





# *The Seven Spirits of God*

*from*

*Kingdom Bible Studies in  
End-Time Revelation*

*by the Lord Jesus Christ*

*through J. Preston Eby*

*as rewritten and amended by  
Paul A. Lindberg*

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## Introductory Notes

This book originated with 19 sermons – Kingdom Bible Studies in End Time Revelation – written by J. Preston Eby and freely mailed to many believers. When our fellowship group found some, we got excited. These sermons needed to be compiled into a book and published, for the blessing of all God’s people! We wrote to Pastor Eby, and he gladly granted us his permission to do whatever the Lord led us, and even sent us the original text for us to modify.

After a year of rewriting, editing, and compiling into the format that you see, I realized that the message was incomplete. We had “taken God apart” into seven Spirits, but had failed to “put Him back together again,” for there is only “... one Spirit... one Lord... one God and Father of all...” (Eph. 4:4-6) I wrote the final two chapters to do just that.

So this book has two authors. But it’s not as simple as that. Both Pastor Eby and we believe that the real Author is the Lord Jesus Christ, whose Holy Spirit led us to write everything that is presented here. So to Him belongs all the glory and honor. May His Holy Spirit speak to you through this work, for we dedicate it all to Him for the growth of His Kingdom.

Much of Brother Eby’s original work was in the “King James English.” I cleaned this up to take out the “thee’s and thou’s” and make it more understandable to the modern reader, while still trying to leave as much of the poetic beauty of the King James Version as possible.

One thing I did not change: in the days of King James “men” was commonly used for “mankind” and understood to include both genders. This is pretty widespread in this book, as it talks a lot about the “sons of God.” Of course these “sons” are also known as the Bride of Christ and as the many-membered body of saints with Christ as the head. Thus, it certainly includes both men and women, for in Christ “there is neither male nor female.” (Gal. 3:28) So I trust that my dear Readers of the female gender will understand and not take offence.

All that was back in 1994. Since then, Brother Eby has also updated and published his 19 Kingdom Bible Studies on the seven Spirits of God. It is now available on his website: [www.KingdomBibleStudies.org](http://www.KingdomBibleStudies.org). Of course, his independent update is very different from mine.

As you read, please bear in mind that our goal is not to teach technical knowledge about God or about religion. God is far too big for us to wrap our human mental facilities around. Instead, our goal is to discuss the nature and character of God in such a way that avenues of communication are opened up with the Holy Spirit Himself. He can take these weak and inadequate words and impart Himself to us, Spirit to spirit. That way, rather than merely learning about God, we will be learning to know God in an ever-deeper, fuller way. For in truth, no matter how much we know about God and no matter how well we understand His wisdom and His ways, “He is always bigger than that.”

That has become my lifetime motto. During the year I spent editing and adding to this work, my own knowledge and relationship with God has grown immeasurably, but more than ever, “He is always bigger than that.” Indeed, I see better than ever before that His plan for me, His love for me, His glory, His everything is bigger and better than I could even ask or imagine. I hope and pray that it will be so for you, dear Reader, as well.

## Prayer and Dedication

Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the universe, Master and absolute Sovereign over all Your creation, we dedicate this work to You. We ask that you please grant the following special anointing of Your infinite grace to every Reader:

- deliverance from past bondages in spirit, mind, will, emotions, and body,
- a transformation of the whole being, quickened by the life of Your Spirit,
- a re-sensitized conscience and renewed communion with Your Spirit,
- an open heart to receive all that You wish to say through this book,
- a forever-more increasing appreciation of and gratitude for Your Spirit, in reverent awe and wonder, and
- a strengthened dedication to yield ourselves totally, for You to accomplish Your perfect will in and through us by Your seven-fold Holy Spirit.

Thank You! We love You! We give You all praise, glory, and honor for all that You choose to bring forth through this book and through each Reader.

In Your holy and beautiful name and by Your blood, *O Lord Jesus Christ!*

Amen.



# Chapter 1 – How Does God “Dispense” Sonship?

## Ministers of the New Testament

Lev. 17:11; Lk. 22:19-20; Jn. 5:39; 6:53; 7:37-39;  
10:10; 2 Cor. 3:6-9; Heb. 8:7-11

“Who also has made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. But if the ministration of death [the old covenant], written and engraved in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away; how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be even more glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more does the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.” (2 Cor. 3:6-9)

These verses contain two important phrases, “Who has made us able ministers of the New Testament... of the Spirit” and “the ministration of... Spirit.”

The New Testament is not the black, leather-covered book called the Bible, containing four gospels, twenty-one epistles, one book of history and one of prophecy. That book is what Paul calls “the letter.” It is the law, the record, the history which tells us many things about the historical man called Jesus, the Son of God. Many Christians have found the New Testament only in this realm of “the letter.” They know much about God, can quote volumes of Scripture, and articulate persuasively their particular doctrines and beliefs. To these Christians, their intellectual understanding of God and

the Bible is an end in itself. But the New Testament is not the Bible. The twenty-seven books called the New Testament are merely the letter – the guide given to point us to the true New Testament, Jesus, the Christ of God. Never once in Scripture is the New Testament called a book or referred to as being written on parchments or paper.

Consider these statements, “And He took... the cup after supper saying, ‘This cup is the New Testament in My blood, which is shed for you...’” (Lk. 22:19-20) “... God who also has made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit...” (2 Cor. 3:5-6) Jesus did not say, “The Bible is the New Testament.” Nor did Jesus say, “The New Testament is in the Bible.” He said, “This [Passover] cup [of wine] is [represents] the New Testament in My blood.” The New Testament can be found only in the blood of Jesus Christ.

One of the redemptive laws of God is, “I will even set My face against that soul that eats blood... for the life of the flesh is in the blood.” (Lev. 17:11) Blood speaks of life, for physical life is in the blood. The life of the Son of God comes to us in His blood. Jesus declared, “Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood, has eternal life.” (Jn. 6:53-54) The New Testament, therefore, is the very life of Jesus poured out for us and imparted to us. Of course we do not drink the physical blood of Christ, which poured

from His veins on Golgotha 2000 years ago, but we do drink the life in that blood. That life is the very Spirit of God! Now we can understand why Jesus cried out, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He who believes on Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this He spoke of the Spirit which they that believe on Him should receive...)" (Jn. 7:37-39)

The English word "testament" is from the Greek word "diatheke" which means "a covenant." This is translated "testament" 18 times and "covenant" 20 times in the King James version. With this in mind, we read, "Behold, the days come, says the Lord, when I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel... I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, or every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord' for all shall know Me from the least to the greatest." (Heb. 8:8-11) These verses tell us three things about the New Covenant: (1) God writes it in our minds and hearts. (2) The essence of the covenant is that God is our God, and we are His people. (3) In this New Covenant, we come to know God. In contrast, the Old Covenant, "written in letters engraved on stones," ministered to the people only a knowledge about God and His commands, but not the knowing of God Himself in any kind of a personal relationship.

The New Testament is not a book; it is a Person. The New Testament is Jesus.

He said, "Search the Scriptures; for in them you think you have eternal life; and they are they which testify of Me. And you

will not come unto Me, that you might have life." (Jn. 5:39-40) Jesus came into the world to be a demonstration of God-life right here upon the earth. Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (Jn. 10:10) To "minister the New Testament" does not mean to preach sermons, doctrines, laws, or truths about Jesus Christ. To minister the New Testament is to minister the very life of God which is in Jesus in the Spirit. "He has made us able ministers of... the Spirit."

The word "minister" carries the idea: to serve, impart, to wait on or give out. As a member of the new creation you have been called to be an able minister of the New Testament, a minister of the Spirit.

