

REVELATION VOL. II

THE BOWLS OF WRATH

Chapter 14

Let's turn to the Book of Revelation, Chapter 14:1-5

And I looked and behold the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion and with him 144,000 having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters, like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps. And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the Elders and no one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been purchased from the earth. These are the ones that have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste, these are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes, these have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb, and no lie was found in their mouth, they are blameless.

We are coming now to the next vision in the series of visions that run through the Book of Revelation. (Let me very quickly clue you in as to where we are at.)

We began basically by seeing Christ among the churches, and we rapidly moved to see that the Lamb, Christ, has been crowned, crowned King of the Universe, Coronated Lord of All, King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Therefore, the message went out that all must repent; the whole earth must turn and acknowledge that there is one King and one Kingdom.

The world responded to that with persecution. They also responded by turning against Christ by persecuting the Church. In the words of the Acts of the Apostles, when Jesus came to Saul of Tarsus, you remember, He said, "Why do you persecute me?" Because he had turned against the church, he was in fact turning against the Lord Jesus Christ.

One would expect that at that point judgment would fall. But, no! There comes, one after another, the trumpets of warning. God warns the people, and the trumpets sound in the world. In the middle of that, the Church is proclaiming repentance and is protected by God. Although the world seeks to shut them out and quiet them, it is impossible! They cannot be destroyed. Even though their mouth is closed, they are not destroyed, nor indeed can they be.

Very well, what is the next step?

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We have seen the unfolding of the seven seals, and we have understood this is the way it is. Then we saw the unfolding of the seven trumpets, and we realized, woe, woe, woe—unless you repent! And the word came that they didn't repent. So we go back to the beginning and understand that when men do not repent, then the inevitable is judgment.

The judgment that falls on those who will not repent.

That is where we come to tonight: The judgment that falls on those who will not repent.

As we go through these chapters tonight, I trust you will be impressed by one thing. There is awesomeness here. Prepare yourself to receive that awesomeness. Feel it from the very beginning. Instead of just coming in and saying, "Very well you did not repent," there is judgment! It isn't like that!

Remember:

- with the seals it was simply that He broke the first seal, the second seal, and the third seal.
- with the trumpets, He says there were angels with trumpets and they prepared to blow their trumpets.

Bowls of Wrath.

Now, we come to what is known as the BOWLS OF WRATH. Those bowls of wrath do not just come on as, "Okay, you didn't repent! So now there is wrath!"

It is as if there is an awful solemnity in heaven. And, very slowly do we come to the pouring out of judgment. It is as if it's the last scene, and now God says, "I want you to see this, I want you to see that, judgment is coming, I want you to understand this, and understand that."

By the time we actually come to judgment, we are coming with a sense of awe, with a sense of worship, and with an understanding that this was the very last thing that God did. But He did it! There was no other way! Men pushed past His goodness, threw aside His mercy, and cast off His grace. God said, "All Heaven and all Church understand. I am left now with only righteous judgment."

It is a very solemn time. Therefore this section, this Vision, begins with another look at the 144,000. It said they were standing on Mt Zion. "Before we deal with a world that will not repent," God said, "take another look at the Church, understand who they are, and understand where they stand."

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The 144,000 again

We have already met the 144,000. They are no strangers to us, and I am not going to waste any time in going over what the 144,000 means. I shall simply state what we sought to prove when we met them in Chapter 7.

- The 144,000 is the complete Church, the Church of the Old Testament, and the Church of the New Testament—all those who have rested either side of the cross, and all those that have rested in the Lord Jesus.

But there are some different things in Chapter 14 to what we found in Chapter 7. In this case, we find they are standing on Mount Zion. The 144,000, the Church, are standing on Mount Zion. There is a sense in which we could spend the rest of the evening simply expounding that one line.

I think many of you have been with us when we have studied Mount Zion. Do you remember? It was when David brought the Ark out of obscurity and brought it to that little hill in Jerusalem which until that time had never been known, the hill called Mount Zion. There he placed the Ark in a tent especially prepared, and the glory of God above the Ark filled the tent.

There David came, and in a sense, inaugurated a new expression of worship to God. He began it in a sense. It was always there, but David (can I say this carefully) ‘exploited’ it. I don’t like that word, but it was always there. In Deuteronomy, there was the bubbling of hilarity in God, but David took it and ran with it. And coming up the road that led into Jerusalem, do you remember that David danced before the Lord; that is, he leaped in the air, and spun around singing Psalms as he did it. That is a trick if you can do it!

As he did that, it was the beginning of a new era of worship in Jerusalem. From then on you read in the Psalms of clapping, of the raising of the hands, of leaping, and of lying prostrate. It was a worship of God by Spirit, Soul and Body.

It was Mount Zion where man was exalting in God in the very presence of ‘the Glory’, and, from that time on, the word “Mount Zion” ceased to be a geographical location, and it became a sign word to describe a way of life. It was theological ‘shorthand’ to describe men living in God’s presence, rejoicing with a joy that cannot be contained, “a joy unspeakable and full of glory,” as Peter said.

Mount Zion: The Church in all its perfection

- The Church of Old and New
- The Church as God sees them -- not one of them lost.

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That Church is seen exalting in God on Mount Zion.

It says, "They were sealed." Notice it says,

. . . having the name of the Lamb and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.

Do you remember back in Chapter 7? It says they were sealed, and because they were sealed, they could not be touched. Now we have a further understanding of this seal that they had in their foreheads. By this time, you should know this is not a mark in their forehead. It was to do with their head: the way they thought, and where they were coming from in their attitude.

It says, "the Name of the Lamb and the Name of the Father." What does that mean?

- Right there in my head where all my thoughts and my philosophies, my attitudes to life, my understanding of life, one might call it my world view—the way I understand where I came from, who I am, what the Universe is, where it came from, and where we are all going to.
- Right there in my head it said that the Name of the Lamb's Father was implanted.

We had in our heads the mentality that God is our Father. That is, 'into' our thinking and 'into' our thought-patterns has come the mentality of the Sons of God. Do you understand what I mean?

Do you want to know who the 144,000 are, this perfect Church?

You will find them! They are the people who are having in their mind the mentality that:

- because of what Christ did for me, and because of the grace of God towards me, I have this mentality!
- I believe I know, in fact I know that I know, and the Spirit witnesses with my spirit that I am a child of God.
- So, in my head, I call Him Father.

Do you remember in Romans Chapter 8 when describing the born again person, the child of God, it says that ". . . we look to God and say, 'Abba, Father.'" That is the mark!

Oh, anybody can call Him God! In fact, many, very lightly and tritely call Him Lord. But, it is only when the Spirit of Christ, (and we saw that was the seal of the 144,000) only when the seal of the Spirit comes that we respond immediately with "Abba, Father."

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As I've told you many times before, 'Abba' means Daddy—My Daddy! My Father! It is the name of the Father planted into our heads. We know that we are His children. We cannot always explain it. Not every one of the 144,000, the perfect Church, can explain that they are the 'sons of God.' You might go for at least six months as a Christian, knowing that you are a child of God without being able to explain it. All you know there is a seal in your head, and you know that you know that you are a child of God.

But also, right along there, it says, "the Name of the Lamb was in their head." You remember in Hebrews, Chapter 2, it speaks of Christ as being the Elder Brother of the family. Again, we could spend all night there.

In fact, the Book of Revelation only teases us. Going through it is as though we are going through it, because it holds out to us so many possibilities—so many roads we could take.

It says the Name of the Father is in your forehead, but also the name of the Elder Brother of the family! If I know that I am a Son of God, then I realize that, by God's Grace, I am related to THE Son of God, the Unbeginning Son of God, who has deigned to call Himself my Brother.

So, there is the Father, the Elder Brother, and I am one of their family! I am one of the sons! And we know that and we don't always understand it, but it is a 'seal' in our heads. That is how we think of ourselves. That is how we know ourselves to be, all because the Holy Spirit has come in the New Birth and sealed us. We stand on Mount Zion exultant in God, and all around us is an unrepentant world that would be very happy to remove us.

We, exalting God . . . That is what it is saying. It is saying, "Hold it!" That is what Revelation is always saying, "Don't go rushing ahead. I want you to see something else before we go on." It says, "Judgment is coming!" It is hanging. "They have had all their chances. They didn't repent!" But, before we go on to judgment, take a look at the Church. "Can you believe what God can do to a repentant sinner?" Get the picture?

And . . . it says they, ". . . sing a song."

It says, "I heard a voice from Heaven . . ."

Then it says, "I heard them singing . . ."

(I want you to notice very carefully what it says...)

It says, ". . . like the sound of many waters."

Where did you hear that before? Right back in Chapter 1! It said that when Jesus spoke, His voice was "like the sound of many waters."

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God has spoken already throughout this Book, and it said that His voice was like a “peal of thunder!” And it says that, when they spoke or sang, it was the sound of “loud thunder” and yet it was as beautiful as many harpists playing on their harps.

Do you know what has happened? We began in Chapter 1 with the solitary Lord of the Universe, when He spoke His voice was like many waters. But then, we were introduced to all those who were redeemed by His blood, and He brought them into such union with Himself that when they sing and praise you can't quite make up your mind! Is it Him, or is it them?

They sing as one!

When my voice speaks, it doesn't just speak for my head, it speaks for the whole body. You don't say, “Now that's his mouth talking. Now, that's his chest.”

No! No! No! My voice is my voice. And the miracle, which is so brought out in picture language in this book, is that we have become united to the One who speaks like the sound of many waters. When He speaks, I say, “that is Jesus.” But, when the whole Church gathers and speaks unto the Father, the Father says, “that's my Son.”

One body in Christ. You got it?

And it says, “They sang a new song . . .”

We met that ‘new song’ in back in Revelation Chapter 5. Do you remember we said it was a song that was new in kind; that is, a song that had never been sung before? It was a new kind of song. It makes a special point here. It says they sang the ‘new song’ before the Throne, and “No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been purchased from the earth.”

You can't go to a hymnbook and sing this song. But, when the seal of the Father touches your forehead, and when you receive the seal of the Lamb, you know a song. There rises from within you a song to the Father! It has never been sung before. It is based on the fact that you have been purchased. Remember, in Revelation 5 it says, “You have redeemed us by your blood, out of every kindred and tribe and tongue and nation.” It is a song for only those who are united to Christ and His finished work. They sing it because it is the song of experience, not the song of memory. You can't learn it by rote. You learn it by experience. It isn't a song sung out of musical chords. It is a song sung out of the harmony of my experience now united to God. So the whole of life has become a Psalm unto God – not mere words and notes. It is the SONG OF THE REDEEMED.

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Notice that it states there that they sang it before the Throne. Now I am really going to test how much you have understood of what I am saying.

Do you remember?

- This whole book of Revelation is based on the idea of the Tabernacle.
- The Throne of the King was understood to be the Ark of the Covenant.
- There was a veil in front of the Ark.
- Right in front of the Ark, but the other side of the veil, there was the Altar of Incense; and from that altar was rising clouds of incense, which the people understood to be their praise and worship to God.
- The highest peak of Israel's worship each day would be when the Priest offered the incense, and all the praise of the people would rise to God in that incense.
- That incense, that golden altar, was right in front of the Throne of God, the Ark of the Covenant.

Now it says that all of these, the 144,000—the whole total Church, they stood before the Throne and sang praise to God. They were the golden incense altar in people. Do you get it?

Every time that you join together with your fellow believers and praise God, just remember you are the golden altar become flesh. And, by the Holy Spirit, not clouds of incense but real praise that is borne out of the fact that you have been purchased by the blood of Christ, and by the very fact that the Spirit has united you with Him, and is now rising to God like incense. Now, however, it is for real. That was the shadow of the real. This is the real!

Now, this whole company called the Church is now found before the Throne. No more is there a golden altar. It is people now! Incense? No! No more incense. It is real! It is praise! As they worship and praise they have become a living Golden Altar. You do understand that, don't you? Okay!

Before the Throne:

That immediately ties me into His sovereignty: He who sits on the Throne. Do you remember Him from Chapter 4? The Sovereign God Who rules the Universe is telling us, "Whatever is going on, I have got it all under control."

And, here is the Church. Do you remember where we were last week?

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- The trumpet was sounding, and everything seemed to be in chaos, and the world was persecuting.
- But the Church stands before the Throne and in faith in Him Who sits there, they worship the Sovereign God.

It says, . . . they are the purchased from the earth. The blood of Christ has purchased us. That is the story.

Purchased? Who paid what price to whom?

There are some people who still believe that Jesus paid the price to the Devil so that we all got off free. The Bible very definitely teaches that the price was paid to God. Again, we could take off. I'm so tempted when I think of that!

But when I look at the Cross, before the blood of Jesus was for you, it was for the Father. Do you understand that? God couldn't forgive you! God could not forgive me until sin had been adequately, perfectly paid for. God can't sweep sin under the rug. How shall God do that?

God shall pay the penalty to God.

God became flesh and dwelt among us. Whether any man accepts it or not, that is beside the point! God paid the price to God. Sin must be paid for and Jesus paid it to God. The shedding of the blood of Jesus was primarily for God. Now it can be for you—now it can be for me.

And so, the second great song arises: "You have redeemed us by your blood, you have purchased us. We now belong to you, we are owned."

Of course, that goes back again to the seal. Do you remember we said the seal indicates you are owned? We are purchased. We are owned. Paul said, "You are not your own, you are bought with a price." And, in the light of that, you respond whole-heartedly.

"I beseech you by the mercies of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice." What are the mercies of God?

That God did what He did. Very well! In the light of that you have no more right to your life. The heart of Christianity is that I know I am purchased out from the earth.

Then it says—and for anyone who takes these verses literally, it becomes one of the most difficult verses, "These are the ones who have not been defiled with women." They are chaste. Now, of course, on this verse there has been a whole system of religion based.

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And, I know that so many of you would be upset by my feelings about that. But, nowhere in the Bible, nowhere in the Bible is celibacy put forward as being something to be cried after or as spiritual. It is only barely mentioned by Jesus, and certainly not in the context of somebody being especially spiritual if they are celibate. The idea that you did not get married does not make you any more spiritual or more liable for the blessings of God than anyone else. Now I know that we could enter into a long discussion about that.

This is one of the verses that gave the idea that the 'celibate' is more spiritual, and the idea that only 144,000 made it. They didn't get married. I don't intend to be sarcastic when I say that. There are some people who really believe that. But, we are back to the fact that this book is a symbolic book, and immediately, when I say that, I believe you can hear echoes from the Old Testament.

Do you remember all through the Old Testament (so many references that we just don't have time to quote them), every time Israel went after another god, or they walked away from God, He said, "you have played the harlot, you have committed spiritual adultery?" In the Bible, there is not just one Scripture that says it—it just all says it! It just simply says that to come and be part of the people who are united to God through Christ means we are married to God. By the time we get to Chapter 19 and Chapter 20, this book is talking about the Bride of Christ.

The whole Church, in the Bible, is female! God is the male, and there is the idea of a marriage taking place. Any time the Church or part of that Church will go after other gods, then there has been a committing of spiritual fornication or adultery. All that this symbolic statement is saying is that the Church, that 'perfect' Church of all ages, are those who have not wandered off after every harlot that has presented herself—that is, all the other gods and possibilities. In fact, they are chaste. Before God they have been cleansed in the blood of Jesus, and they stand in His righteousness.

Notice it goes on to say that, "they follow the Lamb wherever He goes."

They are the ones who have committed themselves, with no strings attached, to the Lamb and they now follow Him wherever He goes. Do you remember we skipped over one particular portion back there in Chapter 7, after John had heard the number 144,000? Let me quickly refresh you there. He only heard the number (144,000). We saw that is the number of the Church in all its perfection. Do you remember that?

I pointed out that you've never seen that, nor did John. He only heard it. I have never seen the perfect church. I have never seen the Church of all ages.

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I have heard God say that He has got it. John heard it, but after he heard it in Chapter 7:9, it says,

After these things . . ." that is, after he heard it, "behold I looked and behold [that is, "I saw!"] a great multitude which no man could count from every nation, tribe, people, tongue standing before the Throne, [same place as these we are talking of] and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes. Palm branches were in their hands, and they cried with a loud voice, "Salvation to our God Who sits on the Throne, and to the Lamb."

All those elements are in what we have just seen. It is the same Company. The only difference is now John is seeing them. Only, when he sees the whole Church, there is no number to it. He says that it is innumerable—myriads upon myriads of people. Do you see the difference there?

When I look at the Church, I say that it is without number. God says, "It is perfect, not one is lost." I say, "Thank you Lord, that's all right with me." I only hear what He says about it. If I looked at it, I would see a company without number.

And, He says, "They are clothed in white, palm branches in their hands." And it tells us in Verse 15, ". . . before the Throne of God, serve Him day and night in His temple and He shall spread His tabernacle over them."

So, here you have exactly the same picture. It is in different language. But, they are before the throne; they serve Him as priests in worship, and exalt Him on Mount Zion.

Feast of Tabernacles

And it says that His tabernacle is over them. I refer to it at this point. You will see in a moment this is a reference to the Feast of Tabernacles. Do you remember the first feast of the Jewish year was Passover? That began everything, and you went right through the whole year. The last feast, it was late in the year as you plunged into winter, is the Feast of Tabernacles. And, that Feast of Tabernacles was one of uninhibited joy! In fact, the people had a saying, "You have never seen joy until you have seen Tabernacles."

If we had time to go from Passover all the way through to the Feast of Atonement, all of those have been fulfilled. It has happened, Christ is our Passover, and Christ is our Atonement. All of those feasts cannot ever be celebrated again! It would be blasphemy to celebrate them for they were only pointing to Jesus.

The last feast, in John Chapter 7, Jesus stood up and said, that, "out of you shall flow rivers of living water." Do you remember that? He said that on

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the last day of the feast. Do you know what that feast was? The Feast of Tabernacles.

And so, Jesus Himself gave us the clue that the Feast of Tabernacles was to be fulfilled in the Holy Spirit. The Bible says of the Holy Spirit that He is the earnest of our inheritance. So, everything that you have ever known of the Holy Spirit is only the beginning of what you will know in the Heaven of Heavens. In that sense, the Feast of the Tabernacles goes on and on and on, forever and ever.

Remember that at the Feast of Tabernacles they put little booths over them: little tents. It says here, "He shall spread His booth over them." And here is a picture of the Church rejoicing now in the Holy Spirit before the Throne in worship. We have come to the unending Feast of Tabernacles—right now with the 144,000, if you want to put it that way—for all the Church is involved.

Or, if you want to put it another way, we are a company that can never be numbered and we stand before the Throne in Mount Zion. We worship and serve Him, and He has spread His tabernacle over us. He has filled us with His Holy Spirit, and we rejoice before Him waving the palm branches of the Feast of Tabernacles.

(Did I put too much in there, or do you understand what I am saying?)

It goes on and says, "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more."

For some of these that had been beaten, they had hungered in prisons and they had thirsted. All the tribulation of this world, where the goal is to be in the Kingdom of God and to have tribulation along with it:

Neither shall the sun beat down on them any more, nor any heat, for the Lamb in the center of the Throne shall be their Shepherd and shall guide them to springs of living water, and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes.

It goes on.

You say, "When does that happen?" Well, quite frankly, it is happening now. But, on the other hand it shall happen forever. For remember, whatever you have experienced of Tabernacles, Tabernacles goes on forever. Do you understand what I mean?

It says, "the whole central idea is that the Lamb who is on the Throne shall lead them to the springs of the water of life . . . and on and on and on!"

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The mark of this Company in Chapter 14—who are the same company—it says, “they follow the Lamb wherever He goes.”

So in the one case, the Lamb leads a Company who are rejoicing in the eternal Feast of Tabernacles, and on the other hand that Company follows Him, they are His bond slaves. Do you see what it is saying?

Feast of First-fruits

It says of this Company that they are the FIRST-FRUITS.

Not only do they follow this Lamb who leads them in waters of life and joy, but also it states that they are the First-Fruits. At the end of verse four it says, “These have been purchased among men as First-Fruits to God and to the Lamb.”

This is another feast! Do you remember the Feast of First-fruits? The Passover took place and it was stated that the first day after the Sabbath of the Passover was the Feast of First-Fruits. So, Saturday . . . that was the first Sabbath. Now, the first day after that, a Priest and company went down to the field and they would select a shock of barley and he would bring a special sickle and would cut it. He would say, “This is the First-Fruits to God.” No man would touch a harvest in Israel until that sickle had fallen on the first sheaf. They said, “this is God’s” and they would take that to the Temple and it would be used in worship. It was the First Fruits.

Jesus was crucified as Passover. Do you realize that, as the Priests went down to cut the First Fruits, Jesus rose again from the dead? He was the first one of First Fruits! He was, totally fulfilled in Himself, the Feast of the First Fruits.

(Let me give a commercial. Why don’t you buy my course on Leviticus? You’ll get all of this in there!)

Now it says that these are the first fruits. Do you remember what it says in Ephesians 2, that when Christ rose again, we rose again? Do you remember that? It says when He ascended . . . You ascended. The first-fruits was not just Jesus by Himself, but every person that would ever believe into Him was included in that. So you have Jesus and every believer united to Him by the Holy Spirit. And God says, “You are mine, you are the Feast of the First-Fruits.”

You are taken into the Temple, and there you are offered as a praise offering to God—exactly what these were doing. Are you following me?

(Leave the rest of the harvest; we will get to them in a moment.)

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But, the First Fruits of the harvest of all the earth, God says, “They are mine.” When Jesus rose again, every person that is alive with His resurrection life rose with Him, and God says, “You are mine.” Even as that first sheaf of the barley harvest belongs to God, so every person who is united with the resurrection of Jesus belongs to Him.

What about the harvest? We are going to read at the end of this chapter where it says that the harvest of the earth is ripe. God put in his sickle to the harvest and reaped with judgment. In that sense, the whole harvest belongs to God. He said the First-Fruits, those who are united with the resurrection of Jesus, they belong to God and glorify His love, His grace and His mercy.

And to all those that are unrepentant and believe that they have fooled God, God says, “No, you belong to me too. You are my harvest.” You will exhibit and glorify His wrath, His justice, and His righteousness.

So all belong to God. Do you see that? I think as you read this chapter you will understand what I mean by that.

It then says that, “No lie was found in their mouth.”

The Grand Lie: You shall be as God. That is THE Lie, and when we repented, that is what we repented of. You did not repent of getting drunk! Quite frankly, that is a very small thing. You did not repent of getting high on heroin! That is a mere result of sin. You didn't even repent of murdering someone. That is a mere result of it. Sin that we repent of is that: “I will be as God.” That is sin, and once I have established that I can be as God, I am capable of all those other things. Repentance gets to the heart of it.

Of these people, it was said that, “no lie was found in their mouth!” They have met with the Person who said, “I am the Truth!” Once I have met with the Person who says, “I am the Truth,” I have repented of The Lie and all the results of The Lie will then drop off. And so, this company of the True Church, there is no lie found in their mouth, for they have turned and become united to truth by the Spirit of Truth.

Then, it says, “They were blameless!” Read Ephesians 1. It says that in Christ, because of our union with Him, God accepts us as if we had never sinned. Blameless.

It is very obvious we could have spent another two hours just on that Company that stood before the Throne, but remember God is building here.

God says, “Now there's my Church—there they are.”

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God's Final Warnings of Judgement

After that, he said that another angel flew in the Heavens. And he speaks of this angel preaching the Gospel—the eternal Gospel—calling upon men to fall before the Creator and to worship Him and glorify Him as such because His judgments are about to be known.

It is as if God is loath to go ahead. We have already had the warnings. Now God gives us a list of all He is going to do. Surely they should have known that by now? God says, “I am going to warn them; I am going to warn them, one more time.” So again, the Gospel goes out that they should repent and worship God because His judgments are going to be made manifest.

