved, God's wisdom is so precious to Him that He protects His Golden Candlestick from the gaze of those who have no desire to walk in His light of humility. Careful examination of the Word reveals that there is more than one tabernacle where the presence of God dwells and where His Candlestick shines.

Earthly Tabernacle - Exodus 15:17

This is the Mosaic Tabernacle which the children of Israel erected in the wilderness according to the directions and instructions that God gave to Moses. The word *tabernacle* refers to a consecrated place, a hallowed place, a holy place. God never gave His Golden Candlestick to Israel while she was living down in Egypt (a picture of the world). She did not have God's light burning day and night within the tabernacle until she came out of Egypt and built a Holy Place in which God could dwell.

Heavenly Tabernacle - Exodus 15:17

The Heavenly Tabernacle is made of spiritual substance and is the one after which the earthly tabernacle was patterned; therefore, the pattern, the Heavenly Tabernacle, has the sevenfold Candlestick of God's complete wisdom, or else the earthly tabernacle would not have one.

Tabernacle of Flesh - John 1:14

The fleshly body of Jesus served as a tabernacle or dwelling place for the Living Word of God. Jesus Christ was the greater and more perfect tabernacle, "IN whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3). Jesus had the lights from the Golden Candlestick shining in Him. Our flesh is also a tabernacle. Jesus Christ bought our redemption on Calvary's Cross, and through the power of His death and resurrection, He has made it possible for our hearts to be made into a tabernacle for the Lord.

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation [tabernacle] of God through the Spirit (Ephesians 2:19-22).

New Jerusalem - Glorified Tabernacle - Revelation 22:1-3

God's final dwelling place, or tabernacle, will be the New Jerusalem, the Bride of Christ, the one who has reached full spiritual maturity. The Bride is the one who allows God to make her heart pure and holy like the heart of Jesus; she lets her will be consecrated and set apart to do the will of God. Beloved, if we want God's personal Candlestick of wisdom to shine inside of our hearts throughout eternity, we must offer Him our heart now and let Him start making it pure and holy, a fit dwelling place for God.

2. Sea of Glass

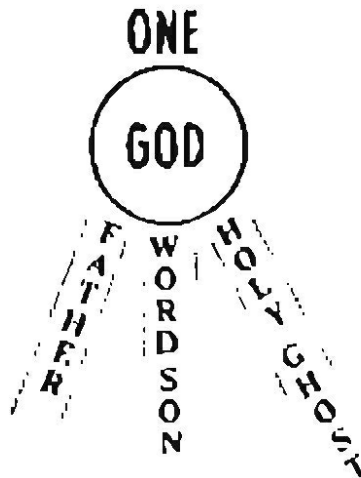
And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: (Revelation 4:6).

First we saw the seven lamps before the throne. Secondly we see a sea of glass which we will study later in more detail. For the moment, we will mention only that the word *glass* means glassy and transparent, transparent as ice. Thus from these definitions, we can identify the sea of glass with God's icy cold breath which forms the crystal and the jasper that is seen in the New Jerusalem. Again the interesting and unusual combination of hot (fire of the seven lamps) and cold (sea of glass) is apparent. The hot and the cold are inseparable, for these two characteristics are inherent within the nature of God. It is not strange, then, to see both the hot and the cold represented before the throne.

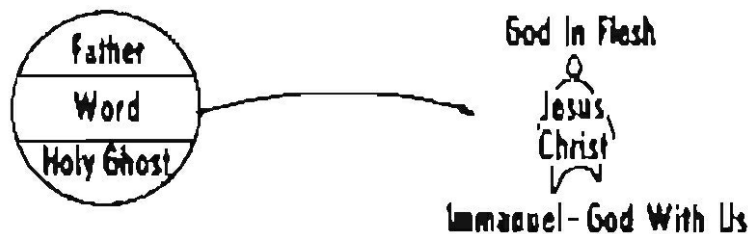
The hot breath of God speaks of the fire of His zeal and His love: the cold breath of God speaks of His humility. As we press on to know the nature of God, we experience both sides of His breath.

II. THE ONE ON THE THRONE - GOD

Many people spend time trying to place God inside of their own particular doctrinal fence. This is a pity, for poor finite beings with their limited carnal reasoning and understanding, cannot comprehend the infinite ONE whom John saw sitting on the Throne (Revelation 4:2). God is ONE, and yet He is able to separate Himself and manifest Himself as THREE. Although He is ONE in the Godhead, He is TRIUNE in the outflow of His workings with the children of men.



In order to redeem fallen man, God separated Himself and joined a part of Himself with flesh (in Jesus Christ). This is an inconceivable mystery, nevertheless, it is true. Christ, the Word, (John 1:1-4; I Corinthians 10:1-4; Deuteronomy 32: 1-4), the second person of the Godhead, (John 1:14), took on the form of a man and achieved our salvation.



Jesus Christ died on Calvary's Cross, was buried, and is resurrected. On the day of Pentecost, the Apostle Peter boldly declared, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). The union between God and the man Jesus is now an eternal union, for Jesus was made Lord and Christ, or in other words, He was deified.

After His work of redemption was finished, Jesus Christ returned to the Father. The Book of Revelation makes mention of "God and the Lamb," referring to the eternal union of God and the man Jesus who was made Lord and Christ. On the throne, they are seen in this oneness of relationship, God being on the throne, and the Lamb being in the midst of the throne.

John gives an interesting description of God who sat on the throne.

A. HIS APPEARANCE

And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and sardine stone:...(Revelation 4:3).

Here again is the strange combination of the hot and cold breath of God. The jasper stone can be traced back to a root word meaning ice; therefore, it represents the cold humility breath of God. The sardine stone, which means fiery, to burn, to scrape out, clearly relates to the hot breath of God, the breath of exaltation and glory.

The appearance of the One who sat upon the throne was like that of the jasper and the sardine stones. The espoused Bride in the Song of Solomon described her Beloved as being "white and ruddy"—cold and hot. These two contrasting characteristics, glowing forth from His very person as He sits upon His throne, vividly describe His nature.

As we grow in the nature of the Lord, He alternates our experiences with these two aspects of His nature. First He sends us His cold breath of humility, crucifixion, surrender, and obedience: then with His hot breath comes revelation, exaltation, and glory.

B. HIS COVERING

“...and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.” The throne of God is the focal point, the hub of the entire heavenly wheel, and around the throne, like a halo, is a rainbow. The mention of a rainbow immediately turns our thoughts to the time when God made a covenant with Noah. However, there is a difference between the bow that God set in the sky for Noah and the rainbow around the throne of God. In the Genesis account, God placed a *bow* in the sky as visible evidence of His promise that He would never again destroy the earth with a flood. A *bow* is one half of a rainbow. The rainbow that John saw encircled the throne of God in heaven. It was a true rainbow. The rainbow formed another wheel, an inner wheel, which surrounded the throne. The covenant with Noah was an earthly covenant, but the rainbow, which is a never ending circle, signifies an eternal covenant of God’s keeping power for all eternity. God’s reign is unending. The rainbow about His throne assures us that there will never be another rebellion in heaven like the one perpetrated by Lucifer in the past. God’s supremacy is established, and one day all rebellion everywhere will be ended, and God alone will rule. Before John’s time, the Prophet Ezekiel had a revelation of the throne of God.

And above the firmament that, was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake (Ezekiel 1:26-28).

The full rainbow obviously was not revealed at this time, for as the prophet describes its brightness, he relates it to the bow that is seen in the sky on a rainy day. The Apostle John was the first to see the revelation of the full rainbow which surrounds the throne of God. Nevertheless, Ezekiel realized that the brightness emanated from the glory of the LORD. The intensity of this glory is described in the Old Testament Tabernacle. The brightness of the Shekinah glory of the Lord hid the One who dwelt between the Cherubims upon the Mercy Seat. His presence was concealed in the light of His glory.

John saw the same intensity of the glory of the Lord in the encircling rainbow which covered the throne of God in heaven. The message of the rainbow is basically one of mercy. This fact is established by the study of the furniture in the Mosaic Tabernacle. There we find that the Mercy Seat covered the Ark of the Covenant containing the Law of God and His Judgments. God’s divine mercy covers His judgments. None of us could survive God’s judgment without His mercy. How wonderful it is to know that God’s ruling power is encircled and covered by the rainbow of mercy.