### **The Dispensation of God**

Jn. 8:32; 14:17; 16:13; 1 Cor. 3:6; 1 Tim. 1:3-4

This reveals the true purpose of God in Christ: to dispense Himself into humanity. "... charge certain men not to teach a different doctrine, neither to give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questionings, rather than a dispensation of God which is in faith." (1 Tim. 1:3-4) This passage is translated more clearly in the American Standard Version, "... command certain ones not to teach a different doctrine, nor to pay attention to false stories and to genealogies, which end in nothing, but which furnish questions... rather than a dispensing of anything by God." (ditto, ASV)

So, God's purpose is nothing less than God dispensing Himself into mankind. God, who is both almighty and all-inclusive, intends to dispense not facts or information, but Himself to us. There is great depth in this truth, worthy of our meditation.

This verse points out the difference between facts and truth. All of Babylon's religions hold to their cold, dead doctrines of facts about God. But facts are expressive only of that dead letter of the Word. Facts can never make you free! Jesus never said, "You shall know the facts and the facts shall make you free," but He did say, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (Jn. 8:32) Truth is Spirit.

"When He the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth." (Jn. 16:13) "He is with you, and shall be in you." (14:17) You can feed into your mind any amount of information via the natural senses, but it will be just so much preaching, teaching, study, research, facts, until the Spirit life within brings it forth as an essence in your being.

Oh, brethren! It is not a matter of learning doctrines! When I was young, I went off to Bible school and studied all the doctrines, but they never ministered an ounce of reality to my spirit. Even in this end-time move of God, it is so easy to be side-tracked in this area. One may learn all the end-time teachings, master the terminology the Spirit has brought forth in the realm of revelation, understand all about the tribulation, the beast, the manifested sons, the coming of the Kingdom, and the various dispensations, but after all is said and done, there is only one dispensation which we really need – the dispensation of God Himself into our lives.

Oh, that we may partake of Him in all His glorious and eternal reality in the Spirit! Let us be filled with God Himself – not merely these dispensational doctrines. Let us not walk among men as dispensers of fables, genealogies, facts, doctrines (even good sonship doctrines), theories of some pre-Adamic

creation, nor yet of the ages to come, but rather let us be dispensers of the life of God in Christ. Learn how to contact and follow the Holy Spirit the whole day through. Let us exercise our spirits to be full of the Holy Spirit rather than just exercising our minds to memorize and understand some teaching. Yes, we need to be taught right doctrine. But let us settle it once for all in our hearts that God calls, qualifies, and empowers us, "... to dispense His new covenant – a covenant expressed not in a written document, but in a spiritual bond; for the written law condemns to death, but the Spirit gives life." (2 Cor. 3:6, NEB)

## **The Tree of Life and the Tree of Death**

Gen. 2:8-9, 16-17; Ezk. 36:25-27; Mat. 7:20-23; 23:25-28; Lk. 17:20-21; Jn. 1:1-4; 14:16-17; 17:23; Rom. 8:5-6, 13; 2 Cor. 4:3-4, 18; Gal. 2:20; 6:8; Eph. 2:1-2; Col. 1:27; Heb. 2:14; 1 Jn. 1:1-2; 4:4, 6; Rev. 2:7

That God's eternal purpose has been to dispense Himself into us can be seen from the very beginning in the Garden of Eden. God is there seen forming man as the center of His creation for the purpose of expressing Himself. (See Gen. 1:26-29 and 2:7-25) "And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree... the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. ... And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden you may freely eat, But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it; for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die." (Gen. 2:8-9, 16-17)

In order to understand God's purpose, we must be thoroughly clear about these two trees and what they represent. What does the tree of life signify? Most assuredly it represents a realm of life beyond what Adam already possessed. Adam already had perfect human life, and it was not necessary for him to eat fruit from the "tree of life" in order to perpetuate that human life. The only thing that could cause the termination of his human life was eating fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God did not say to Adam, "You must eat of the tree of life so you won't die," but rather, "In the day that you eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall die." Therefore, the life offered to man in the tree of life is a higher kind of life than the human life Adam possessed. It is – dare we say it? – God-life.

One thing is certain: the tree of life in Eden was not just a natural, physical tree. To Adam and Eve it may have appeared so, for in their childlike simplicity and naïveté, they probably saw only the outward form. But God has always spoken in parables using physical things as symbols, that we may comprehend spiritual truths of a reality that transcends this physical realm.

One of the Scripture's exceedingly great and precious promises to the overcomer is, "To him who overcomes will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." (Rev. 2:7) This is the same tree of life to which Adam lost access in the Fall. It imparts more than the never-ending perfect human life which Adam could have retained simply by refusing to eat of the tree of death. This tree of life lifts man up from the realm of humanity and infuses him with divine life, even the life of God in Christ.

No physical tree can give this heavenly life, for that which is physical is not of divine substance, "... for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor. 4:18) No natural tree can impart spiritual life, for no natural tree is spiritual in its properties. Jesus is not only our life today, but He has always, even from the beginning, been the life of God Himself made available to man.

Has God-life ever been accessible from any source other than Christ? John's answer to that question is clear, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God... In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." (Jn. 1:1-4) And again, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life; for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested unto us." (1 Jn. 1:1-2) This tree of life in the beginning was nothing less than the life of God in Christ made available to Adam and all mankind.

When fruit is eaten, it first enters the stomach where it is digested. The nutrients are then absorbed into the bloodstream. The blood then carries the nutrients and delivers them to each cell of the body. Thus the life in the fruit is ministered to the body, and the whole body becomes literally filled with the life-giving properties of the fruit.

In this we see the picture of what God has desired for men from the beginning – that man would eat the fruit from the tree of life which is the life of God in Christ, and

thus display Christ to the rest of creation. God intends to so dispense Himself into man that man will express God as the center of the whole universe. That is the only way mankind could ever fulfill his commission to “rule over” the rest of God’s creation. (See Gen. 1:26)

But what actually happened to man? The mystery of this is revealed to us by the symbolism of the second tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This tree represents the realm of the carnal mind under the influence of Satan. The second tree brings death because it is the very source of death, just as the first tree is the source of divine life. Scripture is clear about the instrument of death, “To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace; because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. For if you live after the flesh, you shall die.” (Rom. 8:5-6, 13) Again, “He who sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption. But he who sows to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” (Gal. 6:8) Satan is “... him who had the power of death.” (Heb. 2:14) Jesus also made this plain when He said, “The thief [Satan] comes not, but for to steal, and kill, and to destroy; I am come that they might have life.” (Jn. 10:10) The Scripture is clear that the power of death was in the hands of Satan, and it was his desire to rule by that power. However, death cannot be dispensed into man except through the agency of the carnal mind – knowledge. This is why the tree is “the knowledge of good and evil.” Thus, from the beginning of time, these two trees represent two sources – one, the source of life, and the other, the source of death.

As we know, Adam chose to take the second source, the tree of knowledge, into himself. This was not a matter of merely doing something wrong. No! It was much more serious than just transgressing a law or breaking a commandment. The significance of Adam eating the fruit from the tree of knowledge was that he actually took something into himself; he received the influence or “spirit” of Satan into himself. Since Satan had the power of death, the fruit of the tree of knowledge could only minister death to Adam if something of Satan was injected into it. Satan injected the poison of his own realm of death into that fruit! That the tree was under Satan’s jurisdiction is clear, for Satan introduced the tree to Eve, beguiling her. Adam and Eve ingested that poison of death from the fruit, producing death. That same poison has since been transmitted by inherited nature to all Adam’s descendants, subsequently working death in each one.

Oh, this is not a small matter! Few Christians realized the fall of Adam in such a way. Satan injected the poison of his own nature of sin and death into the fruit of that tree. This is why God warned Adam that if he ate of it he would surely die. Through the fruit, Satan entered into Adam and became a part of him. Through the activity of the carnal mind, the poison of Satan’s own dark nature became operative in man.

Since Satan and man became one through the second tree, Satan is no longer outside of man, but in man. Now you can see that the fall of man was not just a matter of man committing something against God, but of man receiving something into his body, into himself. From the time of the Fall, Satan dwells in man.