Any person that ever goes to hell goes there pushing and shoving past the Goodness, Mercy and Grace of God. But notice how it is received. In the New American Standard, Verse 6 it says, “Those who live on the earth.” In the margin it says, “Those who sit on the earth.” I won't make much of it, but the idea is of a whole lot of people sitting carelessly on earth, unaware that the judgment of God is about to fall.

In verse 8 it tell us that, Babylon is fallen, is fallen!

It is an anticipatory notice that Babylon is about to fall. We shall come to that in our next hour. It goes on to say that for all those who gave allegiance to the beast, there is no hope for them. And again, we shall come to that soon. This is God saying, “This is what is coming—this is what is coming—this is what is coming!” as if holding men back from going on.

Then it says in Verse 14,

I looked and behold a white cloud, and sitting one on the cloud like unto the Son of Man having a golden crown on His head.

We don't need to define Him. The Son of Man with a golden crown spoken of in Daniel, and spoken of already in this book. And it says that He has a sharp sickle in His hand, a reaper. A lot of you here wouldn't even know what a sickle looks like. But, back in the 'good old days,' we used to harvest with a sickle. The sickle was in His hand. Maybe some of you would better understand if it said He was driving a combine harvester!

The idea is that this is the harvest. Already the first fruits have been taken, the Church. Now He says that the harvest has come. In Verse 15, it says:

Put in your sickle and reap, the hour to reap has come. The harvest of the earth is ripe.

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I am impressed by the long-suffering of God. There is a ripeness to sin's harvest. Do you remember in Genesis 15, where speaking to Abraham, He said, "You will inherit this land but you won't have it yet?" Do you remember why? Because the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. If I were God, I would say that in my foreknowledge, in 400 years time, these people would not have repented, so why not get it over with now?

God says, No! There is not one man that falls under God's judgment who does not have to admit, "You are right." God says, "Go on your way Amorites, in 400 years the harvest will be ripe." Right now it isn't. There is hope for repentance. His foreknowledge knows that they will not accept that, but man must always be left with his free will. Just because God knows what will happen that does not mean that you will lose your free will. God knew that it would come to a hideous ripeness, but He said they had to come to that by their choice. There is a ripeness to sin.

The Harvest of Judgement

And so, the command goes forth, "The harvest of the earth is ripe. The First Fruits have been taken. Now put in your sickle, the harvest is ripe." So, God is seen as reaping the harvest of the earth.

Verse 20 then says, "The wine press was trodden."

Here it jumps from the barley harvest to the vintage, the harvest of grapes, which is a common expression of the Old Testament to describe the wrath of God. And it says in Verse 20 that the wine press was trodden outside of the city.

When you have reaped the harvest and tread on it, the juice flows out. It goes on to say that the blood came out from the winepress. These are no ordinary grapes. This is blood, death, and judgment. And it says blood flowed up to the horses' bridles up to a distance of two hundred miles.

Now I have an argument with every translation on this, because that is not a translation from the Greek. Whatever it says in your Living Bible and all your other Bibles, it gives a Western measurement there, and they miss the whole point. I searched all around before this meeting looking for a King James version, and I finally found a Gideon Bible. In it, it says 1600 furlongs. That is the Greek, and that is where the symbolic number is, not in our 200 miles. That may be 200 miles, but God is not telling us a measurement! He is telling us a symbolic number!

1600 furlongs. What is 1600? 1600 is 4 x 4 x 10 x 10.

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Have you got it? You should be brilliant at this by now!

- 4: The four corners of the Universe, the world—This Universe.
- X 4: That is Universal—Universal!
- X 10: Completion
- X 10: Total completion!

1600 furlongs is telling me in the symbolic language of Revelation that this is the universal, complete and utter judgment of God upon unrepentant men. Does that make sense to you?

Chapter 15

One would think we are going to get on with the judgment now. But, No! He said, “I saw another sign in Heaven!”

In Chapter 15, the great marvel of seven angels, they had the seven last plagues. But we don't get on with it. Still we are building this up: The awesome righteousness, mercy of God and His goodness in His judgments.

In Verse 2 it says, “I saw a sea of glass mixed with fire.”

Do you remember that sea of glass before the Throne? Do you remember that He who sat on the Throne was like jasper mixed with sardias fire—The awful holiness of God with His judgments?

The Song of Moses and the Song of the Lamb

It says that beside that sea, those who had come off victorious from the Beast and its image and the number of its name standing on that sea of glass were holding harps of God, and they sang the song of Moses, the bondservant of God and the Song of the Lamb. It says standing on that sea and singing before the Throne was the Company, and they sang the song of Moses and of the Lamb.

Do you remember the song of Moses in Exodus 15? When was the song of Moses? When was Exodus 15?

The plagues were all over now. God had warned and warned and warned Egypt. In fact, His judgment upon Egypt in the death of the first-born had fallen.

But then, God lured Egypt. I use that term advisedly. He lured them! His judgment was going to be final. His judgment on Egypt will be Universal. This is IT! He says, “Come Pharaoh, you wanted this, now you shall have it!”

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And, Pharaoh like an insane maniac follows after Israel to the Red Sea and there the final judgment of God came upon Egypt. I mean the final of the final! All the troops of Egypt, men that had dedicated themselves to defy God died in the Red Sea.

The next morning, as Israel stood on the other side of the Red Sea, having come through it, and they saw everyone who had sought their destruction, and had defied God to the end, they saw them laying on the shore!

And it tells us that then they sang. Miriam grabbed the tambourine and sang, "The Lord has triumphed and cast our enemies into the sea!" Do you remember that?

A God that doesn't judge is not God!

That sounds to us, almost terrible.

Let me say this, and I hope you understand it. Our ideas of the terribleness of God's judgment and the way sometimes we talk about His judgment is as if we are saying, "Do you know God? I do not think you are so much love. I have a problem with your judgments!"

Hold it! Think about it for a week. Those ideas that we have about God's judgment, and our sloppy sentimentality about it is born out of the fact that we live in a society where there are no absolutes and there are no laws. Any man can do what he wants and get away with it.

And, if we do believe in law, then:

I am the absolute!

If a man is as good as me, he has got to be alright.

I can't see why God should judge; he is as good as me.

Aren't we really mad at God for judging anyone because if he is judged then I've had it too? So I get mad at God for judging him.

When I walk into the Bible, I meet a God who says, "This is absolute!

You violate that, and you have violated life.

Violate life and you meet death.

You violate that, and you violate love,

and that is death.

Violate light; you are in darkness and confusion.

A God that doesn't judge is not God!

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I stand with horror and awe before the judgments of God, but I have to join with the song of Moses and sing,

Great and marvelous are Thy works, Oh Lord,
Righteous and true are your ways.

If God did not judge, we would not have a God.

If God does not judge there are no absolutes. There is nothing right! There is nothing wrong! It is all neutral. It's a blur.

Do you follow what I am saying?

It is not easy to take. When I come to the Bible, I do not find a God created by Hollywood. He is a God who is Holy, and He upsets me sometimes. But I have to admit that He is right.

Righteous and True are your ways!

Why does it say the Song of Moses and of the Lamb?

The first time in the Bible that God punished sin in a nation was in Egypt. You read your Bible and you will find God did not punish nations before that. It was as if because of His long-suffering He held back. But in Egypt, He punished them as a nation.

And when Moses stood on the shores of the Red Sea, that was the first time that men could look at the absolute evidence of God's righteous judgments.

There was the beginning: There was the embryonic thought that God will vindicate His holiness, and whoever defies Him, God will not be mocked.

Song of Moses, and of the Lamb?

In the Lamb, in the death of Jesus you have the finale!

- Moses was the first.
- The Lamb was the last.

In the resurrection of Jesus is guaranteed the salvation of every believer and the damnation of every unbeliever!

- The song of Moses is the Alpha,
- The song of the Lamb is Omega.

The Beginning and the Ending. The judgments of God are right and true and the Lamb shall triumph, unquestionably.

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Chapter 16

And then, we move into chapter 16. You have there the outpouring of the Wrath of God.

The Judgements of God are being poured out over time

We don't have time to go into that at this moment. As we move into it, understand that this happens in time -- not only at the end. There is a building up. As we look around us we see the wrath of God. In these bowls of wrath, it says in the first one that the bodies of men were affected.

Please don't run with that--think!

It doesn't say that all sickness is the judgment of God. It doesn't say that all sickness comes because men do not repent. It just said 'sometimes.' I have yet to meet a person who doesn't know when that sometimes is.

It is none of your business. You don't go around knocking on the doors of the sick saying, "You are under the judgment of God." (We've got people like that, believe me!) They will also blackmail you and say, "If you repent, you will be healed."

Nonsense! Are you trying to play the Holy Spirit?

When God's judgment comes, the man knows it! It is none of your business. Keep your nose out of things that are none of your concern. Leave a man with his God. God has a loud enough voice!

The great death of God's judgments!

It goes on to say:

- The sea . . . (We have seen that as a picture of the restless nations);
- and the ships upon them . . . (Their commerce and all their dealings);
- Then it goes on to say the rivers . . . (We have seen that as the philosophy);
- It says they were turned into blood. Do you remember the River Nile? Life turned into death. Blood.

We will come to that in the next hour when we see the fall of Babylon. We come up to that strange and wonderful time called Armageddon. It says that is the judgment of God. God lured them out even as He lured Pharaoh out. He dried up the River Euphrates, and some of you know what that means by now. It says that these foul and evil things draw all men together to the battle of Armageddon.

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God says, “come on, come on . . .” and then the Judgment of God fall.

We shall deal with that in our next hour in detail, with the Judgment of God on what is mystically known as Babylon.

Amen.

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THE WOMAN CALLED BABYLON

Chapter 17

Let's turn to Revelation, Chapter 17.

We shall pick up those BOWLS OF WRATH as we come to study the next time we are together.

Babylon

We shall zero in, in particular now, to the judgment upon what is known here as BABYLON. So let us read a few verses from Chapter 17:

One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me and said, 'Come here, I shall show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality. And those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality.' And he carried me away in the spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns, and the woman was clothed in purple and scarlet and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of unclean things of her immorality. Upon her forehead was written a name, a mystery, **Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and of the Abominations of the earth**, and I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the witnesses of Jesus, and when I saw her I wondered greatly.

Who is this woman?

We have met the Beast before. The beast, when we met him in Chapter 13, had the mouth of a lion, the body of a leopard, and the paws of a bear. If you recollect, he was a great monstrosity. We saw that that monster was a symbolic figure of the nations, the governments of this world.

Now the Beast is pretty much the same, same heads, same horns, only this time with a body of red.

Do you remember the last time we met a red body was in Revelation 12, when the Dragon, the Devil, had a body of red. So, it is simply identifying that same Beast with the Dragon—the Devil. And so, for this study we will basically leave the Dragon as the Beast.

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I want to concentrate on this WOMAN that John saw that was riding on the back of that BEAST.

I want you to notice something. We shall deal with this in greater detail in the next few chapters, but I want you to notice some things for now. Some of you immediately will pick it up; others of you will kick it around, and I think you will see it.

The Devil's Counterfeits

Have you noticed? There is a parallel here all the way through this book between God, His Christ, the Holy Spirit and His Church, and the Devil's counterfeits. Let me just throw a few ideas at you.

- God the Father: The counterfeit is the DRAGON, the Father of Lies, the murderer from the beginning.
- The Lamb and His Bride: The counterfeit is the BEAST and his HARLOT.
 - We have, on the one hand, in this book a Lamb and His Bride. We have not come there yet, but in Chapter 19 it speaks of the Lamb and His Bride.
 - Here in this chapter, we read of a Beast and a Harlot who sits on his back.
 - It speaks of the Lamb and the Bride as coming to marriage. The beast and his harlot—that is prostitution. Do you see the counterfeit parallel?
- The Holy Spirit (The Seven Spirits of God). The counterfeit is the FALSE PROPHET.
 - We find in this book the Holy Spirit (the seven spirits of God), and we know that the Spirit of God glorifies Jesus. Right?
 - We have already met a lamb who was not slain who is called the False Prophet. Do you remember his main task was that all men should adore the beast?
 - So, the Spirit of God glorifies the Christ, and the False Prophet glorifies the beast. Do you see the parallel?
- The Church, The Bride, and New Jerusalem. The counterfeit is the HARLOT, PROSTITUTE, and BABYLON.

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- We find the Church is called the Bride. We find this woman is called a Harlot. (I guess we've said that before, but I'll say it again!)
- We find that the Bride is called the New Jerusalem. (I know, for some of you, you didn't know that before, but we will get there in a couple of weeks.) It states that the Bride, the woman, the Church is also called the New Jerusalem. This prostitute that sits on the beast is called Babylon.
- So you have two women: 1) the Bride, and 2) the Harlot. But the two women are symbolized as two cities: 1) New Jerusalem, and 2) Babylon.

Do you see what I am saying?

When John would see this Harlot, it says he was taken into a wilderness, and in that dead wilderness he saw the Woman.

There were only two times in this book when it says John was taken anywhere:

1. In the one case, he was taken into the wilderness, and he saw the HARLOT.
2. In Chapter 21, he is taken onto a high mountain, and there he saw the NEW JERUSALEM.

So one is the freshness and glory of a high mountain, and the other was the deadness and dryness of a wilderness. But in both cases, there is one thing that holds true. That is, that it says,

- "He was in the Spirit and he saw the Harlot;" and,
- in Chapter 21 it says, "He was in the spirit and he saw the Bride."

The implication is that unless you are in the Holy Spirit you will get the two hopelessly mixed up.

Okay? During the break—You know those doors are very thin!—I heard some of you almost groaning under what I had laid on you in the last hour. I actually heard someone say, "I wish the Lord would come!"

If you desire to know truth, you will know it. Okay? If you didn't understand, just hang in there, and the Lord will open your eyes.

Take these parallels here and you work them out. There are two bodies here, two companies of people. They are put under the terminology of two women or two cities, whichever way you happen to be looking at them.

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- So BABYLON is this woman—the HARLOT.
- The NEW JERUSALEM is the BRIDE OF THE LAMB, which we know is the CHURCH.

Now, who is this Harlot?

We are introduced to her as usual in this book by the name that is on her forehead. Everybody in this book is known by whatever is on your forehead. On her forehead, it says:

BABYLON THE GREAT—The MOTHER OF HARLOTS

When I read it, I emphasize it, and I will emphasize it again: the Mother of Harlots, and the Mother of the Abominations of the Earth. Who is she?

It tells me that she is Babylon the Great. And, as we have done throughout this book, we must go back and see where that comes from in the Old Testament. We have been back there more than once as we have studied, because we have met Babylon more than once as we've been through the book of Revelation. This time we are stopping to see what it really says.

I can give you two Scriptures. One is Genesis 10:10, and the other is Genesis 11:9. I will tell you right now that these scriptures will not tell you what I want to share with you right now. That is unfortunate.

I guess this is the first and only time that we go outside of the Bible for a symbol. The symbol of this woman was so universal in the days when John wrote this that I have no apology whatsoever in going outside of the Bible.

We have lost this symbol to a certain extent as a universal understanding. But in the days of John, when they went back to Genesis 10 and Genesis 11, they thought of this woman as well as the man you will find there.

The man you will find in Genesis 10 and Genesis 11 is the man called Nimrod. We have talked about Nimrod many times, for he was the beginning of Babylon—Babylon in the sense of its being an Empire, a Government. As we saw back in Chapter 13, NIMROD fits the BEAST.

- He was the first of the HEADS.
- He was the first WORLD GOVERNMENT, the system of government controlling men by government coming down in dictatorship and the power of authoritarian government.

Right? Nimrod was that.

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He had a wife, and we have never talked about his wife before. But, if you thought Nimrod was bad, think about his wife!

- Her name was Semiramus.
- She appears in most ancient history and she was basically a nobody.
- She was, however, extremely unusually beautiful, according to every report we have in history.
- And she also was a harlot of the first order.

She was the wife of Nimrod!

When Nimrod was killed (which is another story) she immediately took matters into her own hands. Nimrod was almost adored as a political leader who had emancipated people from God.

- She took matters into her own hands, and said that he was not really killed—it only looked like that!
- She said that, actually, he gave his life for the human race, and she called him Zoroastra.

You may have heard that term. Do you know what that means in ancient Chaldean?

In ancient Chaldean, Zoroastra means (HOLD THIS ONE!):

The Seed of the Woman!

She said Nimrod was the promised Messiah of Genesis 3:15!

That was very fresh in the mind of the race at that time.

- She said that he laid down his life to emancipate the race, and he has now been deified!
- Nimrod was the first human being to be worshipped after his death as a man become god!

But she decided very quickly that she had better get in on the act. If her husband is being worshipped, she had better be worshipped too. The way she did it was that:

- she stated that Nimrod came back to earth via her womb, and
- how she ever did it I don't know, but she claimed to be a virgin.

She claimed that her husband Nimrod was born through her womb. She had statues erected all through Babylon of herself. She was a flaxen-

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haired, very white lady, and she had statues of herself erected with a little child at her breast. She was the MOTHER, and the child was her HUSBAND-CHILD, and they were worshipped together. That symbol went throughout the entire world. It went under every name you could imagine.

Venus: Queen of Heaven—and Mother of Harlots

She became known as VENUS. That is where Venus came from. We could go on, but I'm not going to give a lecture on ancient history. She spread throughout the whole earth, worshipped as the DIVINE MOTHER, worshipped as the GREAT GODDESS, and worshipped as the QUEEN OF HEAVEN—you will read about that in Jeremiah many times. She was worshipped under all the names of Greek goddesses.

Her husband suddenly disappeared into insignificance. He was still there, but he was no longer what he had been before she was deified.

And so, she became the ORIGINAL, and that is why I emphasized those words: The MOTHER OF HARLOTS. She was the first one.

- She DEIFIED her own husband, and then
- She DEIFIED herself.

Out of that one place, that one city there went to every nation of the world a peculiar form of idolatry that centered in a woman and a man who was there somewhere. But, the woman took the main place, and her main title was the QUEEN OF HEAVEN.

It runs right through the whole Bible—you can find it if you are looking for it. Every time God spoke of Babylon, He spoke of this wretched woman who had originated idolatry who was the Mother of Heathendom who spread her corruption to every nation of the world.

It is very interesting that she claimed to have given birth to Nimrod the second time around, on December 24th! So . . . December 25th was called CHILD DAY as far back as 2000 B.C. I won't go any further. I think you can see where the Church has come in these years.

Do you see what I am saying now? Get past your shock!!!

- There was NIMROD and he was the beginning of WORLD GOVERNMENT.
- Riding on him (for that is what she did) was the MOTHER OF HEATHENDOM, the ORIGINATOR OF EVERY IDOLATROUS RELIGION in the world. She rode on the back of the POLITICAL Nimrod.

Do you see what we are saying now?

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What did she do? She corrupted nations. She corrupted them body, soul and spirit, for her appeal was to the appetites. She offered an alternative religion! And I don't care whether you look at it in Egypt or Greece or Rome, Babylon, Assyria or Europe, wherever you find a trace of this woman's religion (and it is right here in America today as old as Babylon), it appeals Number One to the LUSTS OF THE FLESH!

You meet that all through the Bible and you meet it today. It states that the appetites of sex (your body) the lust for food (your body) is all that really matters. It was the expression:

Eat drink and be merry, tomorrow we shall die!

That was the religion of this woman. As it spread, I say again, it went under many different names. You drop in any country and it is only after a while of looking at their religion, you realize it is the same thing, for:

- It demanded SEX to be taken to the most hideous extremes—**PERVERSION!**
- It demanded GREAT FEASTS where they ate and ate for days at a time!

But it always had the LUST OF THE FLESH. It demanded the LUST OF THE EYES! It was greed, for wherever this religion went it said, "Money, money, money—**AFFLUENCE.**"

The priest craft that went with this religion is unbelievable. If you study ancient religions, the priests were loaded with gold and silver. Their temples were ornate and filled with statues and pictures. It was unbelievable wealth and affluence wherever this religion went.

Anyone who was directly attached to it was right in on the action. Kings and Emperors attached themselves to it and became rich because of it. But right at the heart was not only the LUST OF THE FLESH, but also the LUST OF THE EYES. "I want it, I must have it!" Money buys everything! Of course, right at the very heart of this religion was the **PRIDE OF LIFE.**

You will remember all these references in I John 2:26:

All that is in the world, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life . . .

What is the **PRIDE OF LIFE?** It is that arrogance that says I am above judgment. I can do as I please. I will be god unto myself, and no one can drag me down. I will do what I please to do. It was the Religion that came out of Babylon, under its many guises.

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Mystery Religions—Idolatry Religions

Of course very few people realized what they were into—very few!

Notice it says here, MYSTERY. Babylon religion was a mystery from the very beginning.

- You couldn't even know what was going on unless you were initiated into it.
- And, when you were initiated it, you went step-by-step. You never knew it all.
- You were always discovering new mysteries, and when you knew the mystery you couldn't tell anybody about it.

It was a MYSTERY RELIGION, and so it was as it spread through the earth. But everybody was affected by it.

So, as we saw right in the beginning of our study, for many people back there in the days of John, to belong to the trade union you had to worship Venus.

Who is Venus? I don't know who Venus is. We go to her feast once a year, just to be in the trade union.

But their whole life was controlled by the religion of Venus. We could give many illustrations. It just seeped into the people that the way to celebrate your life, the way to live according to the priests (and they know everything, don't they?), the way to life is to celebrate your appetites.

If you feel like it, it must be right!

Did you enjoy it? It must be right! The priest said so!

Do you want money? Well, look at our religion. I mean, they tell us that affluence is where it is at man! They got caught up into greed and lust after things, and power in affluence.

Do you mean to say that we are going to get touched?

Oh, no! Nobody can touch us! We are beyond being touched!

We can do what we like. As long as you enjoy it there is no law.

We are absolute unto ourselves!

They didn't realize where it came from, for the most part. But, they were simply celebrating a RELIGION that had begun with the MOTHER OF HARLOTS.

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Persecution of Believers in the True God

Right at the very heart of it all! All that woman wanted in Babylon, and all she ever wanted as the spirit of the thing spread across the world, was that:

- she should be worshipped, and
- anybody who worshipped the true God should be destroyed!

And so, a trail of blood followed her. For, under whatever name she happened to be operating, wherever she went she destroyed those who refused to go her way, those who confessed the true God instead.

Babylon, its religion under many names, but in those days mostly under the name of Babylon, corrupted Israel. That will explain to you why there are so many chapters in the Old Testament describing the downfall of Babylon.

I will list these scriptures in case you care to read them, but they are far too long for us to discuss now.

- One is Isaiah Chapter 13.
- In Isaiah 14, she is even put alongside the Devil himself.
- Isaiah 21 - the entire chapter is given to this subject.
- Isaiah Chapters 46-48 deals with Babylon and its destruction.
- Jeremiah Chapter 25.
- Jeremiah Chapters 50-51.
- It is probably summed up very well in Daniel Chapter 4, especially Verse 30.

So, you want to be rich? You want to be accepted. You don't want to be on the outside, do you?

You want to be part of the world, or part of the Church. Well, you go my way, or you die! I will destroy you.

In fact, this woman is a bloodaholic. She is drunk with the blood of martyrs and saints. In one sense, she is the one who sits on the red horse, and she is the one who sits on the black horse. She is the Spirit that sits on the back of governments.

The Spirit of this World: Religions of Materialism, Hedonism, etc.

If I look at New York City, I can look at it as a political machine, but if you go into New York City there is something else there! You can smell her perfume. There is the very Spirit of this harlot. She is still around.

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Do you follow the symbolism of this?

You go to London and take a whiff—it is the same perfume. She rides on the back of governments.

Can I talk about New York without talking about her? No! You can't!