John saw the rainbow as an emerald. The green color of the emerald stone symbolizes life, and surely it is God’s mercy that gives life to all of His creation. The word *emerald* means a breach, a break, a fracture. On the breastplate of the High Priest, the emerald stone represented the tribe of Reuben. The name *Reuben* means “behold ye a son,” How beautifully all of these thoughts blend together. Beloved, who can behold God’s Son, His body broken and fractured for all sinners, without getting a glimpse of the mercy of God? God made the ultimate demonstration of His love and mercy when He gave the life of His only begotten Son for fallen man.

If we have aspirations to reign and rule with Jesus Christ as His Bride, we must lay aside our cloak of self-righteousness, and the hardness of our spirit. Unless we become clothed with God’s mercy, we cannot share His throne of judgment and power. Although John sees a God of judgment in action during the earth’s tribulation period, he also sees God clothed round about with the rainbow of mercy. We must remember that God’s judgment is a demonstration of His mercy. Were it not for God’s judgment upon ungodly men, the anti-Christ, and his cohorts, no one would be saved out of the tribulation period.

We are all sinners, having transgressed the law of God. But the child of God can be assured and confident of God’s mercy, because of His eternal covenant of mercy. The rainbow of mercy is round about His throne of judgment and power. Because of His covenant rainbow, we can draw water out of the wells of salvation with JOY, knowing that His judgments are surrounded by His mercy.

We have seen (A) The Appearance of the One on the Throne, and (B) His Covering. Now we will consider His Worship.

C. HIS WORSHIP

As we continue to look with John through the open door into heaven, we see that all attention is still focused upon the ONE who is seated upon the throne, the Eternal God. God's throne is surrounded by worship. The twenty-four elders who are seated around the throne join with the four beasts in praising God continually, day and night, for God is worthy of all the honor and praise from His creatures.

...and they rest not day and night, saying. Holy, holy, holy. Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever. The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever...(Revelation 4:8-10).

D. HIS POSSESSION

After His appearance, covering, and worship, we see the possession of the One on the Throne.

John fails to mention at this point that the ONE sitting upon the throne possessed a sealed book; however, we learn this fact from reading further in the Book of Revelation.

And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals (Revelation 5:1).

This sealed book caused John a great deal of distress, for he feared that no one present was worthy to loosen the seals and open the book. Later we will study more about the book and the One who was counted worthy to open it. The point we wish to make now is that the book was a possession of the ONE who sat upon the throne.

III. THE RIM - Four and Twenty Elders

And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold (Revelation 4:4).

A. POSITION OF ELDERS

The expression *round about* identifies the wheel formation that God uses so frequently in relation to His works. For example, the priests in the Old Testament Tabernacle used the circular operation when ministering the blood at the Great Altar. God instructed them to apply the blood to each of the four horns, which means that the priest had to walk from one horn to the next, carrying the blood, until he had made one great wheel, as it were, of blood around the altar. As we progress further in this study, we shall see many other examples of this principle.

The four and twenty elders are seated on individual thrones *round about*, or in other words, encircling the throne of God, which is the hub of the whole wheel of operation. Although the seats or thrones imply ruling power, we know from their white raiment garments that they do not possess the full reigning authority and power that belongs to the Bride of Christ, who wears white linen. The crowns of gold indicate that the elders have reached the shoulder realm of spiritual stature, which is equivalent to the Holy Place in the Old Testament Tabernacle. Crowns of gold were prominent in the Holy Place; the Altar of Incense carried a golden crown, each almond bowl on the Golden Candlestick was crowned with a knop, and the Table of Shewbread carried a double crown of gold. During their earthly journey, these elders let God crown their hearts and minds with His prayer and praise, with His humility, and with His strength of obedience; therefore. He exalts them to minister in the place of worship and praise throughout eternity.

The number twenty-four is not a literal number, but rather it is symbolic of the twenty-four *orders* into which the priests and the Levites were divided. In the Old Testament dispensation, the tribe of Levi was set apart for the ministry and service of the Sanctuary. Out of the sons of Levi, the priesthood was shut up to the descendants of Aaron: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, Ithamar, and their sons. Two of Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, died in the wilderness, leaving no children. A fire came out from the LORD and devoured these two men because they offered strange fire before the LORD. After Israel crossed over Jordan into Canaan's land, God had King David to divide

the sixteen sons of Eleazar, and the eight sons of Ithamar, into twenty-four orders so that they might serve as governors of the sanctuary and governors of the house of God.

Now these are the divisions of the sons of Aaron. The sons of Aaron: Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. But Nadab and Abihu died before their father, and had no children: therefore Eleazar and Ithamar executed the priest's office. And David distributed them, both Zadok of the sons of Eleazar, and Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar, according to their offices in their service. And there were more chief men found of the sons of Eleazar than of the sons of Ithamar; and thus were they divided. Among the sons of Eleazar there were sixteen chief men of the house of their fathers, and eight among the sons of Ithamar according to the house of their fathers. Thus were they divided by lot, one sort with another; for the governors of the sanctuary, and governors of the house of God, were of the sons of Eleazar, and of the sons of Ithamar...These were the orderings of them in their service to come into the house of the LORD, according to their manner, under Aaron their father, as the LORD God of Israel had commanded him (I Chronicles 24:1-19).

This Scripture establishes the ruling authority of the twenty-four elders. When we add the sixteen sons of Eleazar to the eight sons of Ithamar, we arrive at the figure twenty-four. The entire twenty-fifth chapter of I Chronicles divides the other descendants of Levi into twenty-four orders also. These twenty-four orders allowed the skilled musicians, the singers, and the teachers to minister, by turn, in the Lord's house (I Chronicles 25:6-8). God established, through this division, that the number twenty-four has to do with governmental order in His house. The twenty-four that John saw sitting around about the throne of God were established in their heavenly governmental orders of ministry. We understand, then, that God gave the twenty-four elders authority and power to minister praise and worship, since this was the ministry of the priests who were established in the same order as the twenty-four elders. In Revelation four, we see them offering praise and worship in the sanctuary in heaven. Their ruling authority also extends into the Perfect Age, for they will reign as kings and priests upon the New Earth.

This same priestly order is referred to in the Gospel of Luke when Zacharias is seen functioning in the temple according to the time of his order.

And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God, in the order of his course, According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord (Luke 1:8,9).

The setting up of twenty-four orders of those who minister in the realm of music and give thanks and praise to the Lord, is recorded in I Chronicles 25. These numbered 288: they were divided into twenty-four orders of twelve each.

All these were under the hands of their father for song in the house of the LORD, with cymbals, psalteries, and harps, for the service of the house of God, according to the king's order to Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman. So the number of them, with their brethren that were instructed in the songs of the LORD, even all that were cunning, was two hundred fourscore and eight. And they cast lots, ward against ward, as well the small as the great, the teachers as the scholar (I Chronicles 25:6-8).

We are looking at the shadow and type which prefigures the twenty-four elders seen in heaven. As in the Old Testament type, the same purpose is fulfilled by the twenty-four elders seen in Revelation 4—offering worship and praise in the sanctuary of the Lord. This is their whole purpose while in the sanctuary, but later, they continue functioning as kings and priests, ruling and reigning on the New Earth in the Perfect Age.

Chapter 5 of Revelation offers further proof that the twenty-four elders represent a symbolic number rather than a literal one.

And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands (Revelation 5:11).

John saw a huge multitude that was made up of angels, the four beasts, and the twenty-four elders. Although they numbered ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands upon thousands, John heard them unite as one voice praising and magnifying God in the heavenly sanctuary.

B. POSSESSION OF ELDERS

We have studied the Position of the twenty-four Elders, now we will consider their Possessions.

1. White Raiment

And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment;...(Revelation 4:4).

According to Eastern customs, the greater the wealth and position of an individual, the more garments he wore. These elders had more than the outer white robe of salvation; they also wore the inner white raiment garment of power. Their white raiment denotes their spiritual position, and hence they are governmental robes of authority.

2. Crowns of Gold and Thrones

...and they had on their heads crowns of gold (Revelation 4:4).

In addition to their white raiment, the twenty-four elders also possess crowns of gold. A crown symbolizes ruling power. The fact that the crowns were gold speaks of God's divine nature, showing that the heads (minds) of the elders were ruled by God's divine nature. These elders had lived at the Golden Altar of Prayer in the Holy Place; they had walked in the light of the Candlestick, and had feasted upon the strength of the Word of God at the Table of Shewbread; therefore, they were given crowns of gold and thrones of ruling power.