We have had the false god in us! It came as a revelation to me when I saw what I knew already of saints – that the Holy Spirit lives in us. But then I read that if the Holy Spirit is in the children of God, there is also a spirit in the children of the devil. John wrote, “We are of God, little children... because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.” (1 Jn. 4:4) Then two verses later, John clearly identifies these two spirits which are in the saints and sinners, “We are of God; he who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. Hereby we know the Spirit of Truth and the spirit of error.” (1 Jn. 4:6) So the satanic spirit, the spirit of error (deception), the spirit of “the lie,” dwells in unredeemed mankind.

This was new light to me – a whole new orientation. Most of us think of ourselves as unredeemed “selves” until Christ comes in and takes over. But Paul says this, “And you were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein in time past you walked according ... to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience.” (Eph. 2:1-2) Satan had so concealed and disguised himself in mankind that we think of ourselves as autonomous independent selves. But the truth is that all humans are containers – containers of spirit.

We are vessels. The crucial distinction is, which god is in the vessel? Paul says of unbelievers, “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them who are lost, in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not.” (2 Cor. 4:3-4) Because the body is the container of the spirit, and because we humans have become containers of that false, unclean spirit of error (Satan), Jesus said of human-kind, “That which

comes out of the man, that defiles the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts and fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these evil things come from within...” (Mk. 7:20-23)

This greatly simplifies salvation, for it is first and foremost a change of gods, not a change of vessels which contain Him. And not a change of gods over us, but a change of gods within. Now we can see why God is so interested in dispensing Himself into us!

As this truth sinks deep within our being, how much clearer is our entire vision of that which God is working within. Through the prophet Ezekiel, the Lord said, “I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from your idols. A new heart also I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh... and I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes.” (Ezk. 36:25-27)

Throughout Scripture, we find that God is not so concerned about the external, but with the internal. The Pharisees are a prime example. Jesus said, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, pretenders – hypocrites! for you clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within you are full of extortion – prey, spoil, plunder – and grasping self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and of the plate, so that the outside may be clean also... You are like tombs that have been white-washed, which look beautiful on the outside, but inside are full of dead men’s bones and everything impure. Just so, you also outwardly seem to

people to be just and upright, but inside you are full of pretense and lawlessness and iniquity.” (Mat. 23:25-28, AMP)

Of the new-creation man, the Word asserts, “I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me.” (Gal. 2:20) “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Col. 1:27) “I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of Truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees Him not, neither knows Him; but you know Him; for He dwells with you [in Jesus], and shall be in you.” (Jn. 14:16-17) “The Kingdom of God comes not with observation; for, behold, the Kingdom of God is within you.” (Lk. 17:20-21) “I in them, and You in Me... that the world may know... that You have loved them, as You have loved Me.” (Jn. 17:23) This is the tree of life – God in Christ in us!

### **Three Steps in God’s Dispensation**

2 Cor. 13:14

The process in this communication of God to man has three aspects: “the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.” (2 Cor. 13:14) Here we have the love of the Father, the grace of the Son, and the communion of the Holy Spirit. What are these? Who are the Father, the Son, and the Spirit? Are these three different Gods? Let me ask, are love, grace and communion three different items? Not at all. Love, grace and communion are one element with three steps (aspects): love is the source, grace is love expressed, and communion (fellowship) is love realized and received through grace.

Likewise, God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit are all one God expressed in three progressive manifestations of Himself: God as the Father is the source, Christ is God expressed, and the Holy Spirit is God in Christ transmitted into man. Thus, the Holy Spirit is God revealed and received by man. These three aspects of God become three successive steps in the process of dispensing God into man that man may express God through his person. Without these three stages, God’s essence could never be dispensed into man. The dispensation of God is developed from the Father, through the Son, and by the Holy Spirit.

### **From the Father**

Jn. 1:18; 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 4:6; Col. 1:15;  
1 Tim. 6:16; James 1:17

God the Father is the universal source of all things. Paul tells us, “But to us there is but one God, the Father, of [from] whom are all things.” (1 Cor. 8:6) In the Hebrew and Greek language, “father” is used in various senses: as the begetter or progenitor of an individual (Prov. 23:22; Zech. 13:3; Lk. 1:67), as the head of a household or ancestral family (Gen. 24:40; Ex. 6:14), as an ancestor (Gen. 28:13; Jn. 8:53), as a founder of a nation (Mat. 3:9) or founder of a class or profession (Gen. 4:20-21), as a protector (Job 29:16; Ps. 68:5), as the source of something (Eph. 1:17), and as a term of respect (2 Kings 5:13; Acts 7:2). God, as Father, is thus the source and head of all things. Scripture says there is “one God and Father of all who is above all, and through all, and in all.” (Eph. 4:6) Further, everything from His hand is good. “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights.” (James 1:17)

But God the Father is both invisible and unapproachable. “Who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light; whom no man has seen, nor can see; to Him be all honor and eternal dominion.” (1 Tim. 6:16) John said of Him, “No man has seen God at any time...” (Jn. 1:18) Jesus is “the [visible] image of the invisible God.” (Col. 1:15) How can we possibly know such an invisible and unapproachable Father? How can we see the Invisible? How can we have a relationship with the Unapproachable?

### **Through the Son**

Isa. 9:6; Jn. 1:1; 5:30; 8:28; 10:30; 14:6-10;  
Col. 1:19; 2:9; Heb. 10:5

The second step in the dispensation of God to man is found in the manifestation of God as the Son. Formerly, it was impossible for man to know the Father, for from the time when Adam and Eve were driven forth from His presence, mankind was shut out from any vital relationship with Him. He was exclusively God and His nature was exclusively divine. There was no bridging of the gap between God and man, not because of a deficiency on God’s part, but due to the deficiency on man’s part.

For natural minds to comprehend things spiritual is equally as impossible as for worms of the earth to comprehend things human. Humans are of a different order from worms. Worms may see men and may observe their movements, yet there is no common ground of knowledge. The worm has no comprehension of what it sees. It can discern only things pertaining to its own realm. It has positively no understanding of the ways of man or of the meaning of his movements, words, or habits.

Likewise, God is of a higher order than fallen mortals. There is no common ground of knowledge. Humans are totally incapable of comprehending that which pertains to that higher order. So, until God, through His own infinite ability, manifests Himself on a level in which He can communicate with man, it is impossible for man to have any real understanding, either of God, or of His wisdom or ways. So in His redemptive process, God sovereignly acted to make Himself available to man. Love did this!

An individual becomes significant only by differentiation from another. A universal becomes comprehensible by its particular forms. For example, what is electricity? I don’t know. But I know light, and heat, and power. They are “manifested electricity.” So the invisible, unapproachable God, of whom Paul said, “No man has seen nor can see,” has become manifested to us as redemptive love. He came into visible form. So the first manifestation of God is His “only begotten Son.” Through His divine arrangement, the Father put Himself into the Son, in order to make Himself known unto man. Thus we find that all the fullness of the Father dwells in the Son (Col. 1:19; 2:9) and is expressed through the Son. (Jn. 1:18) The Father, as the inexhaustible source of everything, is embodied in the Son. The incomprehensible God is now expressed in Christ, the Word of God (Jn. 1:1); the invisible God is revealed in Christ, the very image of God (Col. 1:15), and the Son is even called the Father. (Isa. 9:6)

Our space-time realm is very limiting, at least compared to God’s dwelling place in eternity. But God limited Himself to fit here. Jesus Christ is the fullest possible expression of the Father into our space-time realm.

It is for this reason that only through the Son we can know God as the Father. The Son, the particular One, manifests the universal One to us as the living Father. “No man comes unto the Father but by Me.” (Jn. 14:6) Those who seek a way to God apart from the Son, cannot know Him personally. He remains impersonal to them, as in such religions as Buddhism and Hinduism. This is the key when talking of God to those of other faiths or no faith. To them He is just a theory or at best an impersonal entity. To us, through our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ His manifested Son, God has become our personal Father, the Father of the Son, our Father in the Son. Experience is the best answer to theory. “He who has seen Me, has seen the Father,” Jesus said.