Can you talk about Sodom without its spiritual condition? You can't!

The government, the politics, the machine are so mixed up with her. She is the Spirit of this World. She is a WORLD SPIRIT.

Where is she today?

The calls to the appetite—they haven't changed.

Do you want joy? Celebrate your appetites!

Do you want peace? Eat, drink, be merry, have sex!

Tomorrow we die, who cares?

We are too materialistic. In one sense, at least, the Ancient Babylonians were spiritual. They admitted they were worshipping a goddess. Today we are not even spiritual. We just worship our appetites. The rituals haven't changed. The rites of the goddess are still the same; we just do not bother to name her any more.

It is the WORLD SYSTEM.

Every theatre on Times Square at 42nd Street is a Temple reared to the goddess Venus. Semiramus fills New York City.

And, I am sure all around these parts, if I knew this city as well as I know New York City, there are temples here, theatres and bookstores that are reared in the honor of Semiramus.

Do you follow what I am saying?

She (the Harlot Babylon) is the SPIRIT OF THIS WORLD.

Let's face this. I trust that you'll go to the Scriptures and look at this for yourself. From the very beginning she was a Religion.

I am not knocking one Religion more than another, but I am totally impressed that there is today that which belongs to ALL Religions, not just one. The idea is to amass . . . greed, vast political machines called denominations that amass to themselves silver and gold.

We have come a long way since Peter said, "Silver and Gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee."

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Today, religion can tell you its bank accounts. Today, religion can weigh its wealth in gold and silver, sculptures and pictures. Today, religion is worth a billion, billion dollars.

I say to you, and I say this very seriously, for the Book of Revelation is a serious book:

The Religion of Babylon has come right into the Church,
the religion of Babylon, right down to the 24th of December!

I could give you other dates that would make your hair stand on end. The Church embraced the WHORE of BABYLON and said, "We will give to you if you give to us." And the Church that we meet today is a church that has taken to itself the grasp and desire for gold and has forgotten what Christ's Church is all about.

By saying that, I am speaking of every denomination. If I were to mention one, I would have to mention them all. I don't know one that is not tainted in some way.

- The desire for politics? The BEAST has got into the church.
- The hierarchy, the dictatorship, bearing down, "Do this or die!" Of course, we don't shed blood any more, we excommunicate!

It's a lot cleaner, but it is the same SPIRIT OF THE BEAST, and right there the smell of the WHORE'S perfume is through the corridors of our churches. It is a terrible thing to say, but I want to be an honest man with you.

Where do I find her in the world today? I don't only find her in appetites, and in religion that is among us, but . . .

Chapter 18

If you turn to Chapter 18, it describes the fall of Babylon. And, in describing the fall of Babylon it describes all the people that are affected by that fall. Notice Verse 3:

For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality. The kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her. The merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality.

This is very poetic language. What is it saying?

Somehow, the kings of the earth—world leaders, and somehow merchants by having some form of spiritual intercourse with her, have become rich. Okay? Hold that.

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The Fall of Babylon

Then it says in Verse 9:

The kings of the earth who committed immorality, who lived sensually with her, will weep and lament over her when they see the smoke of her burning.

So here, this judgment of God has fallen, and it says of these leaders and merchants that weep,

The merchants of the earth mourn and weep over her because no one buys their cargoes any more.

So, the intercourse they had with this woman was expressed in the fact that they could sell their cargoes, and when she is gone, "We can't sell our cargoes any more." Do you follow me?

Verse 12: Cargoes of gold, silver, precious stones pearls, fine linen, silk, purple, scarlet, every kind of scented wood, articles of ivory, bronze, iron and marble, cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, cargoes of horse and chariots and slaves. (that is human souls)

Everything from cinnamon to slaves! We have suddenly got ourselves out of business because the judgment of God has fallen on this Harlot called Babylon. It says that the fruit you longed for has gone away. All things that were luxurious and splendid have passed away from you, and men will no longer find them.

This woman brought about commerce, trade, affluence, luxury, and splendid things. The merchants of these things who became rich from her will stand at a distance because of the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning and saying,

Woe, woe the great city. In one hour such great wealth has been laid waste.

And . . . there is another group of people who lament her!

Every shipmaster, every passenger, sailor, and as many as make a living by the sea, stood at a distance and were crying out as they saw the smoke of her burning.

In a Roman world, that meant the whole system of travel, since they only traveled by sea. All the communications, all that had to do with commerce and trading . . . they wept! Who? Everybody that had to do with the actual purchasing and selling, and also those that traveled with that purpose. They threw dust on their heads, crying out, weeping and mourning and saying,

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Woe, woe, the great city where all who had ships at sea became rich by her wealth!

Verse 22, another group of people:

And the sound of harpists, musicians and flute players, the trumpeters will not be heard in you any longer, and no craftsman of any craft will be found in you any longer. The sound of a mill will not be heard in you any longer. The lighting of the lamp—the voices of the bridegroom and the bride. Your merchants were the great men of the earth because all the nations were deceived by your sorcery.

It says art, sculpture, all the beautiful things, they originated there.

What is all of that saying?

It is saying that whatever this woman is, she does not only appeal to the individual with the celebration of the base appetites of the flesh. Not only is she, in fact, a religious factor, even though so far from true religion. She is also the key to affluence, luxury, riches, trade, commerce, and traveling.

She is, in fact, behind all beauty that leaves God out!

What is the most beautiful symbol of art, if it isn't Venus? Ever seen the lady with no arms? That is the statue of Venus. It is art. If you go to any art museum, or art gallery, it is beautiful! But, says this, it originated with Babylon if God isn't in it. Do you follow what I am saying?

Music, craft, and all the beautiful things, she took them, putting herself up as the beginning of beauty. Come worship at the shrine of something that was so beautiful, but had become so distorted. Who made a woman's body an object of lust? The worship of Venus. A woman's body, something so beautiful, could be so degraded in the name of art? Do you see what it is saying?

What is more beautiful than the ability of man to sing songs? Who turned the singing of songs into a thing that is almost a religion by itself? Venus, Semiramus, all that is in Babylon.

Do you realize that the merchants of America, the great corporate businesses, and all the travel across the seas in the name of great corporate businesses, when Babylon falls, they will weep and lament! She is the one who makes rich. She is the one who says, "Come my way." The sweet, sweet smell of her perfume says, "I will make you rich, rich, all the splendid things, all the luxury items! I'll make you rich."

She has an outlet in almost in every home, at least one. And she comes on that TV screen every few seconds to say, "If you worship me, you can have this, then you would really live!"

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Do you get it? Do you realize what this whole chapter is saying?

The hatred of God and His Church

There is one verse I consistently left out as I read it. It comes up more than once, that she is drunk with the blood of saints. Underneath the craving for luxury, underneath the craving for appetite, underneath it all is a fist that says, "God I hate you, and God I hate your Church."

Because we live in America, we don't feel how much she hates, but in every other nation of the world they know that if you do not go her way, the way of the WORLD SYSTEM, the way of the FLESH, of GREED and LUST and IDOLATRY and HEATHENISM, then she will probably drink your blood. She is the original Vampire!

Do you follow what I am saying?

And, as always, it is a MYSTERY RELIGION.

Who of the corporate executives who have given their lives to Semiramus, who have sold their lives for riches and possessions, how many realize they are worshipping at a shrine that is 5000 years old? It is a mystery religion, and most of those involved in it do not even realize it.

What do we do in the middle of all that?

Be aware. Refuse to be involved in her worship. The Bible says, We are in the world, we are not of it. I don't know how long you can do business and not become involved in her—God only knows that. I say, "For God's sake be aware of it!"

I was flying back today from Dallas and reading Time Magazine, and I had a very terrible experience. There is an article, an essay in this month's Time magazine. It says what it will be like in 1997 if the energy crisis keeps on and nothing is done. You had better believe what I am going to say.

All that they described there in 1997 is how I was raised most of my life. The great lament of that essay, "You won't have any more cars!"

I never got in a car until I was 14 years old.

We had to ride bicycles to work and walk, and I never knew anything else for the first fourteen years of my life. In fact, would you believe the first twenty years of my life.

It says that there will be no refrigeration except the snow and the ice!

I never knew refrigeration until I came to America.

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It says in the winter we have to wear heavy clothes and there is no heat, only at dawn and then you have to get up and put coal on the fire!

For the first twenty years of my life all I ever did was get up at dawn and put coal on the fire. That is the truth.

It says there will be no air conditioning! You'll have to fan yourself.

I almost wept as we flew across America. I wondered, for this study was very much in my mind, how much is the average American totally wrapped up and sold out to Semiramus? Luxury items, the splendid things of life—we cannot do without them.

Worship at my shrine or I will take them away!

Do you get what I am saying?

America already is lamenting. If Babylon fell—put dust on our heads.

She can fall! I'll tell you this:

If you can't do without what Venus offers you,
you had better examine your Christianity!

When Babylon falls, and this chapter says she is right on the way, ask yourself now:

Will you be lamenting?

Or will you be amongst the saints of God who are praising God, celebrating that that which had at its heart the death of God and His Saints is fallen?

Praise God for his judgments. This is a solemn chapter. It's solemn.

True Christianity requires Repentance

I would go one step further. There are a lot of people in the Charismatic movement who have never repented. I question this.

I spent the day in the plane today just going over and over this. And I realized that there are a whole lot of Charismatics who came into this renewal because they were healed. You don't come into the Kingdom because you are healed! You come into the Kingdom because you repent, and repent means to change your mind.

You look at the BEAST, and you look at the FALSE PROPHET, and you look at the HARLOT, and you change your mind. You know there is only one Kingdom and it is His Kingdom! There is only One Messiah, and that is Jesus.

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There is a new atmosphere, not the world, but as I John 22:26 says,
He who does the will of God shall abide forever. The world and all that
is in it will pass away.

Babylon is going to go. But he who does the will of God shall last
forever.

Do things have you?

There are a lot of people in our Charismatic movement and they have
never seen that Self and I is part of the Beast and Affluence, and a big house,
and riches, and two cars, and a boat is all part of Babylon.

Can you live without it? That's the point. I do not say have a bonfire to
prove a point. I am saying: Can you live without it? Anything you can't do
without: you don't own it. It owns you! Anything you are afraid to lose: you
don't own it. It owns you!

As I come to this chapter, and see what it is saying, I realize that the
things of this world are to be held and enjoyed, but held very lightly. They can
go, as surely as they came.

Do you follow what I am saying?

Probably the greatest thing in this chapter is that always underneath all
of that is, "I want what I want, and I will have it!" But it is the hardest
thing for an American to see. Anywhere else in the world it is easy to see, but
it is the hardest for an American to see.

And at the heart of that is a desire to kill God Himself if He gets in
my way. And if a saint dares to say a word against me, I will kill him, if
necessary. We don't do that in America, and therefore it is very hard to see
that, at the heart of Babylon, she is drunk with the blood of martyrs and saints.

Ponder that one! It is a heavy statement.

What is the End of this woman?

THE END is Verse 16. It says,

The ten horns, the beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her
desolate and naked and will eat her flesh and will burn her with fire.

The Devil's kingdom does not work. The Beast turns on his mistress.
The kings of the earth that have been made rich by her are the very ones who
turn on her, rend her, and destroy her. That is rather stupid. But, that is what
it states they do.

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Why?

Because, at the heart of the whole issue, the Devil's kingdom doesn't work.

There is an Alliance between the BEAST and the PROPHET and the WOMAN. But, what is the Alliance held together with?

I want what you've got!

She says, "I want what you've got," and any alliance based on such selfishness is sure to explode, for that kind of LOVE is only total selfishness. As soon as lust has had its fill, it turns to ashes in the mouth—it is sour, bitter.

The kings of the earth took all she had to give, and she took from them, for she sat upon them and rode them, and then they turn upon each other, because the Devil's kingdom is not built with love! It is built with selfishness, and it doesn't work.

I think that, of all the judgments of God in this Book, that one is the one that announces loudly and clearly. God doesn't even have to judge the Whore! Those that she served become disgusted with her and turn and rend her.

And isn't that the case?

You talk to a man who gave his life to making riches, and he will turn upon those riches and hate them. You turn to a person who gave his life to appetite, and he will despise it.

This judgment is on a magnificent scale. It is saying that at the heart of the whole matter, those she served hate her in the end. All the pleasures of this world, says the Bible, are for a Season, and then they turn to ashes. As it says in Proverbs,

The laughter of this world is like the crackling of thorns under a pot."

That is a beautiful picture! They make a blaze and a roar and a pop and crackle—ashes, full of them! That is the way of this world.

And the judgment of God falls upon Babylon. Men throw ashes upon their head, and they weep and lament that such a tragedy has occurred. For, although they hated her, they want her.

That is the sign of HELL:

Total restlessness, hating what I have and wanting what I have now just given up—the restlessness and the burnings of hell!

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The Victory of the Lamb

It states that the Lamb overcomes in the end:

Chapter 17:14 These will wage war against the Lamb and the Lamb will overcome them because He is the Lord of Lords and the King of Kings and those who are with Him are the called and the chosen and faithful.

I love that! It says He will overcome them because HE IS Lord of Lord and Kings of Kings. It doesn't say He will overcome them and will become Lord of Lords and King of Kings. No. It says of course He will overcome! The end is sure because He is the Lord of Lords and King of Kings!

When does this happen? If you have eyes to see, it happens every so often in history. In a minor way we have seen it in our own political history, when she who rode upon the beast and the whole thing blew up in our faces. And, we even saw the leaders of this world and the rich men lamenting and weeping on television as they lamented that Babylon,

Babylon is fallen. But it hasn't gone!

There was a judgment. But, we await a final judgment which is known in the mind of God and sure not to me. But a day is coming when,

The world and all that is in it will pass away,
but he who does the will of God shall last forever.

Put all we have said tonight together, these two hours. Please don't just take one. Put them all together, for over against this Harlot, and over against this Beast, we are part of the 144,000 who stand on Mount Zion, and are exalting God, the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The world—they are put against each other.

It is not for the Christian to look at the world and say, "Oh dear, what are things coming to?" What are they coming to? Just what God said they were coming to! So don't be so silly. Do what the Church is supposed to be doing, which is:

- Not looking at the Whore saying, "Dear Me!"
- Not even looking at America and saying, "What is American coming to?" as if she were not part of the Whore.
- But looking at the Lamb on the Throne, worshipping Him, and following Him wherever He goes.
- Understand there is a Grand Canyon between the Harlot and the Bride.

Amen.

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THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB

We have noted that, as far as we can see there are seven visions in the Book of Revelation. I hope that by this point in our course, you have seen that each one begins, more or less, at the First Coming of Christ and it moves through Church History. Not as a point of temporal history or geographical history, but rather,

- It moves through this period of time that is between the Redemption that was in Christ and THE END.
- It moves through that period where we now live, and gives us principles with which to interpret and understand what is going on.

I trust you have seen that. Remember the first one began with the Lamb going to the Throne and then the seals being unfolded.

We can stand back and look at our history wherever we find ourselves and say, “Now we understand! This is what is going on. Because the Lamb reigns this, and this, and this takes place.”

In the middle of all the devastation that the unfolding of the seals caused, we saw that the Church—which is the True Israel, which under symbolic number was called the 144,000—stood there unharmed, untouched, sealed in their foreheads with the seal of the Living God.

Then, another vision began and so we moved on.

Then, that one stopped, and another one began.

So, over and over again, we saw an interpretation of Church history and physical history. We saw an interpretation with principles that show what is going on today.

The last time we were together we saw that there is a system—a WORLD SYSTEM that is called BABYLON in the Book of Revelation. That world system of Babylon was presented under the symbolic picture of a HARLOT, a prostitute who was drunk with the blood of the saints.

Do you remember all that?

Now, this is what I want you to understand.

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We are in the middle of that Vision; we only got half way through it.

The first part of that Vision was:

- Here is the great prostitute and she seems to rule the world.
- She sits upon the back of world power and she is drunk with the blood of saints.
- If ever the world seems to conquer, take a good look! Smell her perfume, look at the blush on her face; she seems to be the mistress of the world.

Said the first half of our Vision, “Things are not what they seem to be. The great Prostitute was judged.”

Do you remember that? It collapsed! It fell! The Goodness of God’s Judgement!

The Bride of Christ

The second half of that same Vision that we are dealing with today says, “Now I will show you something else. I will show you the opposite side, the real as opposed to the counterfeit. The World System is a prostitute. The Devil has his bride, she is a whore, but Christ has His BRIDE!”

Immediately upon the judgment of Babylon, we are introduced to the BRIDE OF CHRIST. Okay? Have you got your orientation now?

Chapter 19

We are just following on from where we were last time. The great Prostitute is judged.

Revelation 19:1 After these things . . . (That is, after the judgment of Babylon), I heard as it were a loud voice of a great multitude in Heaven saying, “Hallelujah! Salvation and Glory and Power belong to our God because His judgments are true and righteous for He has judged the Great Harlot, (that is Babylon) who was corrupting the earth with her immorality. He has avenged the blood of his bondservants on her.” And a second time they said, “Hallelujah, her smoke rises up for ever and ever.” And the twenty-four Elders and the Four Living Creatures fell down and worshipped God who sits on the throne saying, “Amen! Hallelujah!” And a great voice came from the Throne saying, “Give praise to our God all you His bondservants, you who fear Him, the small and the great.” And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, the sound of many waters, and the sound of mighty peals of thunder saying, “Hallelujah, for the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.”

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Rejoicing over God's Judgments?

I don't know if you are aware of it, but that has many problems. If you don't have problems with it, maybe you have never thought it through. That is the trouble with thinking! It gives you problems.

I don't know who it is of you, bless your heart, but you stood outside the door the other week and said, "I don't understand it! Just believe Jesus is coming. Hallelujah!" I love you . . . It's okay!

But, when you think, you have problems. When I come to a situation like what is described in the first verses of Revelation 19, I have problems.

My problem is that they are beholding the whole world system going up in flames. They are seeing the smoke of torment. They are seeing the Judgments of God, and they are in an ecstasy of worship! They are saying "Hallelujah, The Lord God the Almighty reigns!" They actually state it in Verse 3. The second time they said, "Hallelujah!" Why? The smoke rises up forever and ever.

Now, these are heavy words. These stand before the judgments of God. They see the wrath of God continually being fulfilled, the smoke of her torment ascending, and they are shouting with ecstasy, "Hallelujah! Hallelujah!"

I find among Christians today that they are embarrassed at this God. They are very embarrassed. Christians today tell you that God loves you. Now, that is true, I have no problems there. I am not embarrassed about a God that loves people.

But, when it comes to Hell and Judgment and verses like this, the Church almost coughs with a cough embarrassment, and wishes that it wasn't there.

Whereas, here in Scripture they are certainly not stating things with an embarrassed cough. But they are stating them with an ecstasy of worship.

God has judged the world system, Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

God has judged the world system, Hallelujah!

You see, we have got to face up to this:

God is not God if He is not the God of Justice and Righteousness and Judgment.

In fact, the Bible teaches me that God's justice, His readiness to punish sin, His wrath, and His anger is part of His Goodness.

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The Goodness of God's Judgment

Do you remember back in Exodus Chapter 33, Verse 19, when Moses cried to God that the Glory of God would pass before Him? Do you remember that? God said, "I will cause my Goodness to pass before you." Notice that!

I will cause my goodness to pass before you!

And then, while Moses was in a cleft of a rock, it says that the Glory of the Lord passed before him. Then it delineates all that that Glory was, all that Goodness was.

And part of that Goodness was that God would punish every sin, and that God would deal with Sin very thoroughly.

When my goodness passes before you,
part of that goodness is justice.

- God is not 'Good' unless He judges Sin.
- Sin has defied the Attributes of God.

We have, on the one hand, in this book a Lamb and His Bride. We have not come there yet, but in Chapter 19 it speaks of the Lamb and His Bride. Here in this chapter, we read of a Beast and a Harlot who sits on his back.

- It speaks of the Lamb and the Bride as coming to marriage.
- The Beast and his Harlot—that is prostitution.

Do you see the counterfeit parallel?

- God is Sovereign.

Sin has mocked His Sovereignty and said, "I too am sovereign."

- God is Omnipresent.

Sin says, "I will act as if God is not here."

That is what the Bible means when it says that, "We have done this evil in Thy sight." The fact is that Sin was not merely committed, it was committed in the very Presence of God Himself. On and on we could go.

Sin has mocked and defied every attribute of God. If God in His attributes is absolute perfection (which we know He is) then God delights in His own attributes. Do you follow that?

I have to delight in God. God delights in Himself.

- There is nothing more glorious!
- There is nothing more perfect!

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- There is nothing more beautiful than the attributes of God.

Therefore, all creation is to delight in them, and God delights in them, Himself.

God's Joy is the joy that He has in Himself.

If man defies those Attributes, if man mocks them, does God really delight in Himself? Is He really God? Is He really the object of absolute perfection, unless ultimately He will move out to punish all those that have set themselves up as another (false) Center?

If God is not a GOD OF JUSTICE, then there is every reason to question whether He is God at all. Do you follow what I am saying?

Or, let's put it this way. If God beholds Evil with pleasure, could He be a Good God? A God that could look at Evil done in His presence and against Him, could that God be Good? Would you ever trust the Justice of God if He beheld Evil with pleasure? Think about that!

I couldn't worship a God who beheld Evil with pleasure. If I did worship such a God, it would be a god of darkness.

God has to punish Sin or He isn't God.

Or, to put it this way, let us be positive about it! Not only is a god who takes pleasure in Evil a god who could not be worshipped, but also a God who is to be worshipped for His absolute Goodness must be the aggressive enemy of Evil. It's not merely that He doesn't take pleasure in it! He must be the aggressive enemy of Evil!

The God of the Bible is NOT some neutral God who could not care less. He is not just sort of out there where there is Goodness going on and Evil, and He could not care less about it all. The God of the Bible is one Who must be aggressively AGAINST Evil, and aggressively FOR Good. Therefore, He must punish Sin.

The doctrine of Hell in the Bible is a necessity. It is not something we are embarrassed about. If I am really going to understand God in His GOODNESS and in His RIGHTEOUSNESS, I must stand with this crowd, this multitude in the Heavens. And, when they see the whole world system collapsing and they see the torment of Sin and the wrath of God, then they stand and begin with an ecstasy of worship, which is one of the greatest in the Book of Revelation.

We have touched on a whole lot of worships in the Book of Revelation, but this is the highest. It was from this Chapter 19 that Handel's Messiah was

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inspired. The great Hallelujah Chorus was taken from Revelation 19, and it is in adoration of the God who must and who does judge Sin.

The Bride of Christ, all those that have refused to bow to the Beast, they are gathered now and are adoring God. He did it!

Remember the Fifth Seal in Chapter Six? This same company is seen as saying, "How long? How long, oh Lord?" There is nothing right. Salvation has not been accomplished, actualized on earth, until all who oppose God have been put down.

Now it is done! This is the Grand Finale! And so, the great cry goes up:

Hallelujah! The Lord God Almighty reigns!

I don't know how you feel from the depths of your spirit about that. It is one thing to study it here. It is another to look out on the world, and to know that God just does not wink at sin. The longsuffering of God waits, but unquestionably, all that is associated with the world system shall be judged, and eternally judged, and there is no question about it.

But, that is almost the Wedding March if you please, for the whole chapter moves on.

Verse 7: Let us rejoice and be glad and give glory to Him for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His Bride has made herself ready.

- On the one hand, all that opposes Him has been put down.
- On the other hand, those that have the seal of the Lamb in their foreheads, they have made themselves ready.
- On the one hand, the Prostitute has been shown up for what she is. The world has been stripped of glamour.
- On the other hand, the Bride is seen for who she really is.

The Bride

Now don't rush on when you come to that expression, "Bride."