3. Harps

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

The four and twenty elders also possess spiritual harps upon which they make melody unto the Lord. The harp, which pictures humility, is formed in the heart at the Table of Shewbread in the shoulder realm of the stature of Christ. The harp of humility is formed within us as we allow Jesus Christ to *unstring* our hearts of murmuring and complaining, and then allow Him to *restring* our hearts with His surrender. A heart of humility will make harmonious praise and worship to God in all circumstances of life. After this harp of humility is formed in our hearts, we are able, in spite of the pressures and adversities that assail us, to sound forth the praise and worship to the Lord which is due Him. Since the elders possess the harp of humility, this assures us in another way that they have grown up to the shoulder realm of spiritual stature.

4. Golden Vials

The fourth possession of the elders is golden vials.

...and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints (Revelation 5:8).

Revelation 15:7 lets us know that these vials are also golden. The golden vials seen in Revelation 16 are filled with God's wrath, but the elders possess *golden* vials filled with the prayers of the saints and their offerings of incense at the Golden Altar. The vials are not filled with man's fleshly prayers, cryings, and groanings, but they are filled with the spiritual prayers that have been prayed out of the nature of the Christ within them. The Name of Jesus is the incense for use at the Golden Altar, and no other incense can be offered to God that will be pleasing in His sight. Our praise, our worship, our service, and our prayers are acceptable to God only as they become infused and permeated with the Name (nature) of Jesus. The four and twenty elders possess these vials of prayer, proving that they are qualified to minister as priests in the Holy Place because of their spiritual growth. Since they possess the substance which we gain in the shoulder realm of the stature of Jesus Christ, this is proof once more of their governmental position as kings and priests.

C. PRAISE OF THE ELDERS

We have studied (A) the Position and (B) the Possession of the Elders, next we will see their Praise.

It is easy to praise and worship in the church when God's Spirit is blessing and when we are surrounded by the saints of God, but it takes real spiritual maturity to bless the Lord at ALL times and in ALL things as Paul admonished the Ephesians to do. "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 5:20). A spiritual babe is recognized by his envying, strife, divisions, and lack of skill in the Word of God (I Corinthians 3:3, Hebrews 5:13). But the twenty-four elders are not babes in Christ, for they have grown into the shoulder realm and have come under the governmental Headship of Jesus Christ.

Let us consider their praise, for in it we see evidences of the ways that the elders have come under the Lord's governmental authority.

1. Praise by Falling Down

The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, (Revelation 4:10).

In recognition of His eternal existence, the elders fall down and worship Him who lives for ever and ever. By falling down, they surrender themselves completely *to His eternal existence as God*, the One living and ruling upon the Throne. Sometimes we worship outwardly, but our worship is not accompanied by that inner surrender of heart which acknowledges who He really is. We sometimes find it easier to surrender to the ones around us, but we must remember that they have no eternal ruling power over us. This power and authority belongs to God; therefore, we should fall prostrate before Him in complete surrender and obedience.

And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb... (Revelation 5:8).

The elders fall down also before the Lamb *In recognition of His eternal sacrifice*. They acknowledge not only His deity, but also His humanity with its accompanying humiliation, sufferings, and crucifixion. With gratitude, they fall down before the Lamb because He is their Saviour; they praise Him for redeeming them with His precious Blood.

And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God. Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power and hast reigned (Revelation 11:16,17).

True praise begins with the inner prostration and surrender of ourselves to God. Again we see the four and twenty elders falling down in worship before the throne. This time it is *in recognition of the power of the Godhead*. After witnessing much of God's judgment, even the great earthquake that destroys a tenth part of the harlot city, the Old Jerusalem, (Revelation 11:13), the elders fall down and worship God because of His great power. The devastation and destruction of Old Jerusalem is complete in Revelation 19, and again the elders are seen falling down in worship (Revelation 19:4-6). Surely He is worthy of all praise, for He is omnipotent in power.

2. Praise by Giving Possessions

The elders first praise by falling down; secondly they praise by giving their possessions.

The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, (Revelation 4:10).

The elders fall down before the throne and cast before Him their crowns, which are symbols of their ruling power. They praise God by giving back to Him what He has given to them. After offering themselves in prostration, and after casting their crowns at His feet, the elders stand up and receive their crowns back, for they hold eternal positions as kings and priests.

This should serve as a beautiful principle for us to practice in our lives. Although we do not possess literal crowns, we do have spiritual possessions which belong to God, for they came to us from Him. Let us praise Him continually by falling down at His feet with an inward surrender and obedience. Let us continually cast at His feet the spiritual riches, treasures, gifts, powers, and authority that He gives to us in this life. Unless we learn to lay our ruling power at His feet, we will become hard and merciless, fighting with our fleshly cudgel of redemption to maintain control over what we consider to be OUR possessions. Beloved, the greatest joy is not in possessing ruling and reigning power, but in the privilege of casting these possessions at the feet of the One who sits upon the throne.

3. Praise with Voices

Thirdly, the twenty-four elders praise with voices.

...and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created (Revelation 4:10,11).

The twenty-four elders praise Him with uplifted voices for His creative power. They acknowledge that He has created all things because it pleased Him to do so. It is His pleasure to create.

It is interesting to see that their voices are not heard until after they have fallen down and presented their crowns to the Lord. Only then is God ready to hear their voices lifted in acclamation. We see this same principle in operation when the Bridegroom speaks to His espoused Bride in the Song of Solomon, "O my dove,...let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice,..." (Song of Solomon 2:14). He knows that her countenance bears evidence of what is in her heart. He wants to see if her countenance is dark and oppressed, filled with rebellion and resentment, or if her countenance is clear and open, reflecting the joy of surrender and love for the Bridegroom that fills her heart. If we approach the throne of God by falling down in inward surrender and by offering our crowns of ruling power to Him, then He is ready to hear and receive the praises that we lift up to Him with our voices.

Further over in the Book of Revelation, the twenty-four elders employ their voices in praise and worship because of God's ruling power.

Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned (Revelation 11:17).

It is easy to praise God for His ruling power when His rule is according to our desire, but we must become mature enough to praise Him in all things. The Bride knows what it is to be completely delighted while walking under His Headship and rule. Even though the carnal man protests God's rule, we can, through the spiritual man within us, continue to praise as we exercise our faith. Although we often fail to understand His ruling power, we can still praise Him for it, for we know that His nature can be trusted in all things.

And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne saying, Amen; Alleluia (Revelation 19:4).

As we noted before, this acclamation came subsequent to the complete destruction of Old Jerusalem, the great whore. This act of judgment is a righteous act because Old Jerusalem must be destroyed in order to make way for the rebuilding of the city where Jesus Christ will establish His millennial reign. The elders praise Him with their voices because of His judging power.

The elders were able to lift up their worship and praise before the throne of God because they had learned to do so during their earthly journey. We will only possess in heaven that which we lay hold of here in this period called time. What we learn to do in this life, we will be able to do in eternity.

4. Praise with Song

The twenty-four elders praised by falling down, by giving their possessions; they praised with their voices and, fourthly, they praised with songs.

And they sung a new song, saying, Thou are worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof:... (Revelation 5:9).

The twenty-four elders sing a new song. The words are born out of a new experience, a new feeling, a new blessing, a new thrill. This new song declares the worthiness of the Lamb.

John saw this scene as if it were actually taking place before his eyes; yet we know that it takes place, literally, right in the beginning of the tribulation period when the sealed book is delivered into the hand of the Lamb. Since the seals pertain to the loosening judgment in the tribulation, we know that the scene is prophetic of the time when the Lamb will open the tribulation judgment. Thus the twenty-four elders sing a new song because of the new work that the Lamb does when He opens these seals.

D. PERCEPTION OF ELDERS

We have seen the position of the twenty-four elders, their possessions, their praise, and finally, we see their perception.

The elders had prophetic perception (understanding). Prophecy enables one to understand what God is going to do in the future, or what God has done in the past. "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple" (Psalm 119:130). Let us look at the things which their perception allowed them to understand.

1. Prophecy

And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof (Revelation 5:5).

On this occasion, John sees that the sealed book contains more of the Word of God. Fearful that there is no one to loosen the seals of the book, John begins to weep profusely. (Would that all Christians had the same burning desire to know the Word of God that John demonstrated on that day.) As John weeps, one of the elders begins to prophesy to him, telling him not to weep, for the Lamb is worthy to open the book.

2. Beheld Worship of Angels

And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God (Revelation 7:11).

The elders are sitting in their appointed positions round about the throne of God, when all the angels come in and station themselves round about the throne to worship God. We know that angels cannot look into the salvation of men (I Peter 1:9-12). Since they never sinned, they cannot comprehend our salvation. However, the elders are privileged to observe and to perceive the worship of angels.