Jesus is the full expression of God. He is God, expressed. “No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.” (Jn. 1:18) The Amplified Bible renders this verse, “No man has ever seen God at any time; the only unique Son... who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him – He has revealed Him, brought Him out where He can be seen; ... He has made Him known.” The marginal rendering in the Scofield Bible expresses the true meaning from the Greek, “The only begotten Son has led Him forth, that is, into full revelation.”

God the Father put Himself into His Son Jesus in order to make Himself visible, comprehensible, and available to man.

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given... His name shall be called... Mighty God, Everlasting Father...” (Isa. 9:6) It does not say “mighty man,” but Mighty God. A little child is called the Mighty God!

All Christians agree with the prophecy of this verse. The child mentioned here refers to the child born in the stable in Bethlehem who is not only named Jesus, but also the Mighty God and the Everlasting Father. As a child born to us, He is called the Mighty God; as a Son given to us, He is called the Everlasting Father (the Father who dwells in eternity, or the Father of all the ages).

This is very strange, is it not? When the child is called the Mighty God, is He the child or God? And, when the Son is called the Everlasting Father, is He the Son or the Father? If you try to figure it out, you cannot do it. You must take it as a fact, unless, of course, you do not believe the Scriptures. If you believe the authority of the Scriptures, you must accept the truth that the child is the Mighty God; and the Son is the Father.

Then, how many Gods do we have? We have only one God, because the child Jesus is the Mighty God and the Son is the Everlasting Father. Truly, He is the Father in the majesty of His power and in the holiness of His nature, expressed in our realm. He is all that God is, on display in human form.

When Jesus came, He came to take the place of Adam – to fulfill the eternal purpose of God for man to become the expression of God to the whole universe. As man, His first emphasis or principle was, “I will be a man fulfilling the divine plan, living my life wholly unto God.” His first consideration was not evangelistic – that is, toward man. His first consideration was towards God. “I will live unto God; I will live by God the Father; I will draw upon His life; I will be a vessel filled with God; I will manifest Him, reveal Him. I will not do anything on my own; I will not initiate anything. I will not

show how much I can do, how much I know, how much power I have. I will not display My own attributes. Though I am a human vessel, a human personality, yet God the Father will be in Me, living out His life, His nature, His will in Me.” That is sonship!

Jesus said, “A body have you prepared Me.” (Heb. 10:5) He was thus saying, “I have a means of expressing God in, through, and to humanity.” A body is for expression. If I never moved my hands, or my mouth, or my eyes, you never would know what I was thinking. But having a body, I am able to express what I am through these features.

Normally, a being can only express itself to its own kind. But Jesus had a choice, as He is both God and man. He could have expressed Himself. But at the beginning of His ministry, He chose the more noble way. He said, “I will not express what I am; I’ll express what God is.” That is sonship!

Jesus said on another occasion, “I do nothing of Myself.” (Jn. 5:30) That is contrary to what we have thought. We have thought, “Jesus could do anything!” Yet He insisted, “I can of my own self do nothing; as I hear I judge...” (Jn. 8:28) In essence He was saying, “My judgments are just, because I judge no one. My Father judges, and My Father never makes a mistake. He knows what’s going on. I just listen for His judgment and as I hear, I judge, and My judgment is just, for it is not Mine, but My Father’s judgment.”

Again Jesus said, “Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in Me? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of Myself; but the Father that dwells in me, He does the works.” (Jn. 14:10) You could ask the Lord Jesus, “Where are you going?” He would answer, “I’ll go

wherever My Father goes. My Father is at work here, and I work His work. I don’t stop and consider before I take a journey. ‘Now I’m going to Capernaum, and then I’ll go to Galilee, and later across the river.’ No, no. I never anticipate anything. I just walk as My Father walks. He guides Me this way then that way, and I gladly follow His lead, for it is not I but My Father who lives in Me.”

This is the way He was living His life, moment by moment. He had no desire to do anything – except the Father’s will. He had no desire to perpetuate anything. He had no personal ambitions. He was neither trying to build His own kingdom, nor tear down the established government of the day. When the Father changed directions, He changed directions. When the Father was finished with something, He was finished with it. When the Father passed something by, He passed it by. When it looked as if the people were about to set Him up as their king, He said, “My hour has not yet come. I can’t anticipate anything. I can’t jump ahead of schedule.” So He walked away from them.

Here is another thing Jesus said when He came into the world: “I delight to do Your will, O God.” (Ps. 40:8) Jesus never stopped to consider if He was going to be understood or misunderstood. He never stopped to worry if He was going to suffer. He never stopped to fret about whether He was going to die. He knew that as long as He walked in the will of His Father, nobody could take His life from Him prematurely because it was the Father’s life. Whatever His Father willed moment by moment, that was all He could will. “I come to do Your will, oh God.” (Heb. 10:7, 9)

This is sonship!

## By the Spirit

1 Sam. 10:10; 16:14; Jn. 1:32-34; 3:34; 4:24; 7:37-39;  
14:16-18; 16:7; Acts 1:4-5, 8; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 15:45;  
2 Cor. 3:17; Gal. 4:6; Heb. 1:5

However, as marvelous as it is to behold the Father in the Son, God cannot come into us through the Son. We still need a further stage, a third and final step, for God to dispense Himself into man. We see what God is like by looking at Christ Jesus, but that doesn't put God in Christ into us. Let's be more specific. Now that we know God's purpose is to dispense Himself into man, we must discern what God is in order to know what He is dispensing. What is His substance? Of course we know the answer, but how fundamentally important it is!

Jesus uttered that profound three-word statement, "God is Spirit." (Jn. 4:24) The very essence of the almighty, all-inclusive God is simply Spirit. All that is in the Father is in the Son, and all that is in the Father and the Son is the eternal Spirit – the Holy Spirit.

"Now the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." (2 Cor. 3:17) According to our understanding, who is the Lord? We all agree that the Lord is Jesus Christ. But it says the Lord is that Spirit. Who is the Spirit? We have to admit that the Spirit must be the Holy Spirit of God. Therefore, the Son is called the Father, and the Son – our Lord Jesus Christ – is also the Holy Spirit. This means the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one.

To further illustrate how this is so, I borrow the following illustration from another brother (who prefers anonymity). When I came across it, my spirit leaped within me as the Holy Spirit bore witness to my spirit of the wonderful truth of it.

I quote, "If you buy a watermelon, your intention is to eat and digest this melon. In other words, your intention is to work this melon into you. How can this be done? Firstly, you buy the whole melon; secondly, you cut it into slices; and then, thirdly, before this melon enters your stomach, you chew it until it becomes juice. The sequence is: melon, slices, and finally juice. Are these three different things or just one?"

"I believe this is a good illustration of the three aspects of God. Most melons are larger than your stomach. How can you swallow a large melon when your mouth is so small and your throat is so slender? Before it can become the proper size for you to eat, it must be cut into slices. Then, as it is eaten, it becomes juice. Are the slices not the melon? And is the juice not the melon? If we say they are not, we must be ignorant.

"The Father is illustrated by the whole melon; the Son by the slices; and finally, the Spirit by the juice. Now you see the point. The Father is not only the Father, but also the Son. And the Son is not only the Son, but is also the Spirit."

Thus the melon is also the slices to eat and the juice flowing down our throats. The melon disappears after it is eaten. Originally, the melon was on the table, all contained within itself, as all of God was originally contained in the eternal Father. Then the slices revealed what was inside the melon even as Christ revealed the fullness of the Father. Finally, the juice enters into us as we eat it, so that all that is in the melon, though now invisible, is in us, to become life to us, just as God enters into us through His Spirit, bringing all that God in Christ is, into us.