We have been seeing all through the book of Revelation: ECHOES. That's the word we have used to describe it. Every word, every concept, every picture of Revelation is an ECHO from somewhere else. When we come to the expression BRIDE, that is an echo from all through the Bible. In fact, in one sense it is the oldest echo that is consistently picked up to tell us something about the nature of the True Church.

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Do you remember Paul gives us that, right? You can read it for yourself in Ephesians 5:22-32. There, he goes all the way back to the very first marriage between Adam and Eve, and there in Verse 32 of Ephesians 5, Paul states, "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church." So, we have the Pauline authority to state that the Old Testament is teaching us concerning Christ and the Church under the symbol of Adam and Eve, the Groom and His Bride.

There are many pictures of the Church in the Bible, and many pictures in the New Testament. The one picture is that of a Bride and the Groom, Christ the Groom and the Church is the Bride. That is the one that spans the whole of the Bible. So, in that sense I can't just say, "Hey! You know, there is a marriage here."

This is an echo, and I've got to go back and see where it originated to understand really what we are stating here.

Adam and Eve, the first Groom and the first Bride, teach us everything we need to know of what God means when He says the word Bride. Do you remember when God took Eve out of the side of Adam? Do you remember that?

- God presented Eve to Adam after the surgery, and said, "Here is your wife."
- Do you remember that Adam said, "This woman is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh?"

Have you ever really thought about that?

Some of these expressions we know so well, we never even think about them any more.

- Bone of my bone: The bones that she has are really my bones.
- Flesh of my flesh: So, the flesh she has is really my flesh.

That is a tremendous statement! What was he saying? He is saying, "This one who is coming towards me now is none other than me! She is me in another form." Right?

Adam had a tremendous command of language. The idea that our ancestors were grunting apes is ridiculous. He was born with a tremendous command of language, and he had already called himself, in the Hebrew, "Ish." ISH means SELF, a person, a rational person. It is when you look in the mirror and say: I, me, SELF.

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That doesn't mean much today, but when you are the only person on earth, that means quite a bit. You can't turn to the animals and say, "Ish!" They are not a person. He had named all of the animals. Every animal had its name, but when it came to himself, he said "Ish. I'm different from all the others. They are great animals, great pets, they imitate me, but they are not ME. I'm Ish!" That's the Hebrew word. And, of course, we translate that as "man" in the first Chapters of Genesis. Man . . . Me . . . I . . .

When Eve came towards him, Genesis tells us he called her Woman. But in the Hebrew, that word is "Isha." Do you see what he is saying? He had looked everywhere, among all the animals. Is there another Ish? Is there another Self that I communicate with, another me? And there wasn't one! He couldn't find fellowship with the animals.

When Eve came towards him, he took one look and said, "Ish!" And then he saw that she was different and he said, "Aaaah! Isha! She's me but not me. She's me in another form. She's bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh—self of myself. She's me, yet she is distinct from me."

That was the very first marriage. That is the understanding when the Bible says the word Bride. Hold it in your head for a minute. How did she come to be? How was Eve there? You may recollect Adam was put to sleep. Do you remember where was she taken from? She was taken from his side, his rib. God built, sculptured, out of that rib, another self. You could say then:

Adam slept in order that Eve may live.

When I come to the Cross of Jesus, there are two sides to that cross. The side we emphasize a great deal is that:

- The blood of Jesus was shed in order to redeem us from our sins.

That is true, obviously! But, there is another side!

- Jesus also died in order that the Church, the Bride, may have Life.

Do you remember how John so significantly records that, as he stood at the cross, a Roman soldier came and pierced His side, and out of His side flowed blood and water.

- Blood speaks of the wiping out of Sin.
- But water, throughout the entire Bible, speaks of Life.

Jesus died, on the one hand, to redeem from Sin, but on the other hand, to give Life to The Church. The Church of Jesus came out of the side of Jesus. He died that she might have life. And, when I look at the Church, I am looking at Jesus in another form. Do you understand that?

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You explain the Church apart from Jesus! You can't! The Church is not a human organization. Most of what we call "the Church" today is Babylon. I think we made that plain the last hour. That is not the Church! The Church is that Company of people in whom the very life of Jesus Christ is. Therefore, when I look at the Church, I am looking at Jesus in another form.

That is why in John Chapter 3, it speaks of the very way every individual enters that Church through the new birth. Do you remember? It says that you have to be born from above—born again, born from above.

In our next hours, we are finally going to come to the New Jerusalem, which we are going to see is yet another picture of the Church. It says there that the New Jerusalem came down out of Heaven. There is no natural explanation of the Church. It was born out of the death of Jesus.

At this point, we are not talking about our sins being wiped out. That is a glorious fact. We are talking about the life being given, so that we become the Church.

Jesus is the Eternal Ish, and He looks at us, the Church, and He says, "Isha!" We are Christ in another form. His life is within us.

Only that which is of God can be presented to God. Do you understand what I mean?

It would have been useless for God to bring a monkey to Adam for a wife, because the monkey was not of Adam. Only that which is of Adam could be presented to Adam for a wife. Do you follow me?

Only that which came out of his side—his very other self—now, that other self can be presented to him for fellowship. The two can know each other.

If I am going to present to God my own good works, if I am going to come to God and say, "I am doing my best—I am struggling hard!" then that self-righteousness is an abomination to God.

Only that which is of God can be presented to God.

Do you follow me?

It is no good saying that I am going to do my best! Your best reeks! Really! You say, "But I am trying hard to be like Jesus!"

There were plenty of apes in the Garden of Eden trying to be like Adam. Apes have been good mimics from the Garden of Eden on. To try and be like Jesus, to mimic Him is not a qualification for being part of this Company we are talking about.

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Only that which is of God can be presented to God.

Only through the death of Jesus when the Spirit of Jesus comes into us, and we begin to exhibit the Fruit of that Spirit and our lives are of God, now that is a Bride fit to be presented to Him. Do you follow what I am saying now?

Not that I am saying that the Church is Jesus, anymore than Jesus is the Church, or anymore than Eve was Adam. Or, as God said, "They two shall become one." He didn't say they one shall become one. They were two!

You are not Jesus Christ. Christ is in you. You have life because of Him, but you are not Him anymore than Eve was Adam! Two! Two distinct ones, yet they are one. Right?

So the Church is alive with the life of Jesus, and in that sense, Jesus in another form, and yet she is not Jesus. They are two, and yet those two are One. That is the idea behind the idea of Bride.

You will find another beautiful picture of the Bride that is one of the most unquestionable echoes of the Old Testament to this New Testament idea in Genesis Chapter 22. I am sure you are familiar with that story of how Abraham took Isaac and offered him on Mount Moriah. Do you remember?

As the knife was poised to plunge into the heart of his son as an offering to God, God stayed his hand. It is significant then, at that point, when Isaac was in effect dead and raised again (Hebrews 11 puts it that way, that in effect Isaac died). The parallel is unbelievable.

It was three days since Abraham obeyed God, and for those three days Isaac lay dead in the heart of Abraham. Do you follow me? He was going from his tent, he was going to offer Isaac, and for three days he lay dead in Abraham's heart. In Hebrews 11 it says that Abraham was positive that even if that knife went into his heart, God would raise that boy from the dead to prove His promises.

Therefore, the knife did not go in, but on that third day, Isaac, in the heart of Abraham, rose again from the dead. And do you know where Mount Moriah is? Some people call it Calvary! It is the very same mountain. In that very same place two thousand years later, Jesus would die, and just down the road there underneath, in a tomb, He would rise again from the dead.

Having told that story in Genesis 22, which is such a parallel to the Cross, the last verses of that chapter seem to go off at an angle. They say:

At that time Abraham heard that his brother who lived in Paddan-Aram in Syria had some children.

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I remember the first time I read this, I thought:

Good grief! Whoever wrote this has got bad timing! You are trembling with anticipation! What has happened? Isaac nearly died, and they are coming back, God did that and . . . Oh, by the way! Here's a letter that says that Uncle Nahor had some kids? Terrific!

. . . Until you notice . . . one of those children's names was Rebekah!

AND, Rebekah was to become the Bride of Isaac. You talk about the Holy Spirit putting something together! In the chapter in which Isaac was offered up, and, in type, was raised again, immediately the Holy Spirit says, and that is when Rebekah was born. Do you get it?

In the death and resurrection of Jesus, that is when the Bride was born. Tremendous parallel.

You could follow it through to the Book of Ruth. For, the Book of Ruth is another tremendous book of the Bible, which is in there just to teach us more about this concept of the Bride. Ruth was the outcast; she was the Moabite, Moabite, the dirty Gentile. She couldn't speak Hebrew. She was 'black' on top of that. And so, here she is a different color to the people she went to, she spoke a different language, she was a Gentile, and she came into the congregation of Israel. Do you remember?

She came into a poverty-stricken situation, and then Boaz turns up. You see, Boaz was a special person. Have you ever heard of the expression Kinsman-Redeemer? Do you know why they call it Kinsman-Redeemer? Because there is one word in Israel, "goel" and the word GOEL means "my relative," "my kinsman," but it also means "my redeemer."

If I am your relative under the ancient Hebrew idea, and you are in trouble, I have to redeem you. I may not like you, but that is beside the point! You are my relative! If you are my relative, I have to redeem you. So the word relative and the word redeemer is one word in Hebrew.

Here they find Boaz. Ruth had married into the family, and the husband had died, but still she was in the family, an outcast, unwanted, but Boaz is a redeemer, a relative. And so, the whole story of the Book of Ruth is that he came and he became her redeemer. He married her; he brought her under the umbrella of all the riches and dignity of his name. He became her Goel, her kinsman-redeemer. Jesus Christ is our Goel. We are the outcasts. We are unwanted. We don't have any right to the promises of God.

God, over and over again, said, "I am your Redeemer."

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I often wonder what the ancient Hebrews thought about that, because God is saying, "I am your relative." How can God who is Eternal Infinite Spirit be a relative of men of flesh and blood?

That is the whole argument of Hebrews Chapter 2: God did not take on Him the form of angels, but He took on the form of man—flesh and blood! And, God then in my flesh and blood can say, "I am your relative, your Goel. I am a man like you!" In the cross, He redeemed us and married this Ruth. We become the Bride of the Goel, the Redeemer.

Are you stacking all these on top of each other? These ECHOES--It is all here!

The Book of Revelation goes all that way back. All through the Old Testament, Israel was called the Bride of Jehovah, but the "Bride in waiting," always waiting.

Now, in Christ the Goel, the Bride has become a reality, and all the jewels of all the promises of God they are now, Yes, Amen in Jesus Christ. So, when it says, "the Marriage of the Lamb is come," that is a loaded statement. It is the marriage that goes all the way back to where we have seen the Lamb we have already met in Chapter 5.

The Marriage of the Lamb is come!

But more than that, marriages in the East are not marriages in the West! There is a difference. We should take at least a very brief look at that difference in order to understand what it is saying here. The marriage of the Lamb is come. What does that mean?

It can only be understood in Eastern terms. The first step of a marriage in the East was an engagement. Forget everything you know about Western protocol. Forget the idea of looking at the girl of your choice with bluebirds in your eyes and bells in your ears, and saying, "Will you marry me?" Forget it! They had a much more sensible idea in the East.

You send an old servant, and if he knows a woman, he knows a woman. And, if you are just some young fellow, what do you know about women? Now this fellow, he has been around a bit, and he knows a woman! So, we are not going to trust you, we are not even going to let you loose. You stay home; we will send the person who knows—the Matchmaker. The Fiddler on the Roof gives you a pretty good idea of the Eastern way of handling this. You are too young, too foolish to think of marriage. We send the Matchmaker, and he's the one who goes.

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If you were to follow this through, Genesis Chapter 24 is the perfect picture. Isaac is home. Matchmaker Eleazar, the trusted servant, goes to Paddan-Aram to find a bride for Isaac. The fact that Isaac had never set eyes on Rebekah, the fact that there were no photographs or anything like that, is quite beside the point. Eleazar comes to Rebekah, and the fact that Rebekah had never set eyes on Isaac is, again, quite beside the point. Eleazar knows what he is after, and of course, in that story there is more at work here than Eleazar.

And that is what we are dealing with right now. That was a picture of the Bride. And, who is the Matchmaker? The Holy Spirit comes to us. We are in Paddan-Aram, the place that was very, very materialistic and worldly with Laban the “Boss” of it all. And, into Paddan-Aram comes the Holy Spirit Eleazar, and he came to Rebekah and he invited her to become the Bride of Isaac. That meant, of course, from our perspective that she was called to inherit all the blessings of Abraham, although she was born in Paddan-Aram. And she came to be married to the unknown Isaac and to receive every blessing God had ever promised to Isaac. She was going to be born into it. It was an engagement.

Now an engagement was as binding as marriage. You remember that, when Joseph wanted to put away Mary they were not yet married, but he had to get a bill of divorce to put her away. An engagement was not a period before the final commitment. Engagement was the final commitment. Engagement was followed by a period of time before the marriage, but the engagement was the commitment.

And so, the Holy Spirit has come to us. Of course, what this book is looking at is “us as a unit,” as a block—all of us together! This is what has happened to us. The Holy Spirit has come to us. You have never seen Jesus, but, “Whom having not seen you love.” We are now rejoicing with a joy unspeakable! The engagement has taken place. Paul says that in II Corinthians 10, where it says, “He has engaged us as a virgin to Christ.” We have come! The engagement of which there is no breaking has taken place.

The engagement was followed by a period of time in which they did not see each other. Still they don’t see each other! This period of time is the period of time discussed all the way through this Book of Revelation. Right? His Death and Resurrection, and then the white horse goes forth and the Holy Spirit puts an arrow in your heart, and you are claimed forever for Jesus. You become part of the Bride engaged to the unseen Christ, part of the 144,000, the symbolic number. “How long, Oh Lord? How long?”

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There is a period of time now before the marriage takes place. This is the time when there are the seals, and the trumpets, and the bowls. This is when the beast walked the earth and the Prostitute seems to have it all.

Then another tremendous echo!

This one chapter has so many echoes back there. One great echo in this Chapter is the Song of Solomon. I don't know if you have ever read the Song of Solomon. One of these days, if I get the courage, I'm going to do a retreat on it. To so many people, the Song of Solomon is a closed book,

Basically, it is a story that Solomon told on himself. He is the great King in Jerusalem, and Solomon goes out to look for more women to put in his house. It was in the days when he was a backslidden, almost-apostate king. The great King Solomon goes out into the villages to find women to take back to his palace, and he picks upon this one shepherdess, and drags her back to the Palace. She doesn't want to come! Once there, he loads her with all the perfumes and fine clothing, and all she says is, "Have you ever seen the man I love? Oh, you really should see him!"

She gets all the other girls together and tells them about the one she has left back in the country. Solomon lavishes her with all the riches and every perfume he can give to her. "Am I not enough?" She says, "Now, you should see my Beloved! Man, you have nothing on him. You should see him."

And then, there are visits to the Palace by the Beloved, and she runs through the streets of Jerusalem to find him. "He's the one, Jerusalem, everybody! Here! You couldn't have missed him!" Finally, Solomon gives up. "What's the use? Let her go back!" He sees her in the last Chapter. She is leaning on her Beloved. He says, "Who is this who comes out of the wilderness, leaning on her Beloved?" "Ah," he said, "That is love! Waters cannot quench it, fire cannot burn it."

What is it saying? The Church of Jesus Christ, betrothed. She wasn't married to that shepherd. She was betrothed, engaged. And who comes along to the Church but Solomon, who at that time of his life related more to the great Harlot or the Beast. "Oh come on! I will load you with all riches. I will give you all you want, all you need. I'll drag you away!"

The Church is being attacked on every hand, inside and outside, "Forsake the Christ! Deny Him!" And all the Church does is say, "If ever you had seen my Jesus; if ever you understand my Jesus." Until . . . "Oh go back to your beloved! What is the use?"

Waters cannot quench it . . .

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Do you get the picture? It is a tremendous book. It is talking about that period of time. The engagement is there but you don't see each other. That is what this whole Book of Revelation is about! Don't give in. Have patience, and if necessary, have wisdom. Understand what is going on.

Christ comes for His Bride

But then there comes the time when the Groom leaves His home and comes to the house of the Bride to pick her up. Remember the story in Genesis 24? Isaac left his home and went out to meet the Bride as she came. That was the way it was done. And so, in this chapter you've got a picture of the Groom coming to meet the Bride.

Notice it says in Verse 11:

I saw Heaven opened and a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True.

Now, I don't need an interpretation of who this is! We have met "Faithful and True" in Chapter 1 and Verse 5. That is where Jesus was described to us as a FAITHFUL AND TRUE ONE. But also, we have seen Him already in Chapter 6 riding out on the white horse. He rode out on the white horse in order to gather together His Bride. Now He comes to collect His Bride. That is the idea here.

It says also, "At such a time," (and we must never forget this) ". . . and in righteousness He judges and wages war." He has come to collect His Bride, but in so doing He must judge the Beast and the False Prophet and the Woman who sat on them all—the Great Whore, and the Dragon himself.

It is not enough to say that God loves us! If God loves us, He must punish all who hate us. Does that make sense? The two go together.

It says, then "His eyes were a flame of fire." We have met Him, the One whose eyes are as a flame of fire in Chapter 1:14.

It says, "Upon His head are many diadems," or many crowns. That is interesting. That goes right back to the Ascension that Paul speaks of in Philippians 2, where Paul says, "God has given Him a Name, and at that Name every knee shall bow, every tongue confess . . ." **all the crowns.**

Or again, it says in Chapter 12, speaking of when Jesus rose again, "The Kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of the Lord and His Christ."

Do you remember in the Temptation the Devil presented himself to Jesus? He showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. He said, "All these will I give you for it is delivered into my hands to do it."

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Do you remember the picture of the Devil we have already met, with many crowns on his many heads? The power behind every empire of the world was the Devil, and he says, "I can give you any one that you want, or all of them if you like, only bow down and worship me."

Jesus had come to this world in order to take all of the kingdoms of the earth. The Devil said, "Why go through all that? Just bow down, and they will all be yours anyway."

But, you see, Jesus had come to take the diadems and to slay the Devil! He refused him. He goes through the way of the Cross and the Resurrection. When He rose again from the dead, He said He had gotten what the Devil had offered Him. He said, "All authority is given unto me in Heaven and upon earth." The kingdoms of this world had become the Kingdoms of the Lord and of His Christ.

In this period in between, He is bringing Evil to its fullest in order that He may defeat it totally, so that the Cross might be actualized on earth. And, as He comes now to take His Bride, He has many diadems. They have all been taken from the heads of the Dragon and they are now on the head of the Lord Jesus. He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, it says in Verse 16.

It goes on to say, "He has a name written upon Him that no one knows except Himself."

Do you remember the names that were written on the other beasts? It says their heads were covered with names of Blasphemy. This one has a name written which no man knows. That speaks of the fact: "Who is Jesus Christ?" Quite frankly, when all is said and done, do you know who He is?

Do you remember one of the titles of Jesus in Isaiah 9:6? It says, "His name shall be called Wonderful."

You open a package at your birthday, and you SORT of expected what you are going to get. Then you get a surprise! It is WONDERFUL. You say, "That is a little bit more than I expected." And once you have taken in what you have got, you open the top thinking you knew all about that thing, and it is even more than you thought! And you say, "This is wonderful!" The word "wonderful" assumes you are getting more than you expected. It assumes you are discovering more than you thought possible to discover.

His name is Wonderful. Every time you think you understand Jesus, the Holy Spirit says, "Hey! Just a minute!" You say, "Wonderful!" It's a little more than you thought.

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Upon Him is written a name that no man knows—the mystery! The Mystery of God incarnate in Christ is an eternal study: The infinite nature of the God-Man.

It goes on and says, “He is clothed with a robe that is dipped in blood.” You will never forget the Cross! Even when the glory of the Marriage of the Lamb is come, you will ever be reminded of the Cross.

His name is called THE WORD OF GOD. Just in case you didn’t know who it was, John says, “just refer back to my Gospel.”

In the beginning was the Word and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

More Judgment

Now it says, “. . . out of His mouth came a sharp sword.” Again that refers us back to that first chapter where we met Jesus with a sharp sword. It says,

“. . . so that with it he might smite the nations, He will rule them with a rod of iron, treads the winepress of the fierce wrath of God the Almighty.”

This is what we have been meeting all the way through this book under the term ARMAGEDDON. I know that the last time we were together we got that far, and I said we would deal with it next time. Well, we have got far this time, and I’m going to say we will deal with that next time. We’ll have to, because we only have a few minutes left, and I am certainly not going to give just a few minutes to what has become one of the key words in some people’s interpretation of this Book.

And so let it be said that, at this point, I want you to get the whole picture here.

Here is the Church surrounded by the Beast, surrounded by the False Prophet (all these symbolic terms which describe the peoples and the ideas and the philosophies of this world), and over all the Great Whore. Already we have seen that He has defeated the Great Whore.

Now we see that He comes into the midst of all this, and there is described THE JUDGMENT. Verse 20: “The Beast was seized and the False Prophet.” It says they were seized and they were judged.

And so here is Christ coming into the midst of all those opposing forces that have come against the Church and . . . It is not a battle! This idea of a battle—it is not a battle! I challenge you to find such a battle. He came and that was it.

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The idea of a battle? You will have to wait for that for our next hour to see what that idea has within it. But enough to say, that at this Coming of Christ, all the forces that oppose the Church were defeated.

Finally the Marriage of the Lamb and His Bride

The marriage of the Lamb is come, which, of course, is at the very end of this protocol of Eastern weddings that we are talking about. The Groom came to where the Bride was. She didn't go to him, he came to her and took her from there, and they lived happily ever after. Or, as I Thessalonians 4 says, "And so we shall ever be with the Lord."

At that point, the Bride and the Groom are seen as belonging to each other. It is one thing to live in a little village on the backside of Israel and say, "I happen to be married to the King of Kings." (Ha, Ha, Ha! You could fool me!) But, when the day of the Marriage comes and the King of Kings comes for His Bride (that nobody believed), Well, you have to admit it! She was right.

That is the idea of Colossians 3. It says,

When Christ who is your life shall appear, we also shall appear with Him in Glory.

John, in the third chapter of his epistle says,

When we see Him we shall be like Him.

Or, as Roman 8 puts it,

The manifestation of the Sons of God.

It is one thing to say you are a Son of God and the world says, "Ha, ha!" But, when the Marriage of the Lamb is come, and the Bride and the Groom appear together, we shall be seen as we are, and He shall be known as He really is. And, all those that defied the fact that He was KING OF KINGS and LORD OF LORDS will see that He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords! The whole universe will know that things are not what they seem to be.

And . . . Every knee shall bow, some with joy and some with anger. But,

Every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that He is Lord.

Amen.

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ONE THOUSAND YEARS

Chapter 20.

Let's turn to Revelation Chapter 20. I don't believe that Chapter 20 is a KEY chapter to the Book of Revelation. I believe that Chapter 5 is KEY. But, in the minds of a great many people, Chapter 20 is the most important.

The Millennium

You may have heard of the Millennium. Of course, the word Millennium is not even in the Bible. That makes it very difficult to argue for it, as a doctrine, or against it. I am always suspect of words that are not in the Bible. You may have heard of Pre-Millennialists, Post-Millennialists, A-Millennialists, and there are some who call themselves Pan-Millennialists (they are waiting to see what will PAN out!).

A Pre-Millennialist is one who believes that Jesus Christ will come and set up a physical kingdom in the nation of Israel and rule from Jerusalem, reinstate the Temple and its sacrifices and rule for 1000 years, during which time the physical nation of Israel will be the top dogs of the world. They are Pre-millennialists. That is a position held by a great number of Evangelicals and Charismatics and was probably put forward the clearest in The Late Great Planet Earth, by Hal Lindsey.