3. Saw the Truth of the Multitude

And one of the elders answered, saying unto me. What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him. Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 7:13,14).

The elders know the truth of the identity of this great multitude of white robed saints. Furthermore, the elders speak out of their understanding and perception, saying that the white robed multitude will spend eternity in the heavenly temple. Beloved, it is a privilege to understand the mystery of spiritual growth and its rewards.

4. Heard the Bride Sing

And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth

(Revelation 14:3).

This scene in chapter fourteen is a heavenly one, whereas the 144,000 mentioned in chapter seven are upon the earth. The 144,000 in chapter fourteen is the Bride of Christ. The elders were close enough to be able to hear the new song sung by the Bride, but they could not learn the song, for it was a song of unity with the Bridegroom.

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments (Psalm 133:1,2).

What is unity like? Unity is like precious ointment; it has a special fragrance of its own. We recall that in the Old Testament Tabernacle, God told Moses to use a special holy ointment to anoint every piece of furniture before it could be put to use. Thus the furniture was brought into unity, or oneness, with God's holiness. After the fragrance of unity was established, then God came and added the fragrance of sacrifice (sin offering) and the fragrance of worship (whole burnt offering). In other words, all work of sacrifice and of worship is built on the fragrance of unity.

On Mount Zion, a sweet fragrance of unity pervades the atmosphere, causing the Bride to sing a new song, a song that no man could learn save the Bride because she alone entered into the realm of mature unity with the Lamb. Although the four and twenty elders cannot learn the song, they are privileged to hear it sung before the throne of God. This ends the study of the stature of the twenty-four elders. Through this study we learned the position, the possessions, the praise, and the perception of the twenty-four elders. Next we will learn more about the four beasts.

IV. THE SPOKES - THE FOUR BEASTS

...and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created (Revelation 4:6-11).

The beasts, or the living creatures, represent the spokes of the heavenly wheel. The four and twenty elders form the rim of the wheel; the throne upon which God sits is the hub, and the axle which turns the wheel is the Lamb and His wife. We notice that the four beasts are "round about the throne," and yet they are "in the midst of the throne." Only a spoke of a wheel could fit both aspects of this description—positioned in a circular fashion, yet extending directly into the throne itself.

The four beasts are not some kind of animal, but symbolic representations of redeemed people, those saved by the blood of the Lamb out of every kindred, tongue, tribe, and nation. These are believers who have grown up to the shoulder realm of spiritual stature. The fact that they are *attached* to the throne indicates that they hold a higher position than the twenty-four elders who are seated *around* the throne.

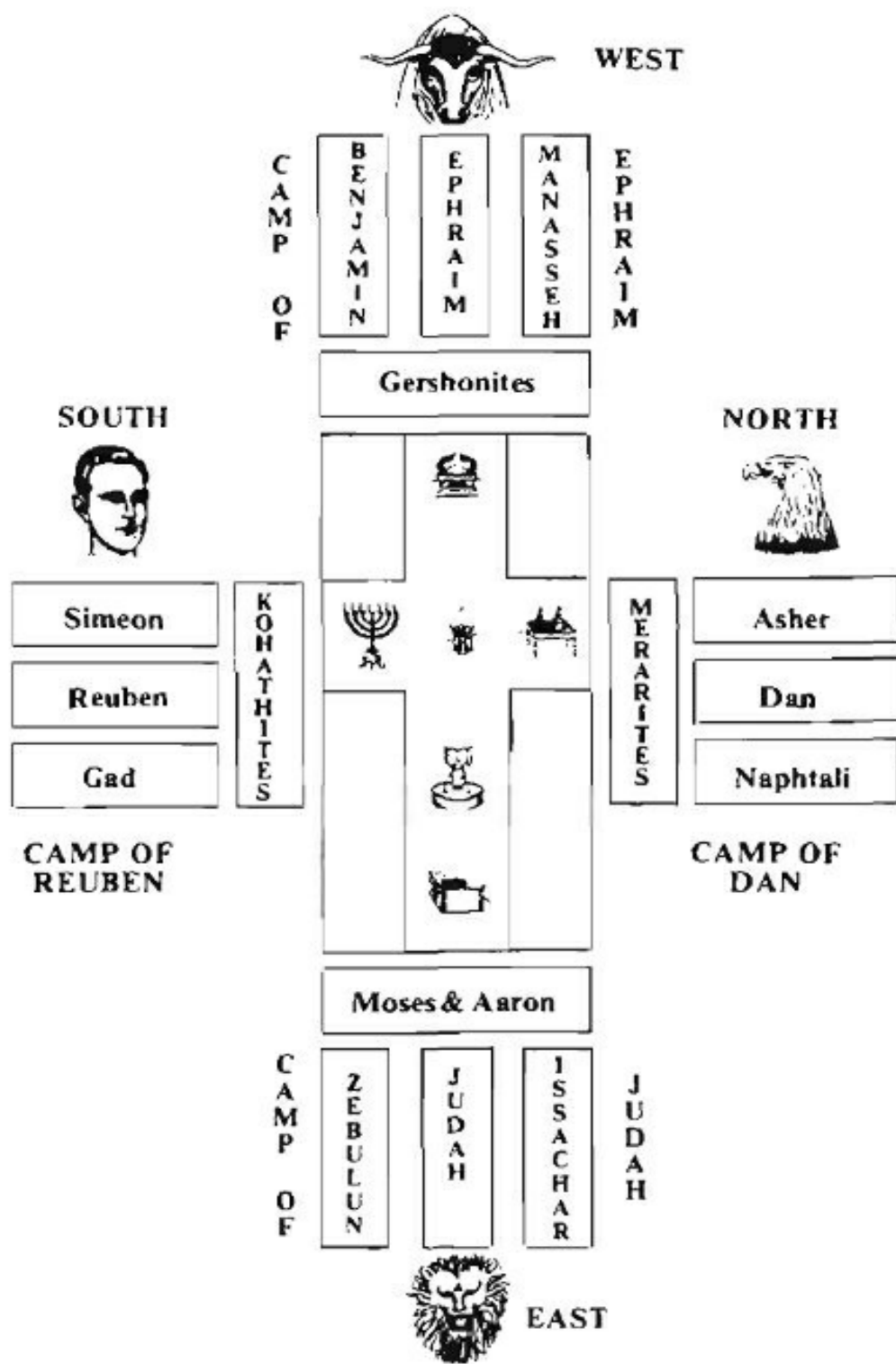
And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying. Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by the blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:8-10).

The white raiment group (the four and twenty elders and the four beasts) will reign on the New Earth in the Perfect Age as kings and priests. They are the kings who will be privileged to enter into the New City (Revelation 21:24). The white raiment group will not reign *WITH* Christ and the Bride in the New City, but they shall reign on

the perfect earth, the New Earth. We also see this group functioning as priests, for they have the vials of the prayers of the saints and are performing priestly duties in heaven.

There is a sense, in this present world, in which all believers are called to be kings and priests. This is why we do not have to solicit the mediation of men, since we can pray and seek access to the Throne of Grace for ourselves. However, it is something else to function as a priest in the heavenly priesthood. These four beasts have reached a degree of maturity in stature by learning how to reign in their own lives over the world, the flesh, and the Devil. Only those who can rule over their own spirits are capable of taking rulership over the lives of others. The beasts' growth to the shoulder realm of spiritual stature indicates that they have come under the government of the Lamb and can minister as priests in the Holy Place.

John saw the first living creature depicted as a lion, the second as a calf, the third had a face like a man, and the fourth was as a flying eagle. We would be in a quandary to understand the meaning of this strange representation if it were not for the fact that God never changes His principles of operation. We know that the explanation of this matter can be found elsewhere in the Word of God. Before proceeding further in the study of the four beasts, we should study the other two portions of the Word which pertain to this revelation. The unfolding of the revelation of the faces of the four beasts begins in the second and third chapters of the Book of Numbers. The twelve tribes of Israel used these four symbols when they were encamped around the four points of the Tabernacle. On the east side, under the insignia of the Lion, were the tribes of Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. The tribes on the south side, Reuben, Simeon, and Gad bore the insignia of the Man. Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh were on the west side under the insignia of the Ox. On the north side, Dan, Asher, and Naphtali carried the Insignia of the Eagle.



Remember that the Old Testament Tabernacle gives the most detailed portrait of the stature of Jesus Christ recorded in Scripture. If we understand the types and shadows presented here, we have a wealth of knowledge. Christ is the Word, and every detail of the Tabernacle is a picture of some aspect of Jesus as He was indwelt by the Word. In other words, as we study the Tabernacle, we are seeing a shadow and type of the stature of the living Word of God—Jesus Christ. Viewing the Tabernacle in this light, we see the four insignias representing the full stature of the nature of the Word.