Now our spirits can breathe deeply of the sublimity of the truth revealed by Jesus when He said, “And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of Truth... you know Him; for He dwells with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you.” (Jn. 14:16-18) Surely Paul spoke of the fulfillment of that promise of Christ to return as the Holy Spirit when he wrote to the Corinthians, “And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening [life-giving] Spirit.” (1 Cor. 15:45) This is why the Holy Spirit is spoken of this way: “And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, ‘Abba, Father.’” (Gal. 4:6) And again, “But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.” (Rom. 8:9)

God has always been Spirit. But formerly, God contained His Spirit within Himself. He did not share it. Angels do not have God’s Spirit although they are spirit beings. Their spirit is of a different order than the Spirit of God, for, “Unto which of the angels said He at any time, you are My Son, this day have I begotten you?” (Heb. 1:5) Angels are not born of God’s Spirit and therefore are not of the same substance as God. They are created spirits, but they have an entirely different kind of spirit life. God had not shared the uniqueness of His own Spirit with any other being until Jesus.

In the Old Testament, the anointings of God’s Spirit came and went, fell and lifted. The Spirit was never completely “given” to

any man – prophet, priest, or king. This is why we read such statements as these, “And when they came to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him [Saul, before becoming the king], and he prophesied among them.” (1 Sam. 10:10) But later, “... the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul.” (1 Sam. 16:14)

When God initiated His great plan to dispense His Spirit fully into man, Jesus was the first to so receive, and during His earthly ministry, the dispensation of God’s Spirit was limited to Him alone.

John recognized this when he baptized Jesus in the Jordan. “John bore witness, saying, ‘I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him. And I did not recognize Him; but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, “Upon whom you shall see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, the same is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.” And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.’” (Jn. 1:32-34) Jesus said, “For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God; for He gives the Spirit without measure unto Him.” (Jn. 3:34)

Jesus pointed forward to a day when the Spirit which was upon Him would be poured forth into His whole body, the church. He told His disciples that it was necessary for Him to go away before this could happen. “Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is better for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.” (Jn. 16:7) After His ascension, He commanded the eleven to wait in Jerusalem for this promise of the Father, the power of the Spirit, which would literally fill them.

This truth is worthy of deep meditation and prayer. Jesus was telling these distraught men that His going away would mean the coming of the Spirit. He told them plainly that it was actually better for them that the Spirit should come to them, than that He Himself should remain with them. How deeply this needs to impress us! Blessed and marvelous beyond description was His own presence and ministry among them; yet far more blessed would be the ministry and presence of the Spirit within them. Jesus was Emmanuel, God with us. But what unspeakable glory to experience the coming of the Spirit, which is God in us!

This does not depreciate Jesus in any sense, for He is the Spirit. He assured His disciples, "And He [the Father] shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it sees Him not, neither knows Him; but you know Him; for He dwells with you [as Jesus], and shall be in you." (Jn. 14:16-17)

Wonderful as was the presence of Christ in the world, that physical presence cannot be compared to the magnificent glory of the Spirit of Christ dwelling in the heart of man. No outward manifestation of power or glory can take the place of His indwelling presence! It is from within and not from without that the work of transformation is to be carried forward from glory to glory until we shine in that same image of Christ. Though Christ had walked and talked with His disciples, eating with them, praying with them, teaching them, demonstrating the mighty works of God among them and even giving them power to heal the sick and cast out devils in His name, yet at the time of His

departure, there was but little sign of any real work of transformation within them. All was by grace. Peter was still capable of cursing like a sailor and lying like the devil! Judas was still capable of stealing, fraud, and becoming a traitor. In the face of a little pressure, they were all capable of forsaking Him and running away in fear and despair. They were still very natural, carnal men, as almost all Old Testament saints had been. God in Christ had indeed dwelt among them, but up to that point, He was definitely not dwelling in them.

Transformation does not take place from without. It must come from within. All the evil in the world today, even as Jesus said, comes from within the evil heart of man. Therefore, since all evil begins within and not without, transformation must begin within and not without. A man who makes his New Year's resolutions to change and reform his habits may have an outward change, usually only temporary, while his heart remains unchanged. But the man who ceases his sinfulness and carnality because his heart is changed, is changed from within and is indeed a new-creation man.

Herein then lies the first and greatest blessing of the coming of the Holy Spirit. Jesus had been with them, but now He would be in them, changing, transforming, and renewing them from within. Jesus would become the dispensation of God into man by the Spirit. How wonderful it must have been to walk the hills of Judea and the sandy shores of the Sea of Galilee with Jesus by their side! How much more wonderful it is that Christ by the Holy Spirit now dwells within us, bringing forth that same image of Christ and glory of the Father in our lives!

## **The All-Sufficiency of the Spirit**

Rom. 8:1-2; Gal. 5:16; Eph. 5:18; 1 Jn. 1:7

If you truly desire to be an overcomer in this hour, here is a most wonderful key. "... If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." (1 Jn. 1:7) There is a way for the Lord's people to be freed from all sin! "If we walk in the light." How? "As He is in the light." To walk in the light as He is in the light, means to expose ourselves to the Spirit even as He exposes Himself to the Father. There is a vital principle here.

Here is one way to express it: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." (Rom. 8:1-2) What makes me free from the law of sin and death? The Law of the Spirit of Life sets me free. Life swallows up death! Light dispels darkness!

But haven't we always had it turned around in our thinking? Haven't we always been struggling to "die" so we can live? How often have we said, "If somehow I can get rid of my 'old man,' if I can just conquer this habit, this nature, this temper, this lust, this... this... this... then I shall be able to have the life of Christ manifested in me." We have been trying to get rid of sin so we can have righteousness. We have tried to get rid of death so we can have life. We have worked at eradicating from our lives all the darkness so we can walk in the light. But friend, we have been putting the cart before the horse. That is like saying, "I will stand in this dark room and rebuke the darkness, and

when I finally manage to get all the darkness out, I will have some light." You can rebuke the darkness until you fall dead on the floor, but it will never leave until you turn on the light. There is no vacuum machine that can suck up darkness, no chemical that can wash it away, no force that can move it.

The problem is not to get rid of the darkness, but to produce the light. The law of light is that it always dispels darkness. It never fails! So if you have been trying to get rid of the darkness in you, the carnality in you, by rebuking it, fighting it, struggling with it, trying to reform it, praying to be delivered from it, having hands laid on you for it... forget it! None of those things can remove the darkness in us. Only the light can do that. Brother, sister, let the light shine in your life, expose yourself to the mighty presence of the Holy Spirit in your life. You can't take death out of a corpse to make it live, but put life in it, and it will live! In exactly the same way, the Law of the Spirit of Life working in you will make you free from the other law of sin and death.

The light is turned on as we yield to the Spirit. The way to learn to yield to the Spirit is first of all to be filled with the Spirit. I am not speaking of merely receiving an initial experience of the baptism in the Spirit and speaking in tongues. I speak of being constantly in that state of being full of the Spirit. Paul says, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." (Eph. 5:18) The Amplified Bible reads, "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but ever be filled and stimulated with the Holy Spirit." This is true to the Greek; this verb tense requires that you be constantly and continuously filled.

I have had that experience of facing the pressures of everyday living until the vital presence of God has been crowded out of my life. This has usually happened when I failed to give myself daily to prayer and praise, to the Word of God, and fellowship with the body of Christ. When we spend all our spare time visiting with friends on the carnal plane, reading the newspaper, watching television, tinkering with hobbies, and any number of other activities which may not be wrong in themselves, we crowd the Spirit out of our lives, and our lives are filled with earthly things. Once in a while, we spend a few minutes in prayer, or in God's Word, or in fellowship with some brother or sister, or in some dead meeting, and then we wonder why we have no power in our lives and why we are not overcomers.

There is a law of life that must be at work in us. But you don't really need to be concerned about the law of life, you just need the life. The law works naturally. When the life is there – the law will work. When the law of life is working in us, death and darkness are swallowed up or put out of commission in us.

Seek life! If the glorious presence of God – the Spirit – can keep me in a spiritual state of overcoming life for ten minutes, or for two hours, or for three days, then that same anointing of His life within can keep me in that state of victory for as long as I maintain the flow of His life.

It's a bit like a fine musical instrument. As long as it remains in perfect tune, it sounds glorious, but trust me, the musician is always alert to the sound. If it gets the slightest bit out of tune, it will sound awful! A good musician never lets that happen.