The Post-Millennialist hardly has a place left today, but that was the idea that was held very strongly a number of years ago. It is that gradually the Kingdom of Jesus would get larger and stronger until the whole earth would come under His rule for a thousand years.

An A-Millennialist is one who does not believe there will be a Millennium at all, but that the terms that are used here in Revelation Chapter 20 are symbolic of something else. I think it becomes very obvious that I am an "A-Millennialist." That is a very dangerous position to hold. I am banned from a number of pulpits. My own denomination in England refused to ordain me because I am an A-Millennialist. People feel very strongly about this one chapter of Revelation, so I want you to hold that in mind.

The Future of the Nation of Israel

I do not believe that the Nation of Israel will ever hold again any great position as a nation. I believe that they have got as much place in the world

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today as Norway has, or Sweden, or England or America. They are a nation and God has always dealt with a people, and that people has been of FAITH and of MIRACLE. It has always been a faith that is in the promised Messiah.

While Israel was carrying that Messiah, they were the “CHOSEN” people. But after He came, the CHOSEN PEOPLE, the Israel of God, are those who have faith in that Messiah.

It has always been that way since Abraham, and it always will be. I do not believe there is any future for the nation of Israel as a nation. Their only future is to come to the Messiah and become part of the Church of Jesus Christ, where there are neither Jew nor Gentile. We are all “One in Christ.”

I do not believe in the blasphemy, and I use that word advisedly, that the Temple will be rebuilt and sacrifices reinstated. That, to me, crosses the line from Bible interpretation into blasphemy. For if there are more sacrifices to come, then the work of Jesus was not enough, and God is a schizophrenic Who, after having put away sacrifices, starts them up again. Therefore, I can in no way hold to that. The idea that the world is gradually coming under the reign of Jesus, I do not find that in Scripture either. Rather, I find that He reigns in the midst of His enemies.

I am left then with Revelation 20. Very well.

Although this chapter has such publicity, it is obvious that it is the 20th Chapter of the Book. In the last set of tapes that were made on this Book, everyone wanted my tape on Revelation 20. I refused to give it. No one can understand Revelation 20 until you have moved from Chapter 1 through to 20.

The Dragon is Bound in Chains for 1000 Years?

I think by this time it is no problem to any of us here, to understand that whatever we find in this chapter is the same as we what we have found in all the other chapters. Here are symbols, echoes of other parts of the Bible. So, let us read a few verses:

And I saw an angel coming down from Heaven having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand and he laid hold of the Dragon, the Serpent of Old who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the abyss and shut it, and sealed it over him so that he should not deceive the nations any longer until the thousand years were completed. After these things, he must be released for a short time.

And I saw thrones and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them, and I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the Word of God and those who had not worshipped the Beast or its image, and who had not received the

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mark upon their forehead and upon their hand, and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed—this is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection, over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison and will come out to deceive the nations.

And then, Verse 9:

They came up to the broad plain of the earth, surrounded the camp of the saints, The Beloved City. Fire came down from Heaven and devoured them. The Devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone where the Beast and the False Prophet are also. They will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

First of all, what is really there? There are a number of ideas that are there and they are kind of mixed up together. Let us pull them out and see exactly what it says.

The context with the rest of Revelation

First, we should note that the Vision we were studying in our last hour came to an end. As all other visions, it came to an end with judgment. Now, we begin again. Here is another vision beginning to take place.

In this vision, it begins with an angel from Heaven. We have seen more than once in this book that the word ANGEL is better understood as MESSENGER. So, look upon this one as a Messenger from Heaven. And, he has a key—it is his. I think it should be noted that all the other KEYS of this Book have been given to whoever is going to use them.

This pit that is spoken of here, I believe it is back in Chapter 9, was opened. But it says that the person who opened it was GIVEN a key.

This person has a key. It is his key. He opens what is termed a BOTTOMLESS PIT. It states he has a GREAT CHAIN. It states that he seizes the Dragon and binds him into that bottomless pit, and he remains there for a period of that is called a THOUSAND YEARS.

- The result of that is that he does not deceive the nations. Notice that!
- That is the limit as the result of that: He does not deceive the nations for that period of a thousand years.
- After that, for a very short time, it states that he is released.

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John then says, as he is looking, that he sees something else taking place during that Thousand-Year period.

- He sees thrones and he sees people sitting on those thrones.
- Now, anyone sitting on a throne must be understood to be a ruler.

So, here are Princes, Rulers, and Kings. It says judgment is given to them—authority. But, it says, they are reigning with Christ. Therefore that judgment or authority must be understood as Spiritual.

Now John says, “I will tell you who these people are.”

- They are the martyrs, those who had been beheaded for the sake of Jesus Christ.
- They are those who refused to take the mark of the Beast, and refused to bow down to the False Prophet.

These people who sit on thrones and reign during that period that is called THE THOUSAND YEARS are those who, if we refer back to many other passages of Revelation, have the MARK OF THE LAMB as opposed to the MARK OF THE BEAST. I think if you have been with us all these hours will understand what I mean by that.

These are those who have the martyr’s head—those who understand that to confess that Jesus is Lord is to incur the wrath of the world. And, it might mean I would be beheaded for the faith of Jesus. That is the martyr’s mentality. That is the Faith that overcomes the World.

It says I saw these who, for the testimony of Jesus and for the Word of God, because they refused to bow to the World, now he sees them seated on the thrones, reigning. He says they are involved in a resurrection. That martyr’s mentality, it says has produced a resurrection, which is called the First Resurrection. During the thousand-year period, these who had experienced the First Resurrection live and reign with Christ.

Okay, you’ve got that? That’s just what we read, but I am putting it back to you to be sure you understand it.

At the end of that thousand-year period, it said that Satan is released. Again, what he is allowed to do is to deceive the nations. That is the specific thing he is allowed to do. And, he is allowed to bring them to hate the saints. They didn’t need much help, but he brings them to hate the saints, and to come against what is termed the “Beloved City.” It states at that point, fire falls from Heaven and devours them.

What does that all mean?

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I think once you have got the first item of that vision, at least you know where you are going. And I believe the most important thing about that vision is the first part:

That is the angel that came from Heaven and bound the Devil with a chain.

You tell me what that means, and I think I can tell you what the rest means. That is certainly the first and it is the most important part of this vision.

Who is that messenger?

I repeat. Every other angel in the Book of Revelation that has opened anything was given a key, which states he did not have the key as his own right. It was given to him. Here is an angel or messenger who has a key of his own right. The only other person in the Book of Revelation who has a key of His own right, was the one we met in Chapter 1, Verse 18, who said, "I have the keys of Death and Hades."

I'll go further and state that no mere angel can order the Devil around.

I am very disturbed sometimes with the way the people talk about the Devil. You don't have to state your victory over the Devil by being irreverent. People call him Old Slew foot, and other names such as that. You should beware! The Devil may be the Devil and may be defeated, but he is not to be despised. He is the greatest power in this world next to God.

There is a chasm between him and God, but as far as created beings are concerned, the Devil is the greatest of all created beings. "Fallen" is still to be treated with the respect, even though understood as being defeated. I tell you very solemnly, do not despise the Devil.

It states in Jude 9, "Michael the Archangel, when disputing with the Devil did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, The Lord rebuke you." Even the highest angels that we know about did not dare mock the Devil, but had to go via the Lord.

Here is an Angel who can bind the Devil with one act. So here is an Angel that is higher than any angel we know of in the Bible. And again, I am led back to the only Person in this Book who has power over the Devil, and who has keys of His own right. It is the Lord Jesus Christ.

What is this idea that Jesus bound the Devil?

That is no new idea. That is something that we have had in the Scripture for some time. Take for example Luke in Luke's Gospel, Chapter

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11. We have this idea of binding the Devil given to us by the Lord Jesus Himself. I am sure you remember it very readily:

Luke 11:21 When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own homestead his possessions are undisturbed. But when someone stronger than he attacks him and overpowers him, he takes away from him all his armor on which he had relied and distributes his plunder.

He is simply stating that Jesus was the one who had come to overcome the Devil. You will find in the King James version, that word is translated as “bind.” The idea is right there that Jesus came to the “strong man,” that is, the Devil, and He came specifically to overcome him and to bind him. The same idea is in Matthew, Chapter 12, where there is a parallel statement.

Matthew 12:28 says, “But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you.”

He says that the very fact that the Devil now is helpless, he is bound, is proof that the Kingdom has come. He goes on:

Verse 29: “How can anyone enter the strong man’s house and carry off his property unless he first binds the strong man? He will plunder his house.”

He says that the proof that the Kingdom has come among you is that the Devil is now being bound. He is helpless and he cannot stop God’s Kingdom coming and accomplishing His purposes. So again, we have proof right there: Jesus claimed to be the One who from Heaven had come to bind Satan.

Do you realize that? Do you see what I am saying? Jesus claimed to be the One who had come from Heaven to bind Satan.

The great question is did that actually take place? That is the question, although one would wonder if everybody has really heard it. In **Colossians 2:15**, it tells us that “He brought to the Cross all of the powers of the Devil, and when he had brought them all together he stripped them publicly and declared victory over them.”

Or, perhaps even stronger than that, is **Hebrews 2:14** where it says, through death He destroyed him that had the power of death, the Devil.

That word “destroyed” there is not the idea of “annihilated.” The word, destroyed in the Greek has the idea in it that “you have messed up all the works.” The machinery is still there, but somebody has thrown a wrench in the works. It is there, but doesn’t work any more.

So, it says, Jesus came and He destroyed—that is, He rendered powerless, the works of the Devil.

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Or again in I John 3:8 where it states that, "Jesus Christ was manifested that He might destroy the works of the Devil."

In John 16:8,11, He makes it very plain that, "Now is the judgment of the Prince of this World."

Now! That was two thousand years ago! Satan has been bound by the one Person who claimed that He had come to this earth to bind the Devil.

I have a great problem with the title of a book that says, "Satan is Alive and Well on Planet Earth." Satan is crippled and dying on Planet Earth! He was smitten at the Cross. There was his Judgment.

And during this period of time, the whole Book of Revelation has been showing us:

- Things are not what they seem to be!
- The Judgment WAS accomplished!
- It shall be actualized!

And in this time in between, the Gospel is being preached to all the nations that once were held under the power of the Devil, so that all may come out from Babylon, be separate, and become part of the Bride of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Do you remember how Peter puts it? He said that "the Devil is a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." That sounds pretty frightening, a roaring lion! But then he says, "whom resist!" That's almost funny! If a lion roars at you, you don't say, "No! No!" Roaring lions are dangerous creatures unless they are clown lions. With clown lions, you can walk up to them and say "No" and they run away.

There is only one true Lion in the Bible: The Lion of the Tribe of Judah.

But, another lion makes an awful lot of noise. He is a roaring lion. Did you know that when a lion roars, he is not on the kill? The lion roars at night in the forest in order to scare everything out of its skull. When a lion is roaring, it is only to scare the whole forest. The lion you want to be afraid of is the silent lion that is creeping up on its prey to kill.

The Devil can only roar; that is, he scares everybody "spitless," but he has lost his power. Therefore, you can resist him and he flees from you. Do you get the picture? He is a defeated lion.

There is only one Lion, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. When He overcame the Devil, He did so by becoming a "Lamb as it had been slain."

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That was a greater indignity for the Devil, in that he was not even slain by another lion. He was slain by a Lamb as it had been slain.

It doesn't say that the Devil is no longer around. It says that at that time he was bound.

I might just say this: If this is a physically literal passage, how can a chain of earth bind the Devil who is a spirit? You try to bind a spirit with a chain. The idea is ridiculous. Do you follow me?

Whatever that chain was, it's got to be a spiritual chain. What spiritual chain can bind Satan? The most elementary Christian knows that it is the finished work of Christ that has bound the Devil. That's the "CHAIN."

This is another picture in a sense of the One we met in Chapter 6, the Rider on the White Horse. This is Jesus going out, unlike in Chapter 6, to conquer and to conquer in order to actualize what He did on the cross. This is the picture of how, at the Cross, He binds the Devil with the work He has now completed.

And now, the Devil is limited. Notice! He is still here. The idea that the Devil is not here is nowhere to be found in the Bible! He is here, but he has lost one vital power, and that is:

He has no more power to deceive the nations!

When he said to Jesus that all the kingdoms of this world belonged to him and he had a right to give them, Jesus never contested that. He didn't say, Devil you are a liar. But now, he has lost that power and he cannot deceive the nations any more.

Deceit is the main power of Satan. His name is "the Liar, the Deceiver," and His Kingdom is the kingdom of darkness, lies, and deceit. You never know the truth in the darkness. Now he has lost the power to deceive the nations. Wherever the Gospel goes, he can't stop it. He can no longer hold a fog over the minds of men.

I think to really appreciate that, you would need to go into some part of the world where they have never had the Gospel, and see the power of the Gospel when it first comes to the minds of men. You talk to very few missionaries and you will soon here one story over and over again: That when they preached into the village where they had never heard the Gospel, everyone wanted to receive it. And they told them, "Please sit down. You didn't understand." Then they would preach it again, and they would all say, "We want to receive it."

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You say, "Well, I have never seen that in America." No, because America has chosen to be deceived. But you go where the Gospel has not yet been, and you will soon find out that the Devil is the one that has no more power to deceive the nations. Wherever the Gospel goes and light comes, men in that moment are free, totally free to receive that Gospel, if they want to. He has no more power.

Before the Cross, before Jesus rose again, the Devil held the world in darkness. Israel, only Israel, held light. Light was centered in Israel. They held the truth. They held the Scriptures. As it says more than once in the New Testament, it is through Israel that we have all the scriptures; it is there that we understand the covenants. They were the ones who understood that Christ was coming. Everything was centered in Israel! If you wanted light, you had to go to Israel to get it. If you wanted to become united to that light, you had to be proselytized and actually become an Israelite in order to have access to the Tabernacle of the Congregation and to become a partaker of that light.

But do you remember the prophecy of old Simeon when he stood over the little baby Jesus in Luke 2:30?

He shall be a light to lighten the Gentiles. (Lighten the nations.)

This One is going to bring light, freedom from darkness to all people. Until that time, they had been held in darkness. Now, in this One, light is going to come.

Do you remember in Acts 26 where Paul speaks of the commission that he received to go those nations in their darkness? In Acts 26:17, the Lord Jesus said to him, "I am sending you . . ."

Listen! This was his commission! For what reason is he being sent to the nations? It says:

. . . to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the dominion of Satan to God in order that they may receive the forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.

He is saying, "Paul, I am giving to you the Gospel. That is, I am giving to you the whole message of what Christ accomplished at the Cross. And, as you go to the Gentiles, you, in preaching that will have power to open their eyes. You will have power to turn them around from darkness to light."

When Paul wrote in Romans 1:17, he said the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation!

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Therefore, I can go out into the world of darkness and when I proclaim what Jesus did on the Cross, IN THOSE WORDS is power to open people's eyes, to turn them around from darkness to light. It, in itself, is the POWER OF GOD.

Do you remember what it says in Psalm 2? And, this goes back to Revelation 12 where we read about the Man-Child, Jesus Christ is the Man-Child. It says, ASK AND I WILL GIVE THE NATIONS FOR YOUR INHERITANCE, THE ENDS OF THE EARTH AS YOUR POSSESSION!

Do you remember that, or am I jumping to these Scriptures too fast? Remember that! We talked about it in Revelation Chapter 12.

He who had risen and was now seated on the Father's throne—The Father turns to Him and says, Ask and I will give you the nations for an inheritance.

There is nothing that can stop it now. Nothing! The Devil has lost his power to deceive the world!

Jesus anticipated this when He stood in the synagogue of Nazareth and said,

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, for He has anointed me to proclaim the Gospel to the poor, announce deliverance and release to the captives.

He is quoting from the Old Testament, where it says it even more strongly. In one place says He will say to the prisoners, "Come forth—the doors are open. Walk out! There is no one who can deceive you any more."

The Gospel is the Power of God to open eyes

Whenever I preach about this, I could become a missionary overnight. I am in America under sufferance of the Holy Spirit. I mean that! I am here, I enjoy living here, but when I have been to other nations of the world, I've had them sit on my doorstep at four o'clock in the morning begging me to teach them, and they have walked through the jungle for a hundred miles to get there. And at 8 o'clock in the evening when I am exhausted they say, "We will give you one meal, and then teach us again."

Then I come to America where people say, "It's 10 miles away! I will wait until he comes closer to us." I wonder if I am here in the right place. But, I am here under sufferance of the Spirit. When I read verses like this, I yearn to go into the world in the Power of the Holy Spirit and proclaim the Gospel. And I know before I even get there, they will hear what I say, and their eyes will be opened.

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Some of you young folks, I hope you hear this! If I were twenty years younger, I would never degrade myself by getting involved in the affluence of America. I would give myself to the preaching of the Gospel in countries where they have never yet heard it, because all you have to do is open your mouth and preach, and those people will hear, for the Devil has lost his power to deceive the nations.

That was a little spiritual commercial in there. But I feel very strongly about those things.

The meanings of the symbols and echoes

The angel with the chain?

Very well! The angel with the chain is none other than the Lord Jesus.

The Thousand Years?

A thousand years? By this time you should be expert at numerology. A thousand years. Why, at this time, should it suddenly become a thousand years when all the other numbers we have seen have been symbolical?

What is a thousand? $10 \times 10 \times 10$.

- We have seen that “10” is the number of finality, of completion.
- 3 times over! This is complete!

So we have total and complete finality!

Beginning when Jesus bound the Devil at the Cross, there is a period of time known only to God. But, it is total! It is complete. It is the full fulfillment of God’s purposes and God’s plan.

For us who live through it, it is a long time. But hardly had it begun before in this very book Jesus said, “Behold I come quickly!”

In the light of the fact that Jesus completed the work and bound Satan, whatever else has got to happen will be happening soon. Do you follow what I mean by that? Not soon on our calendar, but in the light of God’s purposes, every minute of history moved up to the cross, and it was done! From that moment on, anything else is going to be SOON. Do you follow me?

So this period is that period of completion, that period of finality. Nothing more can be added to it. This is it! From the CROSS to THE END, to us humans a long time so far, but in the purposes of God, it’s a very short time.

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The Martyrs?

It says that, during that period of time, a certain COMPANY were those who Ruled and Reigned. We are told they were martyrs. I have heard that before in the Book of Revelation. We met them in Chapter 12: They loved not their lives unto death. These are the ones who reign along with Christ. That martyr's mentality—We have met it so many times. If I am going to confess Jesus as Lord in this World, I must understand that the World is going to hate me.

Understanding that FAITH, in the Scripture, is understood as a MARTYR'S MIND. It may cost me my life. This is not a hobby I am taking up! It is the commitment of my life into the hands of the Person of the Lord Jesus.

It says these are the ones who reigned with Christ. It says they are priests unto God. We have met these people before. They sang in the first part of the book. They have been redeemed out of every tribe and kindred and tongue and nation, to be priests unto the Father.

This is the Church.

The First Resurrection?

It tops it all by saying that these are the ones who participate in the First Resurrection. Now of course, if you are just going to live in Chapter 20 of Revelation, then First Resurrection could mean just about whatever you want it to mean. But, if you are going to take in the whole Bible, the First Resurrection is very simple to explain.

Do you remember in Ephesians Chapter 2: 5,6? It states,

We who were dead in our trespasses and sins have been raised together with Christ.

Do you remember in Colossians 2:12,13 it similarly speaks that:

We who have been born again have gone through nothing short of a resurrection.

The whole of Chapter 6 of Romans Paul speaks with almost mock horror of the Romans:

Don't you know? You who have been baptized into Christ have been baptized into His death and resurrection?

Colossians 3:1-4—We've already quoted it:

Christ who is our Life . . . We have died to the things of earth.

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He continues by saying, Set your mind where it belongs—where you are! You are alive with Christ! You are seated in the Heavens!

Whenever you read any books on prophecy, watch for one thing. If they start talking about politics, put them down and stop reading! God does not suddenly change His mind about the end-time things. All through the Bible, He has been speaking about the real US -- the real WE. He says about the real YOU, “You have been raised with Christ; you are seated in the Heavens.”

Believe me, when He talks about the END-TIME things, He doesn't suddenly start talking like an astrologer or a palm-reader! He keeps on the same track. And when He speaks of the FIRST RESURRECTION, that First Resurrection takes place in our spirits when we are born again. You are raised with Christ. That happened the minute you who once were dead in sin were joined with Jesus Christ!

As you saw that, the Holy Spirit of Christ came into you, and, as Ephesians 1:19 says, You were raised with the very same power that raised Jesus from the dead.

Of course, the one we all quote, that We are now seated with Christ in the Heavens.

Or, Romans 8, We are heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ.

I find as soon as I read Revelation 20, in the light of the whole New Testament, that those who reign with Christ during that period of time of completion (obviously, it is the Church), who have the faith that, if necessary, is a martyr's mentality, we are raised with Christ in the First Resurrection!

Who will Rule & Reign, and how?

Do you remember in Isaiah 32:1, it says,

One day a King shall reign in righteousness and princes with Him?

The people who now are learning how to rule this World are the CHURCH. Or, if we follow on from Chapter 19, it is THE BRIDE. The King of Kings right now is teaching His bride how to rule the World. If we had time to follow that through from Psalm 2, He is teaching us to:

Ask, and I will give the nations for your inheritance, the ends of the earth as your possession.

The idea that this would be speaking of a physical kingdom is nauseating. It is not consistent with Scripture to think that Jesus would come and there would be a physical kingdom with Jerusalem as its center!

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I asked one of the leading exponents of that doctrine,

You who believe that Jesus will reign in Jerusalem and will reign over the whole earth physically speaking, what is your hope as part of that?

I quote him. He said,

My hope is that I might be a Sheriff under King Jesus.

I replied,

Terrific. Your hope is a little red light, going around enforcing the law of Jesus. Terrific! That is the blessed hope of the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior; to one day wear a badge for Jesus.

How nauseating, after Jesus began it all by saying, "My kingdom is not of this world, else would my servants fight." They don't wear badges, or nightsticks, or red lights, nor are they presidents under a Supreme President.

If you want to know how to reign with Christ:

- Learn to flow in the Holy Spirit,
- Learn what intercession means,
- Learn what prayer means.

Then you will learn what ruling with Christ means in the real Kingdom!

Isn't that exactly what Jesus taught us in what we recite in the Lord's Prayer? Thy Kingdom come! You don't come to that with a nightstick, you come with prayer and asking His Kingdom come. These are the people! No wonder they are called priests, for we are now a Kingdom of Priests, and we rule because we are priests who pray and intercede.

What about Satan's release for a time?

But it says that at the end of that time Satan's bondage seemed to be over. All the way through the Book of Revelation, we have noted that at the end of each of those series of Visions, there has been a LITTLE TIME, which has been variously described, when apparently Satan had power given to him.

You might remember with the Two Witnesses, they were shut up and silenced at the end of that Vision. Do you remember that? The whole of the Devil's kingdom rejoiced, and they sent presents to each other because it looked like they had won.

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Or, do you remember at another point, describing this ongoing period, it says that demons were released, and demons were “given power.” Do you remember that?

Again, it spoke of the River Euphrates drying up, and we spoke then that the River Euphrates always held back the powers of evil from Israel, but when it dries up they can walk over it.

Do you remember that in another place it said that out of the mouth of the False Prophet and of the Beast and of the Dragon came evil spirits? And it says they gathered together for Armageddon.

This, I believe, is yet another Vision that speaks of the same thing. There is a period at THE END, spoken of before, and spoken of here again, when Satan is released. Notice that he didn't break out! He was loosed, and that only for a little season.

It says that Jesus shall reign until all His enemies are under His feet. Now the Church in this book is seen to be constantly under the attack of Satan through World politics and the apostate church.