The first insignia was that of a lion. In the natural, the lion is called the king of the beasts and is a majestic, fearsome, devouring beast. Spiritually, the lion nature relates to God's holy hatred against sin. Found on the east side, which was the entrance to the Tabernacle, this Lion-Word is basic and foundational to the whole stature of Jesus Christ. Unless we possess a measure of holy hatred against sin, there is no further building of the Word of God within us.

It is indeed fitting that Jesus Christ is called the Lion out of the tribe of Judah. The lion nature of Jesus Christ, our Saviour, devours our sin when we come to Him in repentance and faith. When John sees Christ revealed in Revelation 5, He is not seen as a raging lion, but rather as "a Lamb as it had been slain." Because of His holy hatred against sin, His lion-like nature, Jesus Christ offered Himself as a Lamb to be slain for the sins of men. Through His death on Calvary's Cross, Jesus provided Blood, Fire, and Water, which are the three foundational experiences in the Courtyard of the stature of Christ. These are gifts, free for the asking, and with Blood, Fire, and Water, we possess what is needed to devour sin in our own lives.

When we start hating sin with a holy hatred, we will hate it most of all in ourselves—our nasty attitudes and despicable spirits that dwell in our carnal nature. There is no benefit in hating the carnality of someone else, but when we are honest and willing to face ourselves for what we are, then we can enter into that same holy hatred against sin that so characterizes the nature of God.

There will never be a change in us until we come to hate the selfishness, the pride, the deceitfulness, and all the many un-Christ-like attitudes and dispositions prevalent in our depraved carnal nature.



On the south side of the Tabernacle was the insignia of the Man, which speaks of humility, compassion, and understanding. Staturewise, this portion of the Word fits together with the Golden Candlestick, a picture of Jesus Christ as the Light of the world. There was no natural light found in the Holy Place, only the light of the divine mind of Christ with its threefold aspect: wisdom of humility, understanding, and knowledge.



Next, as we progress in the stature, we come to the north side with the emblem of the Eagle. Without holy hatred against sin, we can never partake of the humility, compassion, and understanding of the man-side of the Word; nor can we progress to the discernment of the Word found on the Eagle side. In the natural, the eagle has an unequalled

ability to see, thus he represents the power of discernment that the Word creates within us. Since the Eagle is on the north side, it fits together with the Table of Shewbread which speaks of the bread of the Word, bread for strength and bread for discernment. When the hidden mysteries of God's Word are opened to us, we have a new eyesight, a penetrating vision whereby we can see things in their proper perspective.

This calls to mind the position of the Bride as described in the Song of Solomon: "His *left* hand should be under my head, and his right hand should embrace me" (Song of Solomon 8:3). The Bride is embraced by the right arm of the Bridegroom—the Golden Candlestick, the Man side which speaks of humility and compassion. Is this what we want? Do we want the embrace of the humility and the compassion of the Word, or do we choose the embrace of the fleshly arm of pride? The *left* hand of the stature corresponds with the Table of Shewbread and the Eagle insignia, which means that the Bride lays her head (her mind) back in His discernment. At the Table of Shewbread we receive the bread of the Word, bread for strength and bread for government. The bread and the Eagle present the same picture; they both speak of the power of discernment. The Bride of Christ finds delight in this position. She is embraced by His right arm with her head resting back in His left hand, thus she is positioned to look up into the face of her Heavenly Bridegroom and receive the kisses of His mouth which is the kiss of the Word (Song of Solomon 1:2). Unless we are resting in this position, our eyes are taken up with many things other than the Bridegroom. As we keep looking at Him, we will receive the eyes of the Eagle with their power of discernment, This is the position we must maintain in the Spirit to have the eyes within, the eyes behind, and the eyes before formed in us.



In the west position, the head realm, where the Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy Seat are located, we find the insignia of the Ox. The ox is a castrated bull put under yoke as a burden bearer. As such, the ox symbolizes the self-control and continence which comes only through spiritual maturity. The spiritually immature may bear a burden for a season, but he soon faints under the weight of the load. However, if the Ox-nature has been formed within, then there is that quality of steady plodding, and consistent bearing up of the burden, while we shoulder the load without murmuring or complaining. The ox is good for the long haul; he faithfully pulls the load.

Thus we have seen that the Israelites encamped under four insignias which represented the nature of the Word of God. The Lion speaks of God's holy hatred against sin. The insignia of the Man speaks of Christ who possesses the true light of wisdom, understanding, and knowledge which enables Him to show mercy and compassion. The Eagle represents the power of discernment that belongs to the Word of God. The Ox represents the maturity of self-control and continence that is in God.

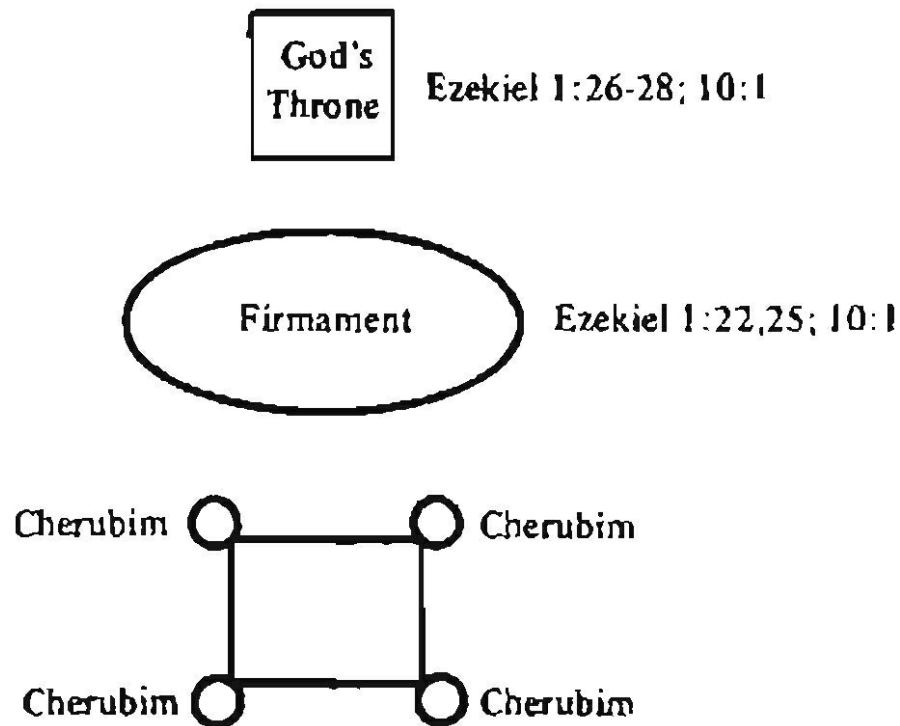
Now let us turn to Ezekiel where we find the mature revelation of the four living creatures. Chapters one and ten of Ezekiel pertain to our subject. Although we cannot study these chapters in detail, we can glean sufficient Information to help us understand the four living creatures (the four beasts) in Revelation four.

Ezekiel was by the river of Chebar when the heavens were opened, and he saw visions of God. Ezekiel saw God's literal war chariot coming out of heaven.

And I looked, and behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire. Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man. And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings. And their feet were straight feet: and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the colour of burnished brass. And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings. Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward. As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle...Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the Living creatures with his four faces. The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the colour of a beryl: and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel (Ezekiel 1:4-16).

Ezekiel, chapter ten, records additional information about the cherubims and the wheels, and is a further commentary on the subject contained in chapter one: “And the cherubims were lifted up. This is the living creature that I saw by the river of Chebar” (Ezekiel 10:15); “This is the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel by the river of Chebar; and I knew that they were the cherubims” (Ezekiel 10:20); “And the likeness of their faces was the same faces which I saw by the river of Chebar...” (Ezekiel 10:22).

We have already stated that the insignias in Numbers represented the stature of the Word of God. This is true of the cherubims revealed in Ezekiel; they, too, represent the stature of the Word of God, but in its entirety. This was God’s war chariot upon which He came riding. God comes riding on His Word; God is never separated from His Word. Perhaps a drawing would be helpful at this point.