In the same way, the saint is ever aware of the indwelling Spirit – ever eager to keep his life “in tune” with whatever the Holy Spirit is saying. He senses it immediately if the Holy Spirit wants to change direction, knowing that awareness of the Spirit is his life! The saint's joy is to do whatever pleases God, knowing that God's plan for my life is far better than any personal pleasures I may seek. In such an attitude of awareness of the Spirit's presence and leading, there is no room for grieving the Spirit.

This is the unfailing key to victory and overcoming. Maintain the flow of the fullness of His presence, and you will have little trouble with the flesh. This is the law of the Spirit. It works! As Paul said, “This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the works of the flesh.” (Gal. 5:16) It's just that simple. In plain English, this means stay full of the Holy Spirit.

How? How does a baby learn to walk? He doesn't focus on the falls; he remembers those short successes and works to repeat them. You can't tell him how; he just needs to do it. It is the same here. I can't tell you how to walk with God. Just do it.

Well, perhaps I can give you a few helps along the way, such as:

- Daily and continually giving yourself to prayer and praise (preferably alone).
- Immersion in the Word of God (not superficial reading, but diligent study).
- Fellowship with God's saints in the deeper things of God.
- Conforming the word of your own testimony to harmonize with the promises of Scripture. (“I am not a sinner any more. I am a redeemed, forgiven, saved, justified, sanctified son of God.”)

- Constant awareness of the presence of the living Christ within you, and of His life-blood continually cleansing, feeding, and empowering you. “Practice His presence.”

- “Reckoning” your flesh nature dead and buried with Christ, so that the life you live is no longer your own, but Christ living in you. In Christ you are a saint! Confess it!

- Eating to please the Holy Spirit, and taking care of His temple that is your body.

- Obeying the command to rejoice in all things, especially in tribulation.

All this will help to insure that constant flow of His presence and life. But in reality, it is not what you are trying to do; for it is actually what He is doing in you. “Work out your salvation with fear and trembling – for it is God who is at work in you.” (Phil. 2:13)

You will see the law of life at work. The old carnality, the old ways, the old desires, the old frustrations, will begin to fade away and become dimmer and dimmer in your life. Life will swallow up death. Light will dispel the darkness. Yielding to the Spirit is simply “giving yourself” to His presence and working in your life.

Don’t try any longer to “get rid of,” or “quit doing,” or “kill,” or “die,” or “change” anything. Seek life. Love what God loves. Give your whole being to Him; expose your whole life to the light. You will begin to live by the life of God’s dear Son.

In the beginning Adam and Eve were never flesh conscious – until they ceased to walk in the Spirit! As long as they were totally caught up in God and in all that He was doing for, in, and through them, they weren’t even aware of the flesh. When they rebelled against God and died to the Spirit, they immediately became aware of the flesh. Then they saw that they were naked and tried to try to cover their shame. As long as they walked in God’s presence, there was no shame, for the notions of sin were simply not in them. The measure of the rising up of His life within will, in that same measure, check the appetites of the carnal mind.

God is seeking the fully developed life of His Son in us in order to manifest Himself through us as the central manifestation of Himself to the whole creation. His purpose is God in Christ in the Holy Spirit in us.

# Chapter 2 – Does God Have Seven Spirits?

## Introduction

God has revealed Himself in at least two major dispensations so far. In the Old we have the promise and preparation, in the New the fulfillment and reality. A difference between these two is the working of God's Spirit. In the Old Testament, we see the Spirit of God coming upon men, working on or through them in special ways and times, coming and going, but always working from above and without, working inwards. In the New Testament, we have the Holy Spirit entering into them, dwelling within them, abiding, always working outwards and upwards from within. In the Old Testament, we have the Spirit of God as the Spirit of the Almighty, the unapproachable One. In the New Testament, we have the Spirit of the Father in and through Jesus Christ.

Jesus, as head of the new creation, was the first man to receive the Holy Spirit in full measure, an ever-abiding presence. Under the Old Covenant, the Spirit moved upon men to fulfill some special purpose of God, after which the anointing lifted from them. The Holy Spirit could not abide with them permanently because their sinful nature had not yet been dealt with. The blood of bulls and goats could cleanse their sins because of their obedience to God's command, but it could not do away with their sin. That is why they had to repeat the sacrifices year after year. Their sins were forgiven, but their sin nature remained untouched. (Heb. 10:1-4)

But Jesus was not just an ordinary man. He was not born with the sin nature which the rest of us inherited from Adam. God knew that no son of Adam could ever be fully cleaned of that sin nature without divine intervention. So He sent His precious eternal Word in all its creative power and glory, Jesus, to be conceived supernaturally by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary, fully God, yet laying aside the glory of His divinity to become fully man – except without that inherited sin nature.

Jesus was in all points tempted just as we are. (Heb. 4:15) He also learned obedience through the things He suffered (Heb. 5:8) because He chose to walk the same path that we also must walk to glory. (Eph. 5:1-2)

But in order to successfully accomplish His mission without falling into sin, Jesus needed one more thing. It was not sufficient for Him to merely be born without a sin nature. Adam and Eve were born without a sin nature, and they fell to temptation. Jesus needed the filling and abiding presence of the Holy Spirit within. He could not go out into the desert to be tempted of the devil until He had first been baptized with the Spirit. (Mat. 3:16 – 4:1) It was this entirely unique experience of the abiding presence and anointing of the Holy Spirit which marked Jesus as the Messiah, the Anointed One. By this means, He Himself became not only the recipient of the abiding Spirit, but the giver, the source, the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.

John the Baptist knew this and said, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him. And I knew Him not; but He who sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, ‘Upon whom you shall see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.” (Jn. 1:32-34) “... He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” (Mat. 3:11)

This word comes to us, as well as to John. To know what the baptism in the Spirit really means, we must see the One upon whom the Spirit descended and abode. Of what that baptism in the Spirit means, Jesus Himself was to be the type. He would only give what He Himself had received. Because the Spirit abode in Him, He could baptize us with the Spirit. Because of this abiding of the fullness and inexhaustibleness of God in Him, we may come to Him and drink, receiving not only the total cleansing of our sins by His once-for-all-time perfect sacrifice on the cross; receiving not only the full deliverance from our inherited sin nature by reckoning it dead and buried with Him at Golgotha; receiving not only a transformed, righteousness-loving nature by reckoning ourselves as risen from the dead in Him; but also through baptism receiving the very same fullness and inexhaustibleness of His indwelling abiding Holy Spirit, giving us also the power to overcome temptation and walk in His righteousness! Praise God!

What Jesus, as the first-born Son, has to give us, He first received and personally appropriated for Himself; what He received and won for Himself is for all of the sons. He will make it our very own. Upon whom

we see the Spirit abiding, He baptizes with the Spirit. And whoever is so baptized, upon him too, the Spirit abides. “But as for you, the anointing which you have received from Him, abides permanently in you; so then you have no need that anyone should instruct you. But just as His anointing teaches you concerning everything, and is true, and is no falsehood, so you must abide – live, never to depart [rooted in Him, knit to Him] just as His anointing has taught you to do.” (1 Jn. 2:27, AMP)

The Old Testament stood in the law of a carnal commandment; the New Testament in the power of an endless life. All that the Spirit works within us is eternal in its nature and substance, after the power of an endless life. This eternal reality dwells within us, ever working from within the spirit, working outwards and upwards, into soul and body, unto the full measure of the stature of the Son of God. (Eph. 4:3-13)

## **The Seven Spirits of God**

Zech. 4:2; Eph. 4:4; Col. 1:19; 2:9;  
Rev. 1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6

“Grace be unto you, and peace, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before His throne.” (Rev. 1:4)

“These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God.” (Rev. 3:1)

“Out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices; and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne which are the seven Spirits of God.” (Rev. 4:5)

“In the midst of the throne... stood a Lamb as having been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God.” (Rev. 5:6)

For many years, we did not know that God has seven Spirits. Although we had read the Bible through, we had never seen anything in it about seven Spirits. We knew that “there is one body, and one Spirit...” (Eph. 4:4) We thought that when we received the one Spirit, in the baptism in the Spirit, that was the beginning and the finish of it. We spoke in tongues, prophesied, did a few miracles, danced in the Spirit, rejoiced with unspeakable joy, and that was it. This is all we knew God had for us this side of heaven.