Anti-Christ is as old as Nimrod. You might say that Anti-Christ would be better understood as an alternative Christ. I think I pointed that out to you before. It is not one who says, “I am against you.” It is one who sets himself up alongside as an alternative. And, world politics and the apostate church have always offered the alternative. Every age has seen its alternative Christ, and each one has been directly related to those before.

That is why we have had all those books! One man who wrote that Napoleon was the Anti-Christ; somebody else comes along and says Stalin; someone else, Mussolini . . . On and on it goes, because in a sense they were all right—in a sense! They were wrong to say, “This is HIM!”

But as John said way back there when he wrote his first letter, there are many Anti-Christes with us. The spirit of Anti-Christ has been with us all the time. The Devil has always offered his alternative.

What about Armageddon?

But all the time through this book, and we have seen right at the very end, it is as if there is a spiraling down to the bottom of the garbage can. Right at the very bottom, there seems to be a time of intense trouble when Satan's alternative is set up against Christ's Bride and the two come together. It is called Armageddon.

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Armageddon? Again, let's remember we are still in the Book of Revelation—a book of symbols.

What was Armageddon in the minds of the Hebrew people? Armageddon was a great battlefield. Incidentally, I see some of you looking. You will not find the word Armageddon in Revelation 20. All I am noting is that, at the end of every Vision, there has been a little period of time of intense trouble for the Church. In one or two places, this is termed, "ARMAGEDDON."

So, you will not find it in this place. In this place, it is just called a "little season" when the Devil is released. Okay? You're with me now!

So . . . this little period of time at the end of each Vision, speaks of Satanic power being allowed to go out and do its worst. It would appear that at the end of that completed period when God has achieved on earth as He wills, then at the end of that time Satanic power is given the right to go and do its worst. It turns its attention to the Church, as is expected, and in one or two places that is termed, "Armageddon."

Armageddon, to anyone in Israel, meant the place where two armies meet to fight. It was the great battlefield set in the middle of Israel where all the great battles of the Old Testament were fought.

Do you have this expression over here that, "You are coming to your Waterloo?" Okay! You've got it, then. Waterloo is that great battlefield of Europe, where you find out just who is going to win!

This is it! Armageddon, the Plain of Megiddo, was where armies met, and that is where you are just going to fight to the end. That's it! It is the Finale. After a battle on the Plain of Armageddon, there were no more battles after that. You might have nit-picked each other all over the place, but when you meet at Armageddon, "Brother, that is your Waterloo!" You are going to find out who wins once and for all!

In more than one place in the Old Testament, when the forces of Evil join together to destroy the People of God, God broke in and, in a most miraculous fashion, gave victory to His people over the forces of Evil. Gideon was one time. Deborah was another. The Book of Judges is full of them.

If you could understand that Armageddon then meant, not only the final coming together, joining of good and evil, but also it was the time in many devout, godly Jewish minds when God came down and visited the enemies in wrath and delivered His people from them.

When it says that they gathered together . . . when the forces of evil merge against the Church . . . then I can say, "This is it!"

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There has been an ongoing battle throughout history; there have been alternatives all the time. But in the end Satan shall be released.

Now do your worst, and understand that you were defeated, and therefore you are defeated.

You say, "I don't like that too much!"

No . . . I know! I can understand that!

But remember all the other visions! You have read the last chapter! You shouldn't be upset. You realize that this entire Book is written over and against Exodus, and we have seen that.

Remember? After it seemed to be all over, in fact, anyone with two eyes in their head would know that it was all over with the death of the first-born. Pharaoh, if he had a pea for a brain, would know that it was all over! But, what got into Pharaoh to go driving like a maniac after those Israelites? I suggest to you, that he, who had already been stripped of power and could do nothing—he was released! "You go! You go!"

I say this very carefully, but that man had hardened his heart beyond all repentance, so God baited him, "I'll get you!"

If you can look at it like that, Exodus takes on a new meaning. For, do you remember? God led the Israelites down into a bottleneck. Do you remember that? The mountain is here, the sea there and they are up against the water. And, there is Pharaoh like an insane, raving idiot, going at them! I would have gone in the opposite direction from those people; they are the most dangerous people on earth right now, unless you are a repentant sinner. And then it says he goes after them into the bottleneck.

God is saying, "Come on!"

Have you seen a lobster being caught? Lobster catching was exactly what was happening at that point. You get a big thing for a lobster catch, put your crab inside and the lobster goes in and can't get out! It is caught.

And here, God puts Israel at the end, and here comes the big lobster Pharaoh, and he is driven like a maniac, and he sees his catch and then goes right into the bottleneck! And God says, "I Gotcha!" Judgment!

Then Israel goes through the Red Sea, and God says, "Come on, come on . . ." And, when they are in the middle of the Red Sea, then the judgment of God fell. God loosed Pharaoh in order that he may be totally, forever out of the lives of these people.

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Why the loosing of Satan at the end?

In order that Satan may be forever, throughout all eternity known as the defeated loser.

Is Armageddon going to be a physical battle?

It states that it is against the Camp of the Saints, the Beloved City. In our next session, we shall see that the Beloved City, the New Jerusalem is none other than the Church. We have already got that in Hebrews 12. It says, We who have been born again have come to the New Jerusalem. The Camp of the Saints is the Church.

Israel is the Church!

You see, if I believe that this whole last battle is to do with Israel as a Nation, then immediately I have forgotten the Bible altogether! I am plunged into Middle Eastern politics. But when I realize that the Bible is one book, it flows on until the end.

- What is God's main concern? ***The Church.***
- And, what is the Devil's chief hatred? ***The Church.***

The last battle, which is an ongoing battle right now, but the last one is between the Devil and the Church.

- And all philosophies of the World . . . and ***The Church!***
- And, all the hatred of Nations . . . and ***The Church!***

It is against Israel, but you had better define your Israel before you begin talking about it.

Armageddon will not be a physical battle!

The Church has been shedding its blood for years. That is not a battle! That is release! In fact, all though this Book, it tells us that, when you have been beheaded, you have won! I know those rules don't hold true on earth, but that is how it is. Those who have overcome are those who have died for the FAITH.

This is not a physical battle; we are not going to have masses of troops. If I were talking about wishes and want to, I would prefer that, actually.

- Swords can't hurt me, but philosophies from the pit of hell can!
- Doctrines of demons . . .

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Go back to your notes that we gave when we were dealing with those spirits that came out of the mouth of the false prophet and the Dragon.

- All the powers of the occult,
- all the doctrines of demons as well as
- all the persecutions of world powers,

are suddenly turning in on the Church: NOT in a geographical location, but in the spirit realm and in a universal sense.

It always has been, as it was in the days of Noah, just one little tiny minority, and the whole world around in opposition.

Lot, in Sodom . . . One little minority. Just before the judgment fell, all the powers of filth in that city ganging up on him! It has always been that way.

But, of course, it says, fire came down from Heaven and devoured them.

As I said in my last hour, there was not even a battle! The fire came and it was all over. The power of God intervened. I believe it was at that point that the Groom came to collect His Bride. The very manifestation of Jesus in the power of His finished Work is enough to end the Battle.

As it says in II Thessalonians 1:6, 7:

For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed

I believe that is what it is speaking about. It is the GLORY of the Church and the DESTRUCTION of all those who have joined themselves to Satan.

- Right now, as far as we know, we live in the time of a BOUND Satan, which drives me to be an evangelist.
- And when the time comes for Satan being loosed for a little while, we shall know GRACE, as we have seen consistently through this Book.
- The same FAITH with which we live is the same Faith with which we shall die, if need be.

But things are not what they seem to be, for He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords! The battle is already won!

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He will win because He has won! The False Prophet, all the powers of an apostate religion, and all the powers of war that persecutes, as well as the Great Whore shall be judged -- eternally so!

Then, whole Church shall join together and sing,

"Hallelujah! The Lord God the Almighty reigns!"

Amen!

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THE NEW JERUSALEM - I

Let's come to the Word of God, now and we shall turn to almost the last chapters of the Bible.

Chapter 21

We are dealing in our two hours tonight with the subject of the New Jerusalem, and I want us to get a perspective on this as well as an understanding. I think the perspective is just as important as the understanding.

Chapter 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth – for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God made ready as a Bride adorned for her husband.

We have come to the end of THE END, and in so doing, says John, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth."

The New Heaven and New Earth

Now, what exactly does he mean by that?

The word "NEW" there does not mean "new in kind". Do you remember? We have already met this word NEW when it says, "they sang a new song," and we pointed out that was a song that was NEW IN KIND. That is, it had never been there before. The word NEW here is not new in kind but rather it means "to REJUVENATE." It is the SAME ONE, but it is REJUVENATED.

And so he is saying, "I saw a REJUVENATED Earth and a REJUVENATED Heaven." It was NEW, yet it was the old one. But it had been made completely over again; it was REJUVENATED.

This is shrouded in mystery. We know nothing about that, and anybody who thinks they do, I'm afraid, go immediately into the realm of fantasy. You see, the Bible is a book that is written for me today. The Bible does not tell me about unknown eons of the future, because I am not living there. God is a very practical God, and He tells me all that I need to know. But He just hints, He nudges me, and says, "a new heaven and a new earth."

Now, that is also spoken of in a Book of the Bible that is not apocalyptic. By that I mean one that is not in signs and symbols. Peter wrote about that in very straightforward language. You will find it in II Peter 3:3. He

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begins to speak about the flood of Noah, and that in itself is a tremendous subject. But, he is stating that God destroyed the earth with water, and when Noah stepped out of the Ark, he was the only family on earth. There were eight people; there was no one else on the earth. All of the animals were dead except those that came out of the Ark.

Noah put his foot down upon a rejuvenated Earth. It was the Earth that was the same one that he had left, and yet it was totally new. It was so totally new he would not have recognized it as the Earth he had left behind. (If you haven't studied our tapes on Genesis, when you do you will understand everything that I mean by that.) He stepped out upon an Earth that was totally NEW, and UNLIKE any Earth he had ever been on before.

Peter parallels that:

II Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar, the elements will be destroyed with intense heat. The earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what manner of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God on account of which the Heavens will be destroyed by burning, the elements will melt with intense heat. But according to His promise, we are looking for a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Quite frankly, I do not know what that NEW Heaven and NEW Earth is, what it is like or anything about it. I am sure we shall be given instructions the moment it arrives, but until then I do not dare to enter into a Disneyworld of fantasy trying to say what the Bible doesn't say. All I know is, it says, ". . . wherein dwells righteousness."

Satan has been forever handed over to torment. The Beast and the Prophet have been given over to torment, and the great Harlot, Babylon has collapsed, crashed and has been destroyed.

Now we enter upon the Marriage Supper of the Lamb and they sing the praises of God, He who has brought about this great judgment! They enter into a NEW Heaven and a NEW Earth.

This life is not all there is. Time had a beginning—time will have an end.

After that, we move into an unknown future, eternal eons when God's future purposes will be unfolded. That is what this is saying. It tells us no more except that Satan will not be able to get there . . . wherein dwells righteousness.

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When Noah stepped onto the new Earth, he brought with him all the problems of the old Earth. It is very significant when you study Genesis, that when the Earth first began, man was the one who fouled it all up, and in so doing, the very first thing he did in “fouling it up” was to stand in the garden and be aware of nakedness. Do you remember that? And, in the new earth, Noah stepped onto it, and the very first thing he did according to what we are told, was to get stone drunk. Then he stripped off all his clothes and stood there naked.

It seems very significant that in the beginning man became shamed in his nakedness. Then God gave them a new Earth, and Noah stepped onto it, but it was only a matter of years before he was shamed in his nakedness.

“But,” said God, “there is coming a NEW Heaven and a NEW Earth wherein dwells righteousness.”

If you know anything about the Scriptures you will know that the saints are clothed with God’s righteousness. And so, we have that little insight into whatever that future holds.

The New Jerusalem

But our main subject, as we come to this, is the New Jerusalem:

I saw a new heaven and a new earth, and I saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.

You will notice also, in verse 10, it says:

He carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the Holy City Jerusalem coming down out of Heaven from God having the glory of God, her brilliance was very costly, etc.

There is something I especially want you to notice. In the light of those two scriptures, now read verse 9. It says that:

one of the angels said, “Come here I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.”

Now, can you hold those last three scriptures together? Maybe the last one is the most important. We have just met the WIFE OF THE LAMB, the BRIDE in chapter 19. It is very obvious that that WIFE, the BRIDE OF THE LAMB, is the CHURCH.

In almost any book you will pick up these days that mentions “End Times,” or the Book of Revelation in particular, they will speak of the New Jerusalem as a real city. Those of my listeners who gather all of their theology

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from Southern Gospel Quartets are completely convinced the New Jerusalem is a city that is 15,000 miles square, cubed and all the rest of it, and somehow it will fall down from Heaven.

I was in Seattle and I heard a man who was speaking very seriously and solemnly of the New Jerusalem, and he stated that it was a satellite, a satellite 15,000 miles cubed. There it was floating around in outer space, because the Bible says that it came down out of Heaven, and all us saints have these celestial bodies, we don't need space ships, we can just zoom up into that New Jerusalem that is floating around out of heaven.

To me, that is absolute "piffle-dee-dee". I have never heard of anything so ridiculous in all my life, when the Bible plainly states to us clearly with absolute clarity.

This is one of the easiest parts of the Book of Revelation to understand! The angel said:

Come, I will show you the Bride, the Wife of the Lamb, and I saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem coming out of Heaven.

What could be simpler? Of all the symbols in the Book of Revelation, this is the easiest because this one says, "I am going to show you the wife of the Lamb, the Bride, the Church," and then he shows us a CITY. You only have to be five years old to know that CITY then, in some way, represents the WIFE OF THE LAMB, the BRIDE, which is the CHURCH.

Do you see the parallel here? We saw one parallel last week. That parallel was that:

- On the one hand, you had the Harlot representing the World.
- On the other hand, you have the Bride representing the Church.

Two women as symbols!

Also, it states in Revelation chapter 17 that the HARLOT was a CITY. Remember, written on her forehead it said BABYLON. She was that city. And then we went on in chapter 18, and looked at that CITY. First of all we saw the WOMAN, the HARLOT, and it told us, "She is the CITY!" Then we looked at the same thing under the SYMBOL of that CITY. Do you remember that?

Now last week we looked at the BRIDE OF THE LAMB under the symbolism of the BRIDE, a beautiful Woman. Now, it says she is also a CITY. Now you have Harlot and Babylon—Bride and New Jerusalem: it is a parallel.

And so, we are looking at the CHURCH. Immediately this gives us perspective.

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When does this take place?

We have already stated right at the very beginning, that John makes it plain that there is a NEW Heaven and a NEW Earth.

He also states there is no more SEA. And all through this book, SEA has been the restless turbulent nations. Do you recollect that? Do you remember the Beast came out of the SEA—out from the nations? Now he says there are no more turbulent nations.

Something has happened here, a new kind of REJUVENATED Heaven and Earth. So, very definitely, he is talking of endless futures.

But on the other hand, whatever the Church is in endless futures, the Church is today in embryo. In fact, the Bible teaches me very plainly that we have already come to the New Jerusalem. In Hebrews chapter 12:22, you have these words:

But you have come (past tense) to Mount Zion and to the City of the Living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem and myriads of angels.”

So the Church today is called the “Heavenly Jerusalem”.

Do you remember in the book of Galatians Paul speaks of the Jerusalem, which is below, and the Jerusalem which is above?

- He speaks of the Jerusalem which is below—that is the whole legalistic system of dead religion—and he says that they are “cast out” (Galatians 4:25, 26).
- But he says that the Jerusalem which is above—that is the promised Seed—which is the one who is free, living in the Grace of God.

So, all through the New Testament, you have this idea that, if we have come to the Church, we have already come to the New Jerusalem, the Heavenly Jerusalem, The Jerusalem that is above. And so, what we are looking at here is not only a Church, which is the ideal Church of endless futures, but we are looking at the Church as it is today in at least in embryo. Do you see what I am saying?

The Work of the Holy Spirit

I don't suppose we will ever really see this unless the Holy Spirit shows us. We can go through these studies together, and maybe these last four hours are more important than all of them. We look at the Harlot and we look at Babylon, and we look at the Bride and we look at the New Jerusalem. But, unless the Holy Spirit shows you that, you will never really see it.

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I think it is significant that of all the chapters in Revelation, it is these two where it specifically states that the Spirit had activity. Look at chapter 17:3:

And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast.

Notice that he says I was carried away “in the Spirit”, and only when he was in the Spirit did he see the true nature of that Woman.

Then, in this statement of the New Jerusalem, it gives the very same idea. Verse 10 (we’ve already read it) says:

And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great high mountain.

If you don’t see these things by the Holy Spirit showing you, then the Church is just a bunch of people and the world is a bunch of people, and they all get mixed up together. But, in the Spirit you can discern the True Church. You are taken to a great high mountain, and you see things the way they really are. When you look at the World by the power of the Spirit, you see the World as it really is, and you go into a desert wilderness and you know that this is just what the World really is.

I am shocked, actually, by the number of people that cannot discern between the two. The number of people who are in the “Spirit Renewal Movement”, and yet they still talk about people in their church as, “nice respectable people.” God help us!

We need to be taken to a great high mountain by the Holy Spirit to see the Church, the real CHURCH: The BRIDE, the HOLY CITY, and the NEW JERUSALEM. Then we need to see by the same Holy Spirit that all those who have not been BORN AGAIN are in that wilderness along with that HARLOT sitting on the BEAST. But only the Spirit can show us that. Apart from that, we get all mixed up and we don’t know where we are.

The New Jerusalem Present and Future

So, we are going to look at the New Jerusalem not only as a future reality, but also as present among us now in embryo. I think you will realize this. Look here in Chapter 21:4, it says:

He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes. There shall no longer be any death, no longer any mourning or crying or pain. The first things have passed away. Behold I am making all things new. I will give to the one who thirsts of the spring of the Water of Life without cost. He who overcomes shall inherit these things.

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I know there is finality about those verses, but hasn't that happened already? Quite frankly, it has! Didn't Jesus say:

I am the resurrection and the life, he who believes on me shall never die?

We have already entered into eternal life. I can honestly say death has passed away for me. There will be a day when you read in the newspaper that Malcolm Smith is dead, but you won't believe it, will you! You will know that he is more alive than he has ever been. There is no such thing as death for a Christian. Always, when the Bible speaks of death of a Christian, it says he "fell asleep." It's a beautiful thing.

I think we Westerners have got to learn to die. We are afraid of death. People think that divine healing is merely to keep alive forever, and then they get upset when someone dies.

In the New Testament it was glory to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. He says there is no more death in this New Jerusalem. That is true, in embryo. I still look forward to the resurrection of my body, and then there will be no more death. It says, "Oh death, where is your sting?" It is over. But even now, it's here! I've got it; it's in embryo already. It is no longer there.

It says, ". . . no longer any mourning or crying or pain." Quite frankly, if we live in what this book is talking about, we live in a "joy unspeakable and full of glory." Can a Christian really mourn? If you are a Christian and you deeply mourn and grieve, then I believe you need counseling. Really! Because, in Christ we have been delivered from that. The tears of a Christian sparkle with triumph. Or, as I Thessalonians, Chapter 4 puts it:

We sorrow not as others who have no hope."

We sorrow. We are human—but not as others. There is triumph in our tears. Although this has not happened in totality, it has happened all right. I know what it is talking about! I have it in embryo.

Of course it says, ". . . the first things have passed away." I hear that all through the New Testament. II Corinthians 5:17, The old things have passed away. Look! Everything has become new, he says, for we are new creations in Christ. So, I cannot really delegate this to the future. This is now, in embryo! I have got this. I know what it is talking about.

Haven't you been the one who has come and drunk of the Water of Life without cost? Of course! Jesus said:

If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.

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So, for all 2000 years to date, (and maybe who knows how many years more to come!) during that period of time, this has already taken place in embryo. Or, as Ephesians 1:13 says:

We have already received here and now the **earnest** of our inheritance.

Earnest money—a down payment. If I lay a down payment on a house, I put so many bills down, ok? That means there is a lot more like this to come. Earnest is little bit of a lot more. We have received the earnest of our inheritance. That is, whatever Heaven is (and we don't know), whatever New Heaven and New Earth means, we do not really know. But whatever it is, it is just what we already have in Christ by the power of the Spirit, multiplied and multiplied and multiplied to infinity.

So, this is how we are looking at this New Jerusalem.

Now, it tells me, that the New Jerusalem has nothing wrong with it. It is a beautiful city. But when I look around at the Church, I say, "Lord you made a mistake somewhere here."

What you are looking at in this New Jerusalem is the Architect's understanding. I have been involved in many building projects over the years, and I have always made it my business to sit down with the architect. The whole building exists in the mind of the architect. He sees it complete. He then draws plans based on what he has already has seen.

No architect begins to draw plans hoping it is going to lead somewhere. (You would have a house that Topsy built.) He already has seen it! It is a complete finished house in his mind.

The plans are drawn, and then you have all of the builders who know how to read plans, they then go and start building. You see great holes in the ground, and you see bulldozers here, and a great girder sticking up there, a chunk of concrete there, and you say, "What a mess!" And the architect stands on the building site and all he can see is the finished article. If you go and look at that building-in-making, somewhere on the site you will see the architect's vision. Always you will either see a model or a picture of what the architect knows this is going to end up like. Right?

So, in the mind of God, the Church existed before time began, perfect and complete in His mind. He then drew up the plans, which we call the Eternal Purposes of God. He then brought in the bulldozers, which we call the Nation of Israel, and then He laid the foundation in Jesus Christ.

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Right now we see a lot of potholes and girders and chunks of concrete. And we say, "Is this it? I mean, really? Is this the eternal plan of the ages?"

Then, God gives us a picture of where He sees it and as He now sees it. The sooner we see it as God sees it, the sooner we will arrive there in our own experience. We are going to look at that picture.

A Look at God's Vision of His Church

First of all, we are going to go through designating all the things it says about this place, the CITY called New Jerusalem.

His Church is a city—but not a real estate

First of all the Church is seen here as a CITY, right? I don't think I need to prove that.

Chapter 21:2, "I saw the Holy CITY, the New Jerusalem."

A CITY. Why should the Church be called a CITY? It says all through the Scripture that the Church is the coming together of peoples: A body, a fellowship. A city kind of puts that idea together. A city is a place of permanent residence. It is a place where people fellowship and live in community. So, all that we read in the Bible concerning Church has to do with other people.

When I was in the Pentecostal movement we used to sing a neat little song: "On the Jericho road there is room for just two, just Jesus and me." Dear God! I wish that was true, but it isn't true. The Church is not a road with two people walking on it.

The Church is a company of peoples. The very word CHURCH means a CAUCUS. It is word used to describe a company of a people who think the same way, and they come "out from". It is a separated company, and they stay together in order to make decisions and to implement them. The idea of a body: even as all my organs are united together, so is the body of Christ—the coming together, the fellowship, the sharing, and the communion. A CITY? You have come to rest in that CITY. There are no motels in the New Jerusalem. You come to rest there.

I think it is important that we understand the echoes from end to end of the Bible. Do you remember the very first people of God, when God first laid His hands upon people and said, "You are my people?"

Do you remember that they lived in tents? Now the people of God end up living in a City. That's the idea.

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- In the Old Testament, they were always searching, seeking, what's next, what's next? They were waiting, waiting, waiting!
- But in Christ, in the Resurrection of Jesus and His Ascension, we have come to Rest.

I think this is brought out very powerfully in Hebrews chapter 11, where it speaks of Abraham.

Hebrews 11:9 By faith he, that is Abraham, lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promises for he was looking for a city with buildings whose architect and builder is God.