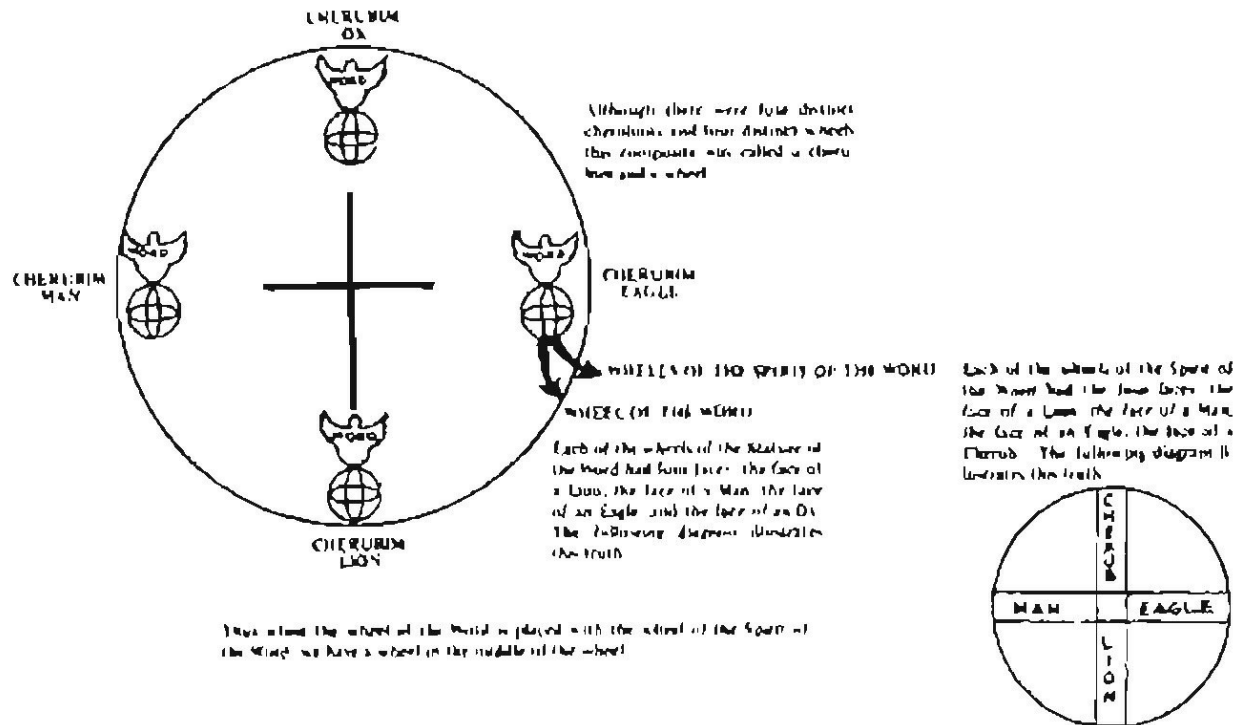


We know, from the first chapter of Ezekiel, that each of the four living creatures had four faces and four wings. Each of them carried the four faces: the Man, the Lion, the Ox, and the Eagle (Ezekiel 1:10). Thus once more we see the man nature of humility, compassion, and understanding, the lion with its holy hatred of sin, the ox with its attributes of self-control, continence, and faithful burden-bearing, and the eagle with its power of discernment. At times the four cherubims are noted in the plural form in English; however, the word *cherubim* is plural in the Hebrew. Thus the word *cherubim* refers to the stature of God’s Word in its entirety. Some people think that the living creatures in Ezekiel are identical with those found in Revelation four, but this is untrue. Consider the eagle for example. In Ezekiel what is mentioned is the *face* of an eagle, whereas in Revelation it is a *flying* eagle. Furthermore, in Ezekiel we see the face of the OX, but the beast in Revelation has the face of a CALF—a young and immature animal. The four beasts of Revelation four are not the Bride of Christ. They have grown up only to the shoulder realm in spiritual stature, therefore, the mature ox nature of self-control is not seen but only the immature nature of the calf. They have had a taste of the ox nature, but have not grown to full maturity.

The cherubims portray the stature of the Word. The wheels which carry the cherubims are the wheels of the Spirit of God. The Word of God is built upon the Spirit. In fact, there is no life in the Word until the Spirit of God quickens it and makes it alive: “...for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life” (II Corinthians 3:6). On the other hand, the wheels also have to do with the nature of the Word, for we see “the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels” (Ezekiel 1:20). God never works apart from His nature. When we lay hold of the mature stature of the Word, we also receive the wheels of the Spirit, the wheels of His nature, along with it. This is the perfection of the Word of God that was unveiled to Ezekiel. It is interesting to note that Israel had only a partial revelation of the mature stature of the Word because she had only two cherubims hovering over the Mercy Seat in the Holiest of

Holies. She will not receive the full mature stature of the Word (all four cherubims) until she is back in her land during the millennial reign of Christ, having received and acknowledged Jesus Christ as her Messiah. In Ezekiel's temple, which will be built during that time, FOUR cherubims are seen over the Mercy Seat.

Each one of the cherubims in Ezekiel's vision was carried by a wheel, and in turn, the whole chariot was carried by one great wheel: "...and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel" (Ezekiel 1:16). In Ezekiel 10:10,13, we see that the wheels are made up of four spokes carrying the same insignias with one exception: in place of the ox, the wheels carry the face of the cherub. The ox and the cherubim are both found in the head realm in connection with the Throne of God. Thus we see the contrast of the mature cherubims with their Lion, Man, Eagle and Ox faces described in the Book of Ezekiel, with the less mature beasts or creatures with their Lion, Man, Eagle, and Calf faces described in the Book of Revelation.



Let us now study the Revelation account of the four beasts, the four living creatures, which form the spokes of the wheel formation around the throne of God in heaven.

A. POSITION OF FOUR BEASTS

And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain...(Revelation 5:6).

1. In Midst of Throne

First we see their position in relation to the throne. The Lamb is in their midst, and although the four beasts are positioned *around* the throne, we have previously seen that they are also privileged to touch the throne. Since they are more closely related to the throne than the four and twenty elders, they are able to look into the rule and reign of the Bridegroom and His wife.

2. In Midst of Elders

Next we see that the Lamb occupies the central position as the directing shaft of the whole operation. We know, from their direct connection with the throne, that the four beasts know, in a measure, what it is to have the Lamb and

His will as the governing shaft or central pivot of their being. Having obviously obtained a higher place in spiritual stature, they occupy a greater position in connection with the throne of God than the twenty-four elders.

B. DESCRIPTION OF FOUR BEASTS

Through John's description, we receive a mental image of the insight and character of these four beasts.

1. Vision of Beasts

...and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind (Revelation 4:6).

And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying...(Revelation 4:8).

Eyes speak of light, discernment, and revelation. The four beasts possessed three sets of eyes; eyes before (looking ahead prophetically), eyes behind (looking back in remembrance), and eyes within (inward scrutiny). How vitally important are these all-seeing eyes. We see them in great prominence in Ezekiel's revelation.

As for their [the living creatures] rings, they were so high that they were dreadful; and their rings were full of eyes round about them four (Ezekiel 1:18).

And their [the cherubims] whole body, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings, and the wheels, were full of eyes round about, even the wheels that they four had (Ezekiel 10:12).

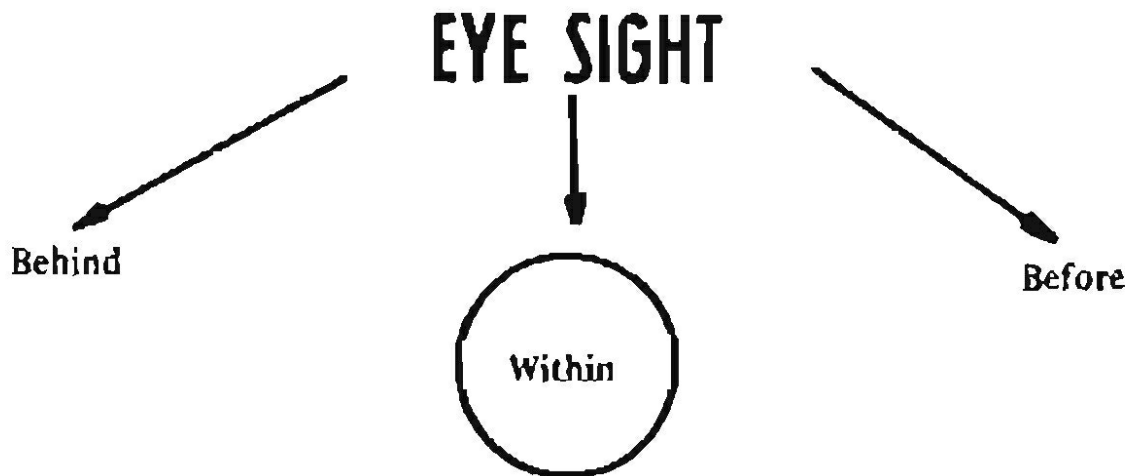
a. Eyes Before (Revelation 4:6)