“Seven Spirits” means literally, in the original text, seven Spirits. So are there seven Spirits of God? If you say that God has seven Spirits, that makes you a heretic! But if you say that the Spirit of God is not seven Spirits, you are disagreeing with the Word of God. If God says there is one Spirit, then there is one Spirit; and if God says there are seven Spirits, then there are seven Spirits. It seems like a contradiction, but they both must be true, as they are both in God’s Word and God’s Word is perfect.

One of the keys to this mystery is found in the book of Revelation, “And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.” (Rev. 4:5) In the Old Testament, the structure of the golden lampstand in the tabernacle was quite unique: below was one lampstand; above were seven branches, each with a lamp. (Ex. 25:31-37; Zech. 4:2) There were seven lamps, yet it was just one lampstand. Therefore, it is correct to say that there is one lampstand, but it is also correct to say there are seven lamps. So also is the Spirit of God. Without question, He is one Spirit; but He is also called “the seven Spirits,” that is, the sevenfold, intensified Spirit of God.

Seven is the most sacred number in the Scriptures. This number is used more often in the Bible than all other numbers except the number one. It is the number denoting spiritual perfection and completeness.

It is interesting to note that in the title “Holy Spirit,” the word “holy,” according to Webster, comes from a root meaning “whole.” Hence, the Holy Spirit is the “whole Spirit.” The number seven denotes spiritual perfection and completeness. The seven Spirits of God are thus a figure of the “Holy” or “whole” or “complete” Spirit. The number seven also conveys the idea of unity and harmony, rather than diversity. Therefore, we can see with unclouded vision that the seven Spirits of God are the united sevenfold, intensified Spirit of the Lord – the absolute fullness of the Spirit of God.

Who is the source of these seven Spirits of God? Jesus is! “In the midst of the throne stood a Lamb... having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God.” (Rev. 5:6) The Lord Jesus said to John on Patmos, “These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God.” (Rev. 3:1) That is, in Jesus dwells the absolute fullness of the Spirit of God. (Col. 1:19; 2:9)

### **The Lord Is the Spirit**

Jn. 1:12; 14:10, 16-18; 16:7, 13-15;

1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 3:17; 5:16

“And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of Truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him. But you know Him, for He dwells with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you.” (Jn. 14:16-18)

As Jesus was preparing to leave this earth realm, He promised His disciples that His departure would be their gain; the Comforter would take His place, to be to them far better than He had been, or ever could be, in His bodily presence. This would be true because His own relationship with them had been mostly external, and thus had not resulted in what might have been expected.

He had been with them, yet they were still very carnal – earthly. But the coming Spirit would be in them. He, Jesus, would return to them as the Spirit, in an intimacy and vitality they could not know as long as He was outside them, merely with them. He would return to them, not in flesh and bone, but as the Spirit, as an indwelling Presence. By the power of the Spirit, they would have as their very own possession, yes, even as their very own being, all that Jesus is!

“... the Spirit of Truth... He dwells with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you.” The thought of Jesus walking with men on earth, living with them, leading, teaching, guiding them, is so clear. But the thought of Jesus becoming a Spirit and hiding Himself within them, and speaking, not in audible sounds but only in the depths of their hearts, was too staggering a thought for these yet carnal men. Their minds were yet blinded to spiritual realities. They still needed to be educated (as do the multitudes of religious men today) to acknowledge that God desires to rule, not by an outward law, but by an inward source of life.

As long as Jesus was with His disciples as a physical being, He had to work from without inward. He could never effectually reach or master their innermost parts.

After Jesus went away, He returned as the Spirit to be in them, that now He might work mightily from within, outward. Taking possession of the inmost recesses of their being by His Spirit of Life, He would cause them to personally become what He Himself is to a greater and greater degree as they surrendered to His will. The shaping of their lives, the forming of their character, and the development of their abilities would be by the power of the Spirit of Jesus, who really had become the only spirit filling their soul.

Oh, how our gracious and all-wise God and Father would have us understand that it really is better for us that Jesus should not be here “in the flesh.” Wonderful beyond words is the truth that He declared long ago, “... I tell you the truth; it is profitable – good, expedient, advantageous – for you that I go away. Because if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you... but if I go away, I will send Him to you.” (Jn. 16:7, AMP) Jesus said again, “... when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth. He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine and show it unto you.” (Jn. 16:13-15)

Before this could take place, it was first necessary, yes, imperative, that He leave His disciples. They could not have Him in the flesh and in the Spirit too, for His bodily presence, knowing Him in the flesh, would hinder the spiritual indwelling. (2 Cor. 5:16) They must part with the physical Jesus they knew before they could receive the glorified Jesus as the Spirit. And Christ Himself had to give up the life He had before He could be glorified either in the heavenlies or in us.

Even so, in our union with Him in the Spirit, we too must give up the Christ we have known in the past, however we have known Him, if we are to become partakers of all His divine fullness in the Spirit.

I am convinced that it is right at this point where so many of the Lord's precious people need this teaching, "It is expedient [advisable, desirable, advantageous, better, profitable, to your best interest] for you that I go away." Like those disciples, so many sincere Christians believe in Jesus with all their hearts. They do love Him and seek to follow and obey Him, but the Jesus they believe in, love, and seek to follow and obey is the Jesus in the fine picture on the wall – the Jesus with soft, piercing eyes, flowing chestnut hair, fine chiseled features, well-trimmed beard, and Galilean robe. It is the Jesus of Bethlehem's manger or Nazareth's carpenter shop, of the sandy shores of the Sea of Galilee or the Judean hills – the Jesus who preached to the multitudes, who fed the five thousand, healed the sick with the touch of His hand, cleansed the leper, and who, weeping, cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" Even the Jesus of the judgment hall, of the Via de Dolores, of Golgotha's hill, of Joseph of Arimathea's garden tomb. With some it is the Jesus of the resurrection – the Jesus calling tenderly to Mary in the freshness of the morn, Jesus on the road to Emmaus, Jesus appearing mysteriously to His disciples behind closed doors, or Jesus inviting the doubting Thomas to thrust his hand into His side. But, dear ones, even that Jesus of the resurrection could not remain with His disciples. "It is better for you that I go away." "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you."

"I will not leave you comfortless; I will come unto you." Even the resurrected Jesus had to pass away from their midst before the exceeding great and precious promise of the indwelling Spirit could be fulfilled.

How many of God's dear saints are yet worshiping the Jesus of the flesh! Truly, they believe on Him, love Him, and long to see Him when He returns. And yet, in their longing to see Him (some glad future day), they find that He is not now their satisfying portion, their all in all. There is yet such a lack in their lives – so much carnality, strife, struggle, sickness, weakness, insufficiency, and limitation. The only reason can be this: they have not yet fully inherited the promise, "The Spirit shall be in you... He shall glorify Me; for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you."

The absolute imperativeness of Christ's going away and the absolute reality of His coming again as the indwelling Spirit, they do not fully understand nor appreciate. They have not yet been able to say, "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer." (2 Cor. 5:16)

Do we know Christ "after the flesh"? This must come to an end, to make way for knowing Him in the power of the Spirit. "After the flesh" means in the power of the external, of men and means, of words and thoughts, of efforts and feelings, of systems and methods, of ceremonies and ordinances, of influences and aids from without. We must know Christ no more after the flesh, as He was on earth, or even in His resurrection.

No. Now we are to know Jesus after the Spirit, as the exalted, glorified, sovereign Lord who has come permanently unto us as the indwelling, abiding Spirit.