The Promised Land was not what we call Israel today. Abraham recognized that straight away. He said:

I am not going to build a house in this land, even though God has given it to me. We are only in this land until we come to the City whose Builder and Maker is God.

That CITY is the Church! That piece of land on the Mediterranean was important only until Jesus was born. When Jesus was born, He said, "I will build my Church," and the Promised Land is His Church.

It said they lived in tents there. You're not going to settle there! Nobody has got the idea that that strip of land is what God had in mind forever. He said, "We'll just put tents there." Even Abraham wouldn't bother to put a house on that old bit of sand. He said:

We'll just live here, you know. But I am really waiting for the real thing that God has promised, that is a city whose builder and maker is God.

When the church came, then we put down our roots. We've come to rest, for the Church will be here as long as God is. Okay, do you get the picture there?

His Church is the Holy City

The second thing He said about this CITY is that he said it is the "Holy City", the New Jerusalem.

Do you remember what it said about Babylon? It said that Babylon was GREAT—Babylon the Great. So, on the one hand are the Harlot and Babylon, Babylon is GREAT. And on the other hand is the Bride and New Jerusalem—New Jerusalem is HOLY. That is the difference.

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What is “GREATNESS”?

If I am to say such and such is GREAT, I am speaking about the person. Do you see what I mean? If I was to point to you and say, “You are great person,” I am saying something about you. You, in yourself, are GREAT and MIGHTY.

Do you remember the first Babylonian, Nimrod? It said HE was MIGHTY! It says something about HIM. That’s the World! The World will always say something about ITSELF. The World is the time-long ego trip! “Great–Mighty–You shall be as gods–All the flaunting by the World of all that it has is seeking to exalt itself and say, “I AM.”

What does “HOLY” mean?

- HOLY means “set apart”
- It means “for another”
- It means “belonging to another”

In its first instance, HOLY does not mean free from Sin. It rapidly gets there, but in its essence it doesn’t mean that.

If I were to take this Bible, this one, and give it to my friend there, then I would say this Bible is for him. That means it is holy to him. It belongs to him. That means that is it is holy to him.

All of creation was created to be HOLY to God:

- that is, set apart for God’s pleasure
- that is, belonging to God and
- that is, for God.

God is Holy. That means:

- God belongs to Himself. He belongs to no one else.
- God is set apart to Himself.
- God is set apart to His own exclusive delight.

All creation delights in God. God delights in Himself, for there is no higher to delight in. Do you follow me on that?

- When I say that Babylon is GREAT, I am saying something about Babylon in itself. It has exalted itself to be GREAT.
- When I say that New Jerusalem is HOLY, I am saying nothing about New Jerusalem. I am saying it belongs to somebody else!

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Do you see the difference there?

The Church is Holy. It is set apart to God. That has an immediate corollary in that therefore it is set apart from Sin to God. Sometimes we are too negative about that.

- The Holiness Movements often emphasize the fact that we are separated from Sin.
- Holiness in the Bible doesn't emphasize that. It emphasizes that you are separated to God,

There is quite a difference there!

So, this New Jerusalem, this Church, is a Company of people who are Holy. They are the "Set-Apart" ones. They belong exclusively to God. They do not belong to themselves—they are for God's pleasure. They belong to Him.

Do you remember the central term of the New Covenant? God says, "I will be your God, and you shall be my people." The New Jerusalem is a Company of people who are the exclusive Possession of God.

The New Jerusalem originates with God. In Chapter 21:2 again it says, "I saw the holy city New Jerusalem coming down out of Heaven from God." So, not only is the City for God, they originate with God. They come down out of Heaven.

Most cities that I know rise up from the earth. You build a foundation in the earth, and then you build a city on top of the foundation, and so they rise up out of the earth. This is a city like you have never seen before: It comes down out from Heaven. That is, it has its origination with God. This fits perfectly with everything else the Bible has said about the Kingdom of God, the Church.

Do you remember in that great statue in the book of Daniel? You have the head of gold, and so on you move down to all the various nations which followed after Babylon, until you get to the legs of iron, which we know was the Roman Empire. Then, do you remember? It says the next kingdom that is to come upon earth will not hereby follow on all the others. It will come from Heaven. It says:

I saw a stone cut without human hands.

That little stone that had a miraculous beginning came hurtling towards that great colossus, smashed it to pieces and became a great mountain that filled the whole earth.

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So it says there was Babylon, the head of gold. They thought they were so fantastic! But, they ended. After them, there came the Medes and the Persians, and although they felt they were so great, they had to admit that they merely took over from Babylon. That head of gold became the breast of silver. After them came the Greek Empire and Alexander the Great, and they thought they were the greatest thing that ever was. Maybe they were! But they took over from the head of gold and chest of silver. Each one takes over from the other, because it is a continuum.

Do you remember the beasts we found in this book? Really and truly, it is only one Beast, he just shows himself up in a different way. The same Beast that was behind Greece, the Beast that was behind Babylon, was the Beast that was behind Nazi Germany. It's a Beast. It's a Beast. It's the BEAST!

But now, he says, here comes one that is a "little stone". That does not just follow on and takes over from the others. This one comes from the outside, "cut without hands." Or, as it puts it here, this City came down from Heaven. All other cities came out of earth. This is totally different! This is all back to front! This one comes out of Heaven, or as Jesus said, "My Kingdom is not of this earth."

You can sit easy in your seat (Pontius) Pilate. I am not about to bring about a battle to dethrone you. Sit down easily, Pilate. My Kingdom is not of this world; else would my servants have fought. My City does not rise out of the earth: My City comes down from Heaven.

The Church originates with God. The Church is not a human institution. The Church is a Heavenly thing on earth.

I suppose because of my understanding of that, I get very uptight when I hear a lot of people call a lot of human institutions "churches". They are not! The Church is a Heavenly institution. It comes down from Heaven. Jesus said, "I will build My Church." It does not originate with men. It originates with God.

I will build my Church!

He calls that Church that comes from Heaven a "CITY". Jesus said, In my Father's House are many mansions (or many dwelling places). Well, that is the Church. That is another chapter we have destroyed. We have given that chapter to funeral parlors. I go to prepare a place for you, and the impression I always got in my spiritual upbringing was that Jesus was up there desperately banging houses together and building and preparing a place for me. And, one day, "I've got a mansion just over the hilltop, glory to God!"

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Then one day the Holy Spirit showed me that I have got it right now!

I go to prepare a place for you.

Where did He go?

He went to the Cross, and on the Cross He prepared a place for me.

What was that 'place'?

It was a place of many dwelling-places, so it fits perfectly.

A city? Many dwelling places? It came down from God? God made all the dwelling places.

- The dwelling place is in His very heart.
- It is in union with Him.
- It is walking with Him.
- We live in God!

You are part of this City. You live there, and you move there if you are born again!

Your new birth came from God, too. Or, as John 3 says, "You are born from above, born of the Spirit."

There is nothing human about the Church. Take the miraculous out of the Church, and you don't have a church. You can take the miraculous out of almost any other religion on earth and you still have it. But take the miraculous out of the Church, and you have lost the Church altogether. It is not even there! A bad Buddhist isn't too bad because he only started off with philosophy, anyway. But you take away the miraculous from the Church, and you have the biggest mess you have ever seen because the Church is from above! And if it is not from above, it isn't anywhere!

The Church came from Heaven.

- It started before time began with those plans that God laid.
- It was brought about by the Death, and the Resurrection and the Ascension of Jesus.
- It is now being built actively by the Holy Spirit.

The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are working in glorious undivided union to bring about the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ on earth.

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That's the whole end of everything.

- Born from above
- Coming down out of Heaven,
- A Bride adorned for her Husband, glorious!

In fact, in verse eleven of this chapter it tells us how glorious! It says:

. . . coming down out of Heaven, having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone as a stone of crystal clear jasper.

When did you meet JASPER before in this Book? In Chapter 4, and that jasper we saw was the glory of the "Unbeginning God who is Light". That was at the beginning of the book. Now, at the end of the book we see here is a city, which we have defined as the Church, and that is a light with the same JASPER.

It says, ". . . having the glory of God." The Church is seen to be the manifestation on earth of the Glory of God.

Probably, the two most amazing statements in the New Testament, if you put them together, are:

1. when Jesus said, "I am the light of the world," and
2. He turned to His disciples in Matthew 5.14 and says, "You are the light of the world."

He makes no difference. Light . . . Light. He said, "I am the light of the world." He is the Glory of God among us, the jasper stone in flesh. And He turns right around and says to His Church, "You are the light of the world." That is the miracle of the true Church.

When you come to God who is LIGHT, to participate in that LIGHT you become LIGHT. That's an amazing thing!

Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. Or, as Paul called us on many occasions, You are children of the night. You are of the night, and we love it, and yet when we come into contact with God who is Light, not only is our past wiped away, but we become a partaker of the Light. To participate in God who is LIGHT, you partake in that LIGHT, and you become LIGHT. Do you follow what I am saying?

The Glory of God shines through us. That is the message of the New Testament that we have so long missed. Not merely forgiveness. It is union! We come into union with God. This is a City that is in union with the eternal Light of God. That's who you are!

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We are heaps of dust, mud, but in us is the Glory of God. Put us all together and you have the Church, radiant as jasper stone with the Glory of God. Or, as II Corinthians puts it,

We have this treasure in earthen vessels.

You are the vessel—the glory of God is the treasure. And, that shines through us in what we call the nine Fruits of the Spirit.

Only God can be satisfied with God. Or, rather, I should turn that around! God can only be satisfied with God. A Church that didn't radiate God, God would not be satisfied with. A few minutes ago, when I said God delighted in God, some of you frowned. You know that egoism is only wrong among humans. If I think I am so great, that's not only wrong, it is stupid because God is the only Perfect. Therefore when man turns to himself egotistically, he is wrong. That, in fact, is the heart of Sin—Pride. But God cannot look to any higher, for He is the infinitely Highest. There is no more perfect that God can look to, there is no more beautiful that God can look to. God is the Infinite Glory, and so every creature that is created must delight in God. But God must delight in Himself, for there is no higher. If there was a higher for God to delight in, that higher would be God! Do you follow me?

God can only delight in His own glory. Anything less than that would mean that God delighted in less than perfect and God wouldn't be God. Right? If God is going to delight in the Church, the Church must be filled with His Light, His Life, His Love, and His Glory.

We have talked about Adam and Eve last week—Ish, Isha. The Bride must be of the very same stuff, the very same nature as the Groom. There has got to be fellowship. And the Ish, the male, must look and say Isha, the female. She is the same as me, but she is different: The Bride.

And so for the CITY, it is the same story. When God looks at the CITY, He sees His own glory. Therefore it is a fit habitation for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb. Do you follow me?

It is quite a thought that the Church is, among men, the Revelation of God on Earth. There is no other revelation. Jesus went away.

It's almost unbelievable, you know! It is finished! The Resurrection, the Ascension: It is done! Salvation has come!

Then He takes a handful of fishermen and says; "Now you go into all the world and proclaim it."

And I say, "You know they are going to fail, so what is Plan B?"

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And He says, "There is no Plan B."

Everything is the Church. The Church is the Grand End of God. That's the grand aim of all the ages. This that you and I have, this relationship together with God—that is what it is all about. I think that when we see that, then we can get history in perspective a lot better.

It tells me, in Chapter 21:15

The one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city and its gates and its walls, and the City is laid out as a square and its length is as great as its width. And he measured the city with a rod 1500 miles. Its length, width and height are equal.

What does that mean? 1500 miles in each direction? The perfect cube?

Now, 1500 miles is our translation. What it really says is "12,000 furlongs." Now you are back to it! Twelve! We have met TWELVE over and over again. What is 12,000?

Twelve: Three times four. Throw some tens in there, and you have got it. That is what we have been doing all the way through: Three, Four, Ten—all the time:

- Three: is the operation of the Trinity
- Four: Universal, the whole world, all nations
- Ten: that number of completion, finale. Completion to which can be added no more.

What is the New Jerusalem, this cube of threes and fours and twelve's? Here we have it! It is the Church. It tells us that in the number. The Church, God's activity in all corners of His Universe, bringing to pass His perfect will.

But, why a cube?

We have come across 3, and 4, and 10 before. This is only another way of saying 144,000, actually.

But, why the cube?

Well, let me read to you. There is only one other place in the Bible where you have such a cube, and I believe it is the key to what this is talking about.

In the first Book of Kings, Chapter 6, and in verse 20:

And the inner sanctuary (that's the Holy of Holies) was twenty cubits in length, twenty cubits in width, twenty cubits in height, and overlaid with gold.

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The only other cube mentioned in the Bible was the Holy of Holies in Solomon's Temple. Now, isn't that significant?

- The New Jerusalem, the Church is presented to us as a perfect cube,
- The only other cube that is mentioned in the Bible is the Holy of Holies.

His Church is the Holy of Holies

What he is stating is that the Church is the Holy of Holies among men. In fact, in Chapter 21:3 it tells us that very plainly. It says:

Then I heard a voice from Heaven saying, The Tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell among them, they shall be His people and God Himself shall be among them.

He said, the Church, this New Jerusalem, that City, is the ultimate Holy of Holies. Now, do you understand what I mean by that? Some of you will.

Let me very quickly give a back up on that.

In the Garden of Eden, there was the Glory of God. Man lived in the Glory of God, and walked in the Glory of God. Then when he sinned he was thrown out of that. Notice that! The Garden of Eden did not fall. Have you ever thought about that? The whole earth fell, but the Garden of Eden didn't. Man had to be thrown out of that. That is very significant. The Garden of Eden was a place, a geographical location. In there was the Glory of God. Man lived in there. When he fell, he was thrown out. That (the garden) didn't fall. Right? It was a place of Glory.

Do you remember when man turned around and looked back at that garden? He saw two cherubim and a flame and inside that Glory was the Tree of Life. It says that the cherubim were to keep the way to the Tree of Life. The word "guard" there, means "keep". The idea was not to hold men OUT. The cherubim were going to guarantee that God's purposes would come to pass. One day, a man will go back in there. They're going to GUARD that way. Man will go back in that way.

Then He gave them the Tabernacle, and right there in the center of it was the Glory of God and the veil. Do you remember what was on the veil? Cherubim. In the Garden: Cherubim. They were guarding the way and telling men, "One day you will be able to come back into the Glory."

Do you remember David? He took the Ark of the Covenant and put it on Mount Zion in a tent and there was the Glory of God, and man rejoicing inside of that Glory. There were two cherubim on the Ark, guarding the way. What David did in that Glory in the raising of the hands, and clapping, the

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dancing and singing, was a promise that one day all men may come in here. The cherubim are guarding the way. The Holy of Holies was on Mount Zion.

Then, Solomon built his temple, and he made that a perfect cube, that Holy of Holies. And, the Glory of God filled that perfect cube. It was a promise!

One day men will come in there.

Do you remember when Jesus died?

That veil on which the cherubim were was ripped in two from the top to the bottom and the way into the Holiest was made open.

- The Cherubim's job was over—God had finished His work.
- The way into the Holiest is now wide open.
- Men can now go back into the Garden of Eden.

They can now go back onto Mount Zion. They can walk into the Holy of Holies!

But more, says the Scripture:

You actually become part of the Holy of Holies!

The Holy of Holies is no longer a geographical location. It is, in fact, a company of people in whom the Glory of God dwells, the New Jerusalem, the Cube. That City is the ultimate Holy of Holies!

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THE NEW JERUSALEM II

Continuing Chapters 20 and 21.

We have seen that the Book of Revelation, in Chapter 21:15 states that the New Jerusalem is a perfect cube. We have seen, at the end of our last hour that that perfect cube is already known as the Holy of Holies elsewhere in the Scripture. We stated that the Church is that Holy of Holies, so that the Holy of Holies, where the Glory of God is on earth, is no longer a geographical location. It is, rather, a company of people. Right?

Do you remember when Jesus spoke to the woman of Samaria in John 4:23? He was speaking of the temple in Samaria, and the true Temple of Jerusalem (at that time). He said that:

The day is coming, in fact now is, when those who worship God, you will no longer worship Him in this mountain or that mountain, but you will worship Him in Spirit and in Truth.

So, He said that there is a day coming when the worship of God will not be conducted in a geographical location. It will be conducted in another dimension, which will be the Holy Spirit.

We have come to live in that. Do you remember II Corinthians 6:16? Paul said to the Corinthians:

Do you not know that you are the temple of God?

The word “temple” there, if we were to translate it literally from the Greek, is “Holy of Holies.” So then, it would read, “Do you now know that you are the Holy of Holies of God? You people in Corinth—you are that!”

Ephesians 2:21. You should study Ephesians 2:20 right through to the end of that chapter. It is the nearest thing elsewhere in the Epistles that discuss the New Jerusalem. It says, “We are the temple of God.” Again, the word ‘temple’ in the Greek is ‘Holy of Holies.’ We are that! It says ‘you are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and the Prophets. Jesus Christ is the Chief Cornerstone.’ It says that ‘built together by the Holy Spirit, you have become the habitation of God.’

That’s just exactly what this is saying, that this company of people is the habitation of God on earth.

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Do you remember that very neat little prophecy among very difficult prophecies? The Book of Zechariah is the most difficult book of the Old Testament as far as prophecy goes. But, in Chapter 14, and the 20th and 21st verses, speaking of the day concerning Jerusalem, it says that:

- All their horses—on their bells it will be written, “Holiness unto the Lord.”
- All the cooking pots in Jerusalem will be “Holy unto the Lord.”

Do you remember that neat little prophecy? What’s that saying?

Well, of course “Holiness unto the Lord” was an inscription that was only written on the miter of the High Priest. “Now,” said the prophet Zechariah, “the day is coming when, not only in the temple and with one man would there be ‘Holiness unto the Lord,’ but right down to the horses trotting across Jerusalem.” That is, in all the busy and scurrying of the business of the day, in the kitchens with the cooking pots, it says “Holiness unto the Lord.”

He was saying the temple will no longer be on Temple Hill. The temple will overflow and the whole of Jerusalem will become the Temple. In your business (horses), and in your kitchen (cooking pots), wherever you are and whatever you are doing, you will be in the Temple.

That was the clearest Old Testament prophecy concerning the New Jerusalem. It says the day is coming, the Church, when you will no longer have to go to a geographical location to find God. When you are traveling . . . of course, there are horses no more, it’s TWA jets now, but it is the same idea. But, whether I am 30,000 feet above America in a TWA jet, I am there in the Holy of Holies. The Holy of Holies is no longer a location on earth. It is a location in the Holy Spirit, the New Jerusalem, that perfect cube in the Spirit.

You should read Isaiah Chapter 4, as well. Isaiah Chapter 4 speaks of similar things. It says that over all the houses of Jerusalem shall be a pillar of cloud and fire. It says it shall be a covering of fire. That is, that Glory of God that was in the Holy of Holies shall now be upon all the peoples of Jerusalem. It is no longer a location. It shall be spread to the ends of the earth in another dimension. We are the Holy of Holies and there we live. We have returned to Eden. For this we were made! For this we were born! Man is only half alive when he is not in the Glory of God.

Do you notice in Chapter 22, Verses 3 and 4, it says:

There shall no longer be any curse and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it. And his bondservant shall serve him; they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.

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We could spend a number of hours just in those two verses. But, notice what it is saying: “No more curse . . .” That is, sin and iniquity have been put away, and the curse that has been put on Sin is gone. Right?

It says that they shall “see God face to face.” They shall know Him. Face to face is the idea of knowing intimately, personally.

It says that they shall be ‘sealed in their foreheads.’ We’ve already discussed that at length, that this is the indication of belonging to. We belong to; we are the possession of God. Are any bells going off in your heads when I say those things?

Your sins and your iniquities I shall remember no more . . .

I will write my law on your heart and put it in your mind . . .

All shall know me, says the Lord . . .

You shall be my people; I will be your God . . .

It’s the statement of covenant!

Do you remember how the Old Covenant experienced that? It was only in shadow. The High Priest, on the Day of Atonement went into the Holy of Holies and stood there with the blood of an animal.

- It was not that “sins and iniquities would be remembered no more.” They were just covered over.
- It was not “knowing Him face-to-face.” They only knew God through that High Priest. He was their mediator.

Belonging to Him? Yes. But they looked forward to a future day.

Now, in this Holy of Holies:

- there are no more priests, for you know the Lord face-to-face.
- there is no more covering over, for the blood of Jesus has cleansed from all sin.
- there is no more curse. for Christ became the Curse of the Law and bore it away.
- The law is written within us.

We are now living in the Holy of Holies, and all the terms of the New Covenant have come to pass to perfection.

- The veil is rent! The way into the Holiest is now open, and we have become that.

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- There is no more need of a Day of Atonement.

Do you see what I am saying? Those of you who did our Leviticus studies will undoubtedly understand what I am saying. (I guess that is a commercial, isn't it?)

It goes on to say in these chapters that there is no Temple there. In Verse 22:

I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its Temple.

Well, that follows doesn't it? If we have become the Holy of Holies, there is no more Temple. All of us together are the Temple—us together. As soon as we come together, the Spirit of God is among us, glorifying the Lamb among us, bringing us before the Ultimate Throne of God.

- You've got your Church!
- You've got your Temple!

So, what makes the Temple? Does a building? Obviously not.

The Glory of God makes the Temple. Wherever God chooses that His Glory shall be, there is your Temple. God has chosen that it shall be in the midst of His praising people. We are the Temple. Whenever we gather together—be it two or three or two or three thousand—when we gather together, the Holy people, the Holy City would gather. And, there is the Temple. There may be no walls; there may be no fine drapes. There may be nothing but trees and grass, for all that matters, because it is people who make the Temple. There is no temple in this CITY, for the CITY is the Temple, for the Glory of God is there. Do you have that?

I want you to notice something that almost clinches what we are saying. In Verse 23, it says,

And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine upon it, for the Glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.

Do you notice that there are three items of illumination mentioned there? There is the sun and the moon, there is a lamp, and there is the Glory of God. Right? They are all mentioned in that one verse.

It says that this city doesn't need the light of the sun or the moon. And, as far as lamps go, the Lamb is its lamp. When all is said and done, the Glory of God shines in it. How many bells does that ring in your head?

What item on this earth was lit by sun, moon, lamp and Glory? The tabernacle:

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- The outer court of the tabernacle was lit by the sun and the moon. It was open to the sky.
- The Holy place was lit by the lamp of the seven-branch candlestick.
- The Holy of Holies was lit by the Glory of God. And, the Holy of Holies never needed the sun or the moon. The Holy of Holies never needed a lamp. It had the Glory of God for its light.

If that isn't the clearest statement in Revelation to tell me that New Jerusalem is none other than the Holy of Holies. No sun or moon! No lamp! The Glory of God. The Lamb is its lamp. Do you follow what I am saying?

Safety & Security in the New Jerusalem

Incidentally, this glorious company of people—under this terminology, symbolic New Jerusalem—has very high walls. Did you notice that? 1500 feet high . . . that's high! 1500 feet high walls!

Walls speak of two things, really. They are really the same: separation and safety. I think I could live in Brooklyn downtown if I had walls 1500 feet high. There you've got safety. People are not going to climb over walls 1500 feet high. Also, I don't think I would get on too well with my neighbors. Separation! Walls of safety and separation.

All through this Book you have had a recurring theme, a theme that the Church needs to hear today maybe more than ever: That the devil cannot get inside the Church and do harm. He goes so far into the Church that isn't the Church. But, when all is said and done, he cannot touch the heart of the matter, which is a company of people worshipping God in the Holy of Holies. I think if you have just the slightest memory of this course, you will remember that.

You remember that the glorious woman in Revelation 12? When the Devil tried to get her, she is given wings of an eagle and taken into the wilderness. When he spews out water after her, the earth absorbs it. He can't touch the woman. Remember that!