The four beasts have eyesight to look into the future. Some Christians cast away their confidence in God, backslide, and lose what they once possessed in Him because they lack eyesight to look beyond their present difficulty. When tests and difficult circumstances come our way, it is wonderful to have a clear vision of the prize before us. If we keep a clear eye of discernment and revelation upon the Heavenly Bridegroom, we will not be led astray or caused to stumble in the way.

b. Eyes Behind (Revelation 4:6)

Why do we need eyes behind? The Devil does not always attack us from the front; he is more likely to sneak up behind, as it were, to make our past sins seem more appealing to us than the prize that is set before our face. Beloved, we need eyes behind so that we can see the truth concerning our past. Eyes behind will enable us to remember the pit from whence we have been dug. Sometimes the enemy tempts us to pick up again what we have once laid aside, but with eyes behind, we will ever be aware of the true nature of the things that we have cast off in our spiritual journey. Looking back keeps us humble; looking back can also be encouraging. When the Devil tempts us to think that we have made no spiritual progress, we can look back and see how far we have progressed on our spiritual journey. Then we see the truth. We have grown! And we know that He who has begun a good work in us will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Hallelujah!

c. Eyes Within (Revelation 4:8)



God always works by a threefold witness. He has worked within the four living creatures this tremendous capacity of sight. They have eyes before, eyes behind, and eyes within. The first two sets of eyes relate to others and outward things, but the inward eye is concerned with the inner person. Often God speaks to us in dreams. This is one of the operations of the eyes within. We could learn a lot about ourselves if we would go before the Lord in every circumstance, and ask Him to search out our hearts. We are too prone to see our brother's fault rather than our own fault in a matter. But if we sincerely desire to grow in God, we will deal with our OWN inner faults. How faithful and good the Lord is to appoint circumstances and experiences which will formulate the inward eyes within us. We need to cultivate these eyes within so that we can begin discerning the hidden dispositions and attitudes of our own heart.

The four living creatures had a threefold vision. In Scripture, the number three is the number of perfection, as seen in the triune God. We must have the vision of His perfection if we are to grow in the stature of Jesus Christ.

2. Likeness of Beasts (Revelation 4:7)

First we saw the threefold vision of the beasts; secondly let us consider their likeness. Likeness has to do with stature, image. The four living creatures were like a Lion, a Man, an Eagle, and a Calf.

We have already noted that the lion represents God's holy hatred for sin, and that the man aspect speaks of His mercy, compassion, and humility. The ox identifies with God's self-control, continence, and faithfulness. However, John saw a calf rather than an ox, because the four beasts have not reached the full maturity of the ox nature. The beasts possess a portion of self-control, continence, and faithfulness in burden bearing, but it is still in its immature state. John also sees a flying eagle which signifies the ability to mount up into new realms of the heavenlies for greater vision of spiritual things, for greater eyesight into the things of God and man.

Let us notice that each of the four beasts possess six wings. "And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him" (Revelation 4:8). The picture of the six wings originates with the seraphims seen in chapter six of Isaiah. God has two heavenly hosts of angels that fight: the cherubims and the seraphims. The cherubims battle in the heights and are seen ministering at the Throne of God as they cover the Mercy Seat. They speak of the heights of the resurrected Christ. The first chapter of Ezekiel shows the cherubims on God's war chariot descending to minister judgment to the sinner and the ungodly in Jerusalem. The cherubims speak of the heights of God's mercy and ruling power which war against the wickedness and sin that would try to mar God's holiness and mercy.

The sixth chapter of Isaiah gives us information about the second heavenly host, the seraphims, which fight against uncleanness in the believer. The seraphims speak of the depths of God's mercy and ruling power that war against sin that has marred God's creation. For example, seraphims visited Isaiah with coals of fire from off the Altar to cleanse his mouth and to anoint him to preach. Seraphims will purge our mouths to speak the Word of God and to receive the ministry of the Word Prophet as spoken of in the first chapter of Jeremiah.

Although the four beasts possess three sets of wings, the same as the seraphims, they are not angelic beings. They are redeemed people out of the earth (Revelation 5:9). The purpose of the six wings is the same for both the beasts and the seraphims. This purpose is explained in Isaiah's account.

Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings: with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly (Isaiah 6:2).

The first pair of wings was used to cover the face. It is very important to learn how to approach God. We need to grow, as it were, the feathers of His mercy humility so that we can present ourselves covered by the mercy humility of God. Before we can properly approach God, we must hear and receive the trumpet Word. The trumpet Word will cure us of our fleshly curiosity. When Elijah came out of the cave, there was certainly plenty to see: a whirlwind, a fire, and an earthquake. But Elijah clothed his face with his mantle—another way of saying that he clothed his face with the feathers of mercy humility. His interest went beyond curiosity which seeks to see only the supernatural manifestations of the presence of God. Elijah sincerely wanted to hear the Word of God.

By covering the face, we demonstrate humility of heart; we humble our eyes and wait for Him to direct our spiritual vision. How we need the power of these wings in order to cover our face, to clothe our eyes with the power of His mercy humility, that we might stand in His presence.

The seraphim used the second pair of wings to cover their feet. Since our feet usually follow the direction of our vision, we must first cover, or protect, our eyes with humility lest our attention be diverted from the Lord; then we will have the power to cover our feet. We will have power to walk in the Lord's will. Without this covering for our eyes and our feet, we stumble in the way. When our feet refuse to walk in His appointed ways, we know that our feet are not covered by the wings of mercy humility. Beloved, the more that we grow spiritually, the more humbly we come before His presence, and the more conscientiously we walk in His will.

The seraphim used the third pair of wings to fly to obey the Lord's bidding; thus these wings speak of the power of humility obedience. If our face and our feet are covered with mercy humility, then we will also be clothed with the wings of mercy humility so that we can fly to obey His commands. Obedience comes out of the mercy humility of God. If God never stooped to the depths to clothe us with His mercy humility, we would never be able to bend to the lowest place in order to do His will. Man's nature is to be self-reliant and independent. We like to rely on our natural talents and abilities, but these are insufficient to accomplish the work of God. We must have His wings of mercy humility with which to fly obediently to whatever place God's will directs, whether it is high, or whether it is low. Remember that whatever God calls us to do, He is also able to perform through us.

The four beasts have these three pairs of wings with which to fly. They have grown to the shoulder realm in stature and have laid hold of the wings to cover their face in humility, the wings to cover their feet with surrender, and the wings to fly in obedience to the Lord's command.

C. PRAISE OF FOUR BEASTS

The word *praise* means to express a favorable judgment, to comment, to glorify by ascription of perfections, and it means to worship. Let us look at the praise which the four beasts offer to God.

1. Praise His Nature

...and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come (Revelation 4:8).

The four beasts acknowledge the nature of God as they continually (both day and night) say Holy, Holy, Holy. They pay tribute to the holiness of the nature of the Lamb. Beloved, the more of our carnal nature that we allow Jesus to rule over, the more we will praise Him for His nature. His nature becomes first in importance and His power is secondary. In fact, His power issues out of His nature. Power, without God's nature of mercy to govern it, becomes merciless, as it did with fallen Lucifer.

2. Praise His Eternal Existence

They declare, "which was, and is, and is to come." This is another way of saying, Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever. They acknowledge that His eternal power existed yesterday, that it exists today, and that it will exist tomorrow—forever. He never changes.

3. Praise His Eternal Life

And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever (Revelation 4:9).

Too often our concept of life is Limited to that which is mortal. When God changes the picture by letting death touch someone near and dear to us, we collapse, thinking life has ended. But this is not true, for life consists of more than this little span of time which we call life. We need a greater vision of God, the unending reservoir of life. It is no wonder that the four living creatures are thrilled with the One who lives for ever and ever and ever and ever—unending life! They give Him glory and honor and thanks, and we should follow their example.

4. Praise by Falling Down

And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb... (Revelation 5:8).

Falling down is a demonstration of submission. As we grow in humility, the greater becomes our demonstration of submission to His will. Sometimes we prostrate ourselves outwardly before His holy presence. This is a wonderful demonstration to experience in the Spirit of God. Although we cannot always make an outward demonstration by laying our physical body down, we can always offer our will in inward prostration and submission to the Lamb who alone is worthy.