Do you remember, in Chapter 11, he was given a measuring rod to measure off the Holy of Holies? Can't touch that! The rest that looks like the church (but isn't!) has been given to the Gentiles. They can trample all over it, and let the world come in and have their bingo parties and do what they like. But, the Church cannot be touched! The Church cannot be touched! It has been measured off. Remember that!

You will get this all through the Book of Revelation.

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The 144,000—that is yet another picture of it. Do you remember? It says that just before all that lot was released, it said, “Stop! Seal the servants of God on their foreheads. They can’t be touched.”

Do you remember when the Beast was raging and giving the Mark of the Beast? It says,

. . . and then I saw the Lamb standing on Mount Zion with the 144,000

Untouched? Always! That’s the whole thing! All the way!

High walls—Same idea. The satanic trinity can’t get through these walls. The Garden of Eden didn’t have any walls. Serpents could get in there. And, snakes do damage to innocent little ladies standing in front of trees. But, snakes can’t get over walls that are 1500 feet high. That’s the idea. You are safe!

Or, to put it more in more straightforward language, in I Peter it says, “You are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.”

You are kept! That’s in the passive tense. You don’t “keep” yourself! You are being kept by the power of God.

Or, as 1 John puts it that, “because of our faith in Christ, we have come to that rest in Him.” It says, “. . . and the wicked one touches him not.” He comes close, but he cannot touch us. The symbolism of this is very plain. The high walls keep us. We don’t struggle. We rest in the fact that any power that would ever come against us must first of all come up against the power of God. And, the greatest power on earth or hell, when it comes up against the power of God, comes up against Omnipotence and it can make no headway.

God has made Himself personally responsible to keep us. That is a tremendous thought! I don’t have to have men on the walls of this city to look after me.

God has made Himself personally responsible to keep us. So, you have the recurring idea of the Shepherd all through the Bible. A shepherd, in the East especially, made himself responsible to keep his flock. If one of them was attacked by a lion, then the shepherd would die before he would let the lion get away with it because a shepherd is a person who is personally responsible for looking after the sheep.

Jesus is the Great Shepherd who is personally responsible for keeping His Church. That glorious Holy of Holies cannot be fouled by Satan. He (Jesus) keeps us. And, of course, the walls separate us.

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- Sometimes you have a satanic attack. There you've got the great Beast.
- Other times, you have the little lamb that bleats like a dragon. Now, he doesn't attack the walls, he kind of sidles up and gives an alternative. (He has the hamburger stand outside of the gate!)
- Then, you have the Whore, the great Harlot, who is calling for the people to come out.

You've got various attacks. If the walls are walls of safety, that's fine. But also, they are walls of separation. There is no danger for those who are "in Christ". We watch and we pray, but when all is said and done, He does the "keeping", and we do not drift out and suddenly find ourselves outside. We don't happen to be walking on the walls for a morning stroll and suddenly fall off. It's not that easy to fall out of God. The walls are walls of separation as well as walls of safety. There is a Grand Canyon between the Church and the world.

The Foundation of the Apostles Teaching

It says in Verse 14,

And the wall of the City had twelve foundation stones and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

Twelve foundations, and each foundation had on it a name of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

The foundation of the Church is always stated in the New Testament to be the twelve apostles and their teaching. We are founded on that. We've already quoted from Ephesians 2:20 where it states that:

- We are founded upon the apostles.
- Jesus Christ is the Chief Cornerstone.

You will find in I Corinthians 3:9, where Paul, speaking of the building of the church in Corinth, says that "He had laid the foundation." The apostles' teaching is the foundation of the Church.

What was that teaching? It is the teaching that we are always speaking of! Paul states that the only foundation he could lay was that which is in Jesus Christ. In 1 Corinthians 15, he said the Gospel is that Christ died, was buried, and rose on the third day. That's the foundation and all the terms of the New Covenant as they are outlined in the New Testament Epistles.

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That's important, you know—Very important! The Church is not founded on some mystical experience. It is founded on straightforward teaching.

Some of you may not even be bothered with that, it's so obvious to you. But for the sake of those to whom it isn't so obvious, think about this. How many times have you heard a person say, "I know I'm a Christian because you see, I woke up in the middle of the night and there was this light over by the wardrobe, and I just know God came! I just know it! I know it!"

My friend, you've got problems! I don't doubt. I am not suggesting that God didn't come to you. God came as a great light to Saul of Tarsus, and I am quite aware that He could do the same today, and maybe well has. But, you'd better hurry up and get to the foundation of this whole thing.

The foundation of this City was not mystical experiences. It was the teaching of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And, it's not enough to say, "I feel good; therefore, I am saved."

I think I have shared with you before that I was sitting on a plane a number of months ago, and two seats behind me (across the aisle) I could hear a girl say, "Since this happened to me, I have such joy! I am overwhelmed! I have such peace. Oh, it is so wonderful—I just want you to have this experience."

I thought, "A Charismatic behind me!" And, I turned around and it was a Hari Krishna girl behind me! Oh yes! You look so horrified. When the Hari Krishna talk of entering into their experience, they use all the same expressions: Joy, Peace, a "found" reality.

Don't you realize what I am saying now? You can enter into any religion in the world and have some mystical experience. Christianity is not a mystical experience! It is founded in solid, historical fact. It can be talked about! It can be discussed. It is logical.

Therefore, the Scripture says, "By the renewing of your mind."

You be very, very careful of people who are not founded on the twelve apostles of the Lamb. They might have an experience, and they might talk glibly about meeting with God, but you had better define that God! Is He the One who became flesh and lived among us as the Lamb? Is He the "lamb as it had been slain?" Is He the Lamb who sits on the throne with His Father?

Let's be sure we're not meeting with the "little lamb" that talks like the dragon.

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It is built upon a foundation. This is not a floating city, even though it comes down from heaven. It is built upon a foundation—a solid foundation. When we talk about the foundation of the apostles, it began with Peter when he said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Do you remember Jesus said, “I will build my church on that foundation”? That’s the rock! Not Peter—Peter wasn’t the rock. It was what he’d said. It’s a “play” on words. The word “Peter” (Cephas), means a “little chip of rock.” It’s that sort of thing that falls on top of your car where it says “DANGER-FALLING ROCK,” little bits of rock.

Jesus said, “Upon this rock,” but He used a different word there. The word there is something like the mountain itself! The Great Rock! The Enormous Mountain.

- So, He is saying. “Here is a little chip of rock, Peter.” (Means ‘little chip of rock’).
- And, out of the little chip of rock has come a Great Mountain!

The Mountain is, “THOU ART THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD.”

Jesus said on that foundation—not upon Peter, but upon the foundation of what he had just spoken.

What is the foundation of the Church? That He is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. That is the Rock on which the Church is built! The Rock on which the Church is built is a statement concerning the Person of Jesus Christ.

Then Peter, John and James pick up the same theme and they teach us that the One who is the Christ, the Son of the Living God died, and is risen again, and His blood cleanses from all sin. This is the foundation!

Not everybody is in this City. The gates are wide open, but not everybody is in it. You’ve got to be careful; you’ve got to understand that. You can have a love that is “slush.” You just say, “God bless everybody . . .” No! God says there is a foundation and you don’t come into that City unless you are coming on that foundation. My fellowship is with all of God’s people, but there is a foundation. There are some things on which we don’t all agree. That is okay, but there has got to be “the Foundation.” I cannot fellowship with a man as a brother who does not come in on that Foundation: The Person of Jesus, the work of Jesus, and the “now” resting of me upon that work. That is the Foundation!

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Also, it says that the CITY had gates. In Chapter 21, Verse 21, it says, “The twelve gates . . .”

Incidentally, I don’t go into this anymore, but do you see the twelve, twelve, twelve? It’s all twelve’s. You know what this is about now! It says,

The twelve gates were twelve pearls. Each one of the gates was a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold.

Then, go back to Verse 12 where it says again,

. . . with twelve gates. And the names were written on them which are the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel.

So, have you got the picture now? There are twelve gates into this City, and the “twelve” speaks for itself. But, we know two things about those gates:

- It says they are “pearls”. Each gate was a solid pearl.
- Secondly, it says that written on them was one of the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Okay? What does it mean?

How can a man enter into the Holy of Holies? That’s the whole problem. I want to get into it through the gate. How can a man enter into the Holy of Holies? How can sinful man ever stand in the Glory of God? David considered that when the Holy of Holies was on Mount Zion and he wrote Psalm 24,

Who shall ascend to the hill of the Lord?

He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, and has not lifted his tongue to deceit . . .”

and on, and on, and on!

It’s the perfect man! Only the sinless can enter the Sinless Presence. How can I get into the Holy of Holies? It says, “through gates of Pearl.” That’s how you’ll get in: Gates of pearl.

You know, a pearl is the strangest of all precious stones. Every other precious stone is made by pressure and heat. Do you know how a pearl is made? By blood and suffering! Sand gets into the shell of the oyster, and there the excretion caused from the excruciating pain of that little bit of “stuff” that’s got inside there. And in the blood, gradually a pearl is formed. To get that pearl, the creature has to die, and then you’ve got your pearl.

Isn’t it significant that, of all the precious stones that have been mentioned in this Book (and this Book is loaded with precious stones), isn’t it

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significant that the one used for the entrance into the Holy of Holies, the Gates of the City is the one precious stone that is made by blood, suffering, and death? That's the way into the CITY: Blood, suffering and death.

But . . . it's a precious stone! It's beautiful to see! I tell you that only the Christian can understand that the Cross of Jesus with all its blood and suffering is the most beautiful thing the Christian has ever set eyes on. It's the "pearl of great price." It's beautiful in its horror. It's magnificent in its blood and sweat.

Jesus said,

I am the door.

By me, if any man enter in.

I am the way.

No man comes to the Father but by me.

It only follows that we have read (in our readings of this) that the only people inside that City are those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. That is, they all have life, but they got it through the Lamb; the Lamb "as it had been slain" or this other picture of Jesus, "the pearl", which is the gate into the City.

Notice . . . (I don't know whether I can put this over as I want to). If you want to get to the Throne of God, which is inside the City, if you want to get into the Glory of God, which is inside the City, you have to go by the gate. That makes sense! But then, I've just got done saying that Jesus is the Gate in His death and resurrection. But then, I've just gotten through saying before that, that WE are the CITY. Are you following me now?

We are the City. But, I've just said that the twelve gates are pearl—that's Jesus. So, how does a person get into the Glory of God? Through a gate. The gate is Jesus, but the gate is part of us, for WE are the CITY. Are you following me now? Okay!

We have said that the CITY is a symbol of the Church. Well, part of the CITY is the GATE. Therefore, the Gate is, all at once, a picture of Jesus and a part of the Church.

Do you realize that the only way people will ever come to God is, not only through the Cross, but through us presenting the Cross? So, as it states at the end of this Book, in the last chapter:

The Spirit and the bride say, "Come."

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Here's a man and he is crying out for salvation! Crying out for salvation! His name is Cornelius. Heaven is opened, and an angel comes down. The angel says, "Now Cornelius, I don't know what to say to you, but there is a man up the road who does. Call for Simon, whose name is Peter, and he will give you the words of life."

Isn't that significant! The only way into the City is through the City walls. The only way to become part of the City is to go in through the City. The only way people will ever hear the news of the Pearl, is by those who have received the Pearl and who speak it.

Our mouths become the doorway into the Kingdom of God.

It says that each gate had the name of a tribe of Israel. Do you remember when we were studying Chapter 7 that we established that we are the Israel of God. Now, it says that all around the City there is a name of Israel. So, here is the gathering of True Israel, the Ultimate Holy of Holies.

Do you remember that when the Glory of God was in the tabernacle in the wilderness, all of Israel camped around it? Do you remember that? Twelve tribes camped around the Glory of God. I think that is the picture here. Here is the Glory of God in the City, and all around it is pitched the True Israel of God. So, you have the twelve gates, each tribe, and each a part of the True Israel.

We are Filled with God's Divine Nature—His Life

It states in Chapter 21, Verses 18 and 21 that the City is full of gold:

Full of gold!

You may remember in our Exodus course that we took time to show that gold, in the Bible, always speaks of the divine nature. This City, which is the Church, is filled with the Divine Nature. The Church is a company that is not only filled with God's light, as in the jasper, but also filled with His life: His very Divine Nature. We are not only people united to God's Illumination; we are united to God in His Life.

In II Peter 1:4 By the promises of God we are made partakers of His divine nature.

There's GOLD in us! We are the Church! We are human, but there is gold in us. God has put in us His own life even as He has put in us His own light. In 1 John Chapter 3, it says that God has given to us His very life. The word that is used there, in the Greek is sperma. God has given to us His very sperm—His very life! You couldn't get it more direct. It says that God has placed His Life inside of us.

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We are not just people who have made a decision and decided to join a church. We are those into whom has come His Light and His Life, and we live—but Christ lives!

We can do all things through Christ.

Christ in us, the Hope of Glory!

It is God which works in you!

The very divine nature was given to us. We never become God. We are ever the receivers, expressers. But, never let us misunderstand that we are, at the same time, those who have partaken of Divine Nature.

We—the Church—are Precious to God and Radiate His Glory

Chapter 21:19 states, The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stones.

The first foundation stone is jasper. I'm not going to read all of those. I can't pronounce half of them! But, there are twelve of them, twelve precious stones. You know, if you could stand off from that City—imagine it! You go through those twelve colors, and just imagine those all on top of each other. It would be like looking at a rainbow. Bands of Glory!

The Church reflects the rainbow. Do you remember meeting the rainbow with Noah? The Mercy of God. You just take a quick look at the Church, and you will see the Mercy of God. That's the radiance of the rainbow—the Mercy of God.

But, there's more there than that. Do you remember the High Priest (Exodus 28:17)? He had a breastplate. Do you remember the stones? How many? Twelve—twelve stones. He carried Israel on his heart in the form of twelve beautiful, shining, precious stones.

Now, I find in the New Jerusalem twelve stones! I see this New Jerusalem, not only coming down out of heaven, but actually the breastplate of God Himself! We are carried on the heart of the King who cannot die, whose name is Melchizadek. We are carried in the presence of the Father. We are borne in the love of God.

God put it like that in the Old Testament that each tribe of Israel would be a precious stone, because He was telling them that they were a special treasure. He could have had twelve pieces of mud on there. I mean it represents something. But, He made them twelve precious stones because He was saying:

- You are peculiarly precious to me!

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- You are my treasure and I bear you on my heart.
- You are ever in my presence.

The Church. Its very foundation is that we are part of the breastplate of the Melchizadek High Priest. We are His peculiar treasure. Because of the fact that He never dies, He holds us everlastingly in the presence of the Glory of God.

Do you realize that it says in John 17:22 that we share the same Glory that Jesus had with the Father before the foundations of the world? We are held there in the glorious presence, radiating the Glory that we share with God.

If we didn't know that was in the Bible, it would almost sound like another religion, wouldn't it? Because, all we have been told is, "God bless you, your Sins were forgiven." And that is only the beginning of the introduction to the preface of the first volume. This is what it is about! Our Sins were forgiven for what?

- In order that we might realize the Mercy of God. He has placed us upon the Breastplate of our High Priest, and
- We are borne into His Presence and we share His Glory by Grace.

He who is Glory in Essence, shares with us who have Glory by Grace. And so we every live in His presence.

God Blesses Nations that Honor His Church

In Verse 24, it tells us,

The nations shall walk by its light, and the kings of the earth shall bring glory into it.

Incidentally, this puts out of the picture the idea that this is only something in the future. It tells me two things here. Number One, it says there are lots of other nations out there. Now, to people who see this as something only in the future, I just ask the question, "Then, who are those other nations?" They have no idea. But, if I see this as already begun now in the Church, well of course! It says the nations walk in the light of this.

I was talking just before the study began tonight with someone who was questioning me concerning Israel—the Jews. They brought up the question that, "Whoever blesses Israel, (whoever blesses the Jews) will be blessed, and whoever curses Israel will be cursed."

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I entered into a disagreement over that. That WAS true. Whoever blessed Israel under the Old Covenant would be blessed. God promised that to Abraham. Whoever cursed Israel would be cursed. But, that is no longer true of those people on the Mediterranean. Now the light of God is not centered in a Nation—it is centered in the Church.

Therefore, nations, if you want to be enlightened, keep close to the Church! The nations walk in the light of the Church. This whole Book, if you've got the "swing" of it, (maybe you'll need to read it through another twenty times to really get the feel of it!) . . . have you noticed that the way the nations treat the Church results in the way God treats the nations? Okay!

In the Old Testament, the way they treated Israel is the way God treated those nations. But that isn't true any more. You can send all the soy beans you want to Israel and all you will do is get money back. I mean, forget it! Israel, by blood, has nothing! It's Israel by the blood of the Lamb that has something. That's the Israel of God. And it says that nations walk in the LIGHT of that Israel! That Israel—the New Jerusalem, the True Church, the Heavenly Jerusalem—the nations walk in its LIGHT.

Any country that gives place to the Church of Jesus Christ and listens to its message, that country will be blessed. They walk in the LIGHT of it. Any country that persecutes the Church of Jesus Christ will fall sooner or later. God will make sure of that!

That's the message of this Book. Think about that.

It says that all the Nations walk in its LIGHT, but it goes on to say:

The kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it.

So here are peoples—notice the kings of the earth. In old Israel, you had to be in Israel by blood and have Israeli blood in your veins. Not this one! It says "kings of the earth." That means all nations—kings of all nations shall come and bring their glory into it, as those who come surrendering like the Queen of Sheba came to Solomon. She brought her glory to lay it down before Solomon. So here we have the kings of the earth, the nations of the earth, and they bring their glory. They are coming, if you like, with their hands in the air in surrender.

For every knee shall bow, every tongue confess that He is Lord.

This is a City that is filled with people, not just Jews, but Jews and Gentiles. It is an Israel of all peoples.

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As Isaiah Chapter Two says concerning that ultimate Mount Zion, which is what we are talking about:

All nations shall flow into it.

Or, as Galatians Chapter 3 says:

Now there is neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free. All are one in Christ.

Or again in Ephesians Chapter 3:

There is a mystery that has been hidden from prophets in generation past. It is now made plain and revealed that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, fellow partakers of the same promises along with Israel.”

This is the New Jerusalem—all together in Christ.

The Garden of God and River of Life.

The first verses of Chapter 22 describe a beautiful garden. The City is a garden. It has the River of the Water of Life in it and the Trees of Life, which are for the healing of the nations. The Bible begins with a Garden, and it ends with a Garden. This is the eternal Eden. This is the Garden of God.

All through the Bible, whenever it speaks of peace and total satisfaction, it always speaks in terms of gardens.

He maketh me to lie down beside still waters.

He leads me in green pastures.

Obviously, it is symbolic. But, it conjures up everything I need. Here is peace and satisfaction. Do you remember those prophecies in Ezekiel where it states that when Messiah comes, it says that the sheep will be able to sleep in the forest and no one will harm them? Back to gardens and trees again—the whole idea of peace and joy.

Do we really need an interpretation of that with John 7:37 hanging in our Bibles?

Out of your innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.

The River of Life is ever the Holy Spirit. Running right through the center of this New Jerusalem is the power of the Holy Spirit, the River of Life.

Ezekiel 48, prophesying of the Church, do you remember it says that out from under the Temple there would come a river and wherever that river went, life! Life! LIFE! And, where there was death, life came. Do you remember that?

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Do you remember how that was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost? The disciples sat in that very temple that Ezekiel was talking about, and the Holy Spirit came upon them! Out through the gates of that very Temple flowed the River of the Water of Life. Wherever the Gospel went, it was life! Life! LIFE!

The Tree of Life

The Tree of Life is none other than Jesus. It says you eat of the leaves of that tree and you will be healed. Do I need to explain that?

I am the Bread of Life.

We “EAT” of Jesus. He is the Bread that came down from heaven. In Him is our continuous sustenance; in Him is our continual wholeness and healing. He is to us the Tree of Life and the Bread of Life.

The Throne of God

It says that in the center of that City is the throne of God and of the Lamb. In Chapter 22:3, it says the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it.

The Church is the center of God’s rule upon earth.

We’ve already seen in Chapter Twenty that Thousand Years symbol. And it says they lived and reigned with Christ. The reign of God on earth is through the Church.

Go back again to Matthew 28, where it says:

All authority is given to me, you go therefore . . .

That is, “My rule that I am exercising from the throne shall be through you, the Church.”

That’s when it comes to prayer. Do you remember in Psalm 2, which is the greatest Psalm on prophecy and prayer, when Messiah has conquered all and sat down on the Heavenly Mount Zion—which is the Holy of Holies—the next thing was:

Now ask of me and I will give you the ends of the earth for your possession.

It’s yours! The Church is the “asking” end of the Messiah. He sat upon the throne. We sit on that throne in Him and ask in His Name.

So, the rule of God is established on earth. Or, as the classic prayer,

Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

Who prays that? The Church does.

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So, the throne of God and the Lamb is centered in the Church, and God's will is done on earth because the Church brings it to pass in prayer and through faith. There you have your New Jerusalem.

Remember this was written to persecuted Christians.

- When you are being persecuted, and
- when the Church is being split and torn in pieces, and
- when the world seems to have trampled all over the outer court, and
- you are shaking your head and saying, "Where do we go from here?"

The Architect comes and says, "Come and see the original plan!"

Blessed is he who reads this book and who hears it.

Whether you are being attacked by political power, by apostate religion, by the sweet, sweet smell of the world and her scent, or whether you are being disrupted within a by false prophet, take a look at the original plan! God says,

Things are not what they seem to be!

Just because there is a bulldozer there, and a great hole there, and a steel girder sticking up there . . . You say, "This is the New Jerusalem?"

God says, "Yes."

When you see it as God sees it, you will soar over all the despair of this world, and you will rest in God. And you will be blessed as the Book promised, which means "supremely, enviably joyful".

When does all this take place?

Well, we've seen, and consistently through the Book we've stated it:

It takes place between the First Coming and the End of the World, in the glorifying, the Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

All through that Book you get one expression:

Behold, I come quickly.

That's how the Book ends. We didn't end there, but that's how it ends. People have a problem with quickly, quickly.

When you can get a perspective on this, then I think you'll really get it. And then we are finished.

Quickly?

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This Book is founded upon one fact:

- Jesus Christ is Victor!
- He has conquered. It is done!
- Everything is sealed and signed. It's over! It's done.

Once everything is done for which all Time has been moving toward, that from Eternal Councils it has been moving up to, and that is now! Then: IT IS DONE! Anything after that would be "soon". Do you see what I mean?

This is the only way to make sense of that. It wasn't, "Hey John, next week I might come!" That wasn't the point! The Point is:

This is going to work out like this in the generations of men.

But the Grand Finale in comparison to all we have waited for is soon!

You bought the house. You signed for it! Oh, I know you haven't moved in yet, but do you remember all that time of deciding you were going to move, and then all of the time looking for the house? Once you signed it, anything after that is "soon".

Do you get what I mean?

"Soon" is ambiguous. And, it is meant to be ambiguous. Anyone that sets a time and begins to talk about when THE END will come . . .

Did you listen to that very silly radio program last September? The world was going to end on Labor Day, was it? You wouldn't believe the thousands of cabbage headed Christians in this area that really believed that it was going to end on September the (whatever it was)! You wouldn't believe it!

God didn't say that He would come on such-and-such a day! He just said "soon". In the light of the finished work of Jesus, it is soon. The rest? It's none of your business. Just soon.

And so, every generation lives caught between the two: Blessed Catch. I look back and I know it is DONE! I know that whatever is happening now, it will be wrapped up soon. If you can live there, glorious tension! Blessed tension! I know it is done, and whatever is happening now doesn't faze me in the least. I know He is coming soon.

There you live in the blessed, enviable joy that comes through the Book of Revelation.

Amen!