5. Praise with Their Song

And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation (Revelation 5:9).

The four beasts sing a new song. After we have fallen down before the Lamb in humble submission, it is easy to sing with new consecration and new delight, “thou art worthy.” After each new experience of falling prostrate before Him, demonstrating our own unworthiness, we can sing a new song of His worthiness.

6. Praise with Words

And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia (Revelation 19:4).

Just prior to this adoration, the elders and the four beasts had witnessed the judgment of mystery Babylon (Old Jerusalem). They all fall down and say “Amen and Alleluia” for the judgment of God. Beloved, is this our attitude when God begins to judge the flesh in our lives? When it is pruning time, do we fall on our knees and say, “Amen Lord...Hallelujah...Thank you, Jesus?” Or do we murmur and complain when the hand of God is heavy upon us? Judgment time is a fearsome time, yet the four beasts know the justice of God and rejoice in the judgment that has just been meted out upon mystery Babylon.

This completes the section on the four and twenty elders and the four beasts. The number twenty-four is symbolic of the twenty-four orders of Levites and Priests who served in the Temple, leading the worship and praise unto God. The number twelve, which is so prominent in the New Jerusalem, indicates complete government, the government of the Spirit and of the Word. The four beasts are also a symbolic number, and like the elders, they represent redeemed people out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation. Together these two groups comprise the shoulder realm group who will rule in the New Earth as kings and priests.

Thus we have seen the first of the four great pictures of the Lord Jesus Christ as revealed in the Book of Revelation. In the first picture, we have seen the Lord Jesus Christ as the King in the midst of the seven Churches, and as the one who gave the kingly invitation to the Apostle John to view the throne of God with all its accompanying splendor.

All these pictures are profitable lessons for us personally if we allow the truth of their messages to penetrate our hearts. God's Word furnishes us with all the spiritual principles which we need to guide our growth into the full maturity of His stature. His Word instructs us in righteousness so that we might attain the unity with Him which will one day allow us to possess the prize—to be His Bride.

THE END

COMPLETE OUTLINE

Chapter One - INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF REVELATION

I. PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

- A. TO REVEAL JESUS CHRIST
 - 1. To the Humble
 - 2. To the Holy
 - 3. To the Followers of the Lamb
 - 4. To the Thirsty
- B. TO REVEAL THINGS WHICH MUST COME TO PASS
- C. FOR A RECORD OF THINGS JOHN SAW
- D. FOR A BLESSING
 - 1. Read the Prophecy
 - 2. Hear the Words of the Prophecy
 - 3. Keep the Things Which are Written in the Prophecy

II. THE SALUTATION

- A. FROM GOD'S ETERNAL EXISTENCE
- B. FROM THE POWER OF GOD'S SPIRIT AND HIS THRONE
- C. FROM HIS NAME—JESUS CHRIST
 - 1. Faithful Witness
 - 2. First Begotten
 - 3. Prince
 - 4. Priest
- D. IN VIEW OF HIS COMING
 - 1. He Comes with Clouds
 - 2. Every Eye Shall see Him
 - 3. They Who Pierced Him
 - 4. All Kindreds of the Earth

III. PATMOS EXPERIENCE

- A. EFFECT OF THE WORD
- B. HEARING OF THE WORD
 - 1. Sound of the Word
 - a. Trumpet Soundeth Long
 - b. Trumpet Sounded Exceeding Loud
 - c. The Noise of the Trumpet
 - d. The Trumpet Waxed Louder and Louder
 - 2. The Fullness of the Word
 - 3. The Command of the Word
 - 4. The Responsibility of the Word
 - 1) Seven Literal Churches in John's Day
 - 2) "He" that Hath an Ear
 - 3) Church Age
 - 4) Seven Literal Churches in the End Time
- C. THE STATURE OF THE WORD
 - 1. The Fire

- a. His Feet
 - b. His Eyes
 - c. His Countenance
- 2. His Robe
- 3. His Golden Girdle
- 4. The Word Himself
 - a. The Origin of the Word - Head
 - b. The Authority of the Word - Hair
 - c. The Release of the Word
 - 1) The Word as Water
 - a) Springs
 - b) Fountains
 - c) Well
 - d) Streams
 - 2) The Word as a Sword
 - a) Divisive
 - b) Aggressive Warfare
 - c) Discerner
 - d) Destructive
- D. POWER OF THE WORD

IV. MYSTERY REVEALED

- A. THE STARS
- B. THE CANDLESTICK

Chapter Two - THE CHURCH OF EPHEBUS

I. HE MINISTERS AS KING

- A. STAR OUT OF JACOB
- B. DAY STAR
- C. MORNING STAR
- D. BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR

II. HE MINISTERS AS PRIEST

- A. RECOGNIZES THE GOOD
- B. RECOGNIZES THE BAD

III. HE MINISTERS AS PROPHET

- A. PROPHECIES JUDGMENT
 - 1. To the Church of Ephesus
 - 2. To the Nicolaitans
- B. PROPHECIES BLESSING

Chapter Three - THE CHURCH OF SMYRNA

I. HE MINISTERS AS KING

II. HE MINISTERS AS PRIEST

III. HE MINISTERS AS PROPHET

- A. PROPHECIES JUDGMENT
 - 1. The Head of Blasphemy
 - 2. The Head of Affliction

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1. The Death of the Christian
2. The First Death of the Sinner

Chapter Four - THE CHURCH OF PERGAMOS

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2. And Hast Not Denied My Faith

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 - a. Balaam's Way
 - 1) His Nature
 - a) He Loved Reward
 - b) Compromiser of the Truth
 - c) Entertained Temptation
 - d) Rose Up (changed the Truth)
 - 2) His Blindness
 - 3) His Way Unveiled
 - 4) He Chose the Permissive Will of God
 - b. Balaam's Error
 - c. Balaam's Doctrine
 - 1) Whoredom with the Daughters of Moab
 - 2) Israel ate the Meat that was Offered unto Idols
 - 3) Israel Bowed To Their gods
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 - d. Balaam's Destruction

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1. Manna
 - a. The Appearing of the Manna
 - 1) From Heaven
 - 2) Early in the Morning
 - 3) It Came as the Dew Came
 - 4) It Came in the Night
 - b. The Nature of the Manna
 - 1) It was Small
 - 2) It was Round
 - 3) It was Fragile
 - 4) It was a Seed
 - 5) It was White
 - 6) It was Sweet
 - 7) It was Oil Bread
 - c. The Reception of the Manna
 - 1) What is it?
 - 2) Ignorance
 - 3) Accused Bread
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- d. God's Command
 - 1) Gather According to Eating
 - 2) Leave Not Until Morning
 - 3) Gather Early in the Morning
 - 4) Gather Twice on the Sixth Day
- 2. White Stone

[Chapter Five - THE CHURCH OF THYATIRA](#)

[I. HE MINISTERS AS KING](#)

[II. HE MINISTERS AS PRIEST](#)

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- 2. Charity - Love
- 3. Service
- 4. Faith
- 5. Patience
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- 1. Jezebel
- 2. Prophetess
- 3. Teach
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[III. HE MINISTERS AS PROPHET](#)

A. PROPHECIES JUDGMENT

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- 2. Tribulation
- 3. Death
- 4. Reins

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- 2. Rule Them with a Rod of Iron
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- 1. The Spirit of the Father (Spirit of Glory)
- 2. The Spirit of Humility
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- 1. Minister to the Seven Churches
- 2. Minister the Seven Trumpet Judgments
- 3. Minister the Seven Vials (Plagues)
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- A. RECOGNIZES THE GOOD
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- D. HE USES THE KEY

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- A. AN OPEN DOOR
- B. LITTLE STRENGTH
 - 1. Reason for the Thorn
 - 2. Place of the Thorn
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 - 4. Prayer Concerning the Thorn
 - a. Besought
 - b. Gave Word to Him
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 - 1) Infirmities
 - 2) Reproaches
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- D. NOT DENIED MY NAME

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- A. PROPHECIES JUDGMENT ON ENEMIES
 - 1. Make them to Come
 - 2. Worship
 - 3. Bow

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- B. PROPHECIES BLESSING
 1. Keep
 2. Come Quickly
 3. Pillar
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 - a. Name of My God
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II. THE WORD OF PEACE (Pillar Erected at Galeed)

III. THE WORD OF THE NEW NAME (Pillar Erected at Beth-el)

IV. THE WORD OF DEATH (Pillar Erected at Ephrath or Bethlehem)

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- B. THE NEW JERUSALEM
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