To many, it is very difficult to set aside the Christ of the flesh and to know only the Christ of the Spirit – to give up the Christ who works through human efforts, external agencies, systems, methods, or ceremonies, influences from without, and come to know Him who works only internally after the power of an endless life. But, “As many as received Him [as Spirit], to them gave He power to become the sons of God.” (Jn. 1:12) To all who honestly desire to become truly God-men, bearing the full image of the first-born Son, in all things well-pleasing to the Father, the thought of Jesus’ departure, that His Spirit may now become our very own, and we be transformed and matured into His own nature and character, will be welcomed with unspeakable gladness and gratitude. In this union, the benefits we enjoy, the nobility we attain as sons of God, the intimacy and fullness of fellowship and relationship with God we enter into – all these are infinitely greater than anything experienced by men of God in any previous time or age.

To have our Lord coming as the Spirit into our hearts, becoming our very own life, just as He was the Spirit of Christ Jesus on earth – surely this is a blessedness worth any sacrifice, for it is the means God has chosen to manifest Himself to this physical realm. The people of Israel in Jesus’ day saw the full revelation of God in the person of Christ Jesus. But the world of our day has yet to see a full and complete revelation of Christ in His body. This is the consummation for which all other things since the foundation of the world were merely the preparation. The Word now is being fulfilled, “Behold! the tabernacle [home] of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them!” (Rev. 21:3)

“Now the Lord is that Spirit.” (2 Cor. 3:17) The Lord is what Spirit? The “Lord,” of course, is the Lord Jesus, and “the Spirit” is the Holy Spirit. “And so it is written, the last Adam was made a quickening [life-giving] Spirit.” (1 Cor. 15:45) The last Adam is the Word of God made flesh, the man Christ Jesus. The life-giving Spirit, again, is the Holy Spirit, for there can never be any other life-giving Spirit. Christ Jesus became man, the last Adam, and later, through His death, resurrection, ascension, and glorification, He became to us the life-giving Spirit.

Some Christians have a traditional way of saying, “Christ is in the Holy Spirit.” But the Word of God does not say that. Jesus, in the days of His flesh, did say, “I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me.” (Jn. 14:10) But the Scriptures never say that the Son is in the Spirit, because the Son who comes into us is the Spirit. It is not that the Son who is in the Spirit comes into us, but that the Son who comes into us is the Spirit. “The last Adam was made a life-giving Spirit.” “Christ is in the Spirit” is, therefore, merely a traditional saying, while “The Lord is the Spirit” is the scriptural expression.

The Lord who is the Spirit is neither the Jesus of the flesh, nor the resurrected Jesus who appeared to His disciples for forty days. The Lord the Spirit is the ascended, glorified Lord. If the resurrected Christ had been the Lord the Spirit, there would have been no need for Him to ascend to impart the Spirit; He could have remained here and simply disappeared into His disciples. He did not say, “It is better for you that I be resurrected; for if I am not resurrected, the Comforter will not come unto you.” He said rather, “It is better for you that I go away.”

The resurrection of Jesus was a first step toward the last man Adam becoming the life-giving Spirit. But notice what Peter says in Acts 2:32-33. "This Jesus has God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father [in His exaltation] the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has shed forth this which you now see and hear." In Ephesians 4:10, it is even plainer. "He who descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things." He was not simply resurrected that He might fill all things, but He ascended up far above all heavens in order that He might fill all things.

Ephesians 1:20-23 says the same thing. It is Christ seated at the right hand of the Father in the heavenly places, "far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come," who was made "head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."

John wrote, "This He [Jesus] spoke of the Spirit, which they that believed on Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified." (Jn. 7:39) Two things were essential before Jesus could return as the Lord the Spirit: He must go away, and He must be glorified. In our place and on our behalf, as man and the head of man, Jesus was resurrected and then ascended and was admitted into the full glory of the Divine. His human nature, now victorious over sin, death, and Satan, was received up, exalted, and glorified into union with the Spirit, becoming of the same substance and essence as the eternal Spirit.

Thus, the Holy Spirit could now come down as the Spirit of the God-man – truly and fully the Spirit of God and just as truly now the Spirit of Jesus the man. He could come down as the Spirit of the triumphant glorified Jesus, to be so in each one of us who receives Him. God be praised!

## **The All-Sufficient Spirit of Christ**

Gen. 1:26; Jn. 1:33; 14:16-18; Rom. 5:10; 8:19;  
1 Cor. 15:38-45; 2 Cor. 3:17; 4:5-7; Gal. 4:6;  
Eph. 1:23; 3:16-19; 4:10; Col. 1:27

The value of knowledge, that is, true spiritual knowledge, in the life of a child of God can hardly be exaggerated. Just as a man is none the richer by his inheritance or by a treasure in his field, as long as he does not know about it or does not know how to get possession of it or use it – so the gift of the Holy Spirit cannot bring His full blessing and reality to us until we know and, in knowing, truly apprehend and possess Him in all His fullness. In Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and it is the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, our Lord, for which the sons of God must be willing to count all things but loss. (Phil. 3:8) It is because of the lack of a true knowledge of what God in Christ is in us that the lives of many brothers and sisters are so weak and feeble.

In order for us to know and properly understand the all-sufficiency of the Spirit of Christ within us, we must first see what Christ is. I do not say "who" Christ is, but "what" Christ is. There are many different titles ascribed to Christ in the Scriptures. But I want to go beyond those names and get to the substance of Christ, His very essence.

My automobile, made of metal, is called an automobile, but its essence or substance is metal. What is the substance of Christ? "Now the Lord is the Spirit." (2 Cor. 3:17) What is Christ? He is the Spirit! He is called by many titles and names descriptive of His characteristics, offices, and ministries. He is known as Savior, as Redeemer, as the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, Lord, Comforter, Prophet, High Priest, King, the I Am, and scores of other glorious titles. But what is His substance? "The last Adam was made a life-giving Spirit." (1 Cor. 15:45) The substance of Christ is Spirit. "And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts." (Gal. 4:6)

"For we preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." (2 Cor. 4:5-7)

If we read the Scriptures carefully, and as the light of God's divine revelation bursts in blazing glory upon our consciousnesses, we will come to see that the main thing God is after, and has always been after, is to work Himself into us, to reveal the very fullness of God through us as the vessels of His glory. For what purpose did God create man? That man might be His container, His expression, the revelation and the source of God for the rest of creation. In fact, the universe only exists because Spirit chose to have a body in which to manifest Himself. Truly Scripture says, "The whole earth is full of His glory!"

Christ has entered into His glory as the Spirit unto this very end, that now, in a divine way, "He might fill all things." (Eph. 4:10) He has entered into His glory that He might especially fill the members of His body, as the first-fruits, with the fullness of Himself and His divine life.

"He [God] put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him [Jesus] as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all." (Eph. 1:23) Through the Holy Spirit, the creation is brought into a living relationship with God, so that He can manifest Himself in all His perfection of divine life and love and power through us. Jesus "fills all in all." Thus all things are containers of Him. The rest of the creation can contain only limited manifestations of God, but we (the church) can contain God as a person, "the fullness of Him who fills all in all." God put a little of Himself into everything He created, thus each thing has its own "glory." (1 Cor. 15:41) But only mankind is in the image of God, so only mankind can display God's fullness.

You can appreciate a cat, or a sunrise, or a rainbow for what they are, but you can't fellowship with them. I can fellowship with you, and you with me, because we are of the same essence. The heavens and the earth declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows His handiwork. We can view their marvels through a microscope or telescope and stand in awe before their magnificence, but we do not say, "God lives there." God made it, but He does not dwell in it. He dwells someplace much higher and better. The greatest marvel of the ages is when we can look at a human personality and say, "God lives there!" That is glory! (Col. 1:27)

Certainly Paul had this in mind when he wrote, “And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts.” (Gal. 4:6) God has made us His sons! And because we are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts.

True fellowship is person to person. But for God to manifest Himself, His Person, through a fallen, unregenerate human is like me trying to manifest my personality through a worm. We have two different natures. The two are simply not compatible. Therefore, God appeared to be on the horns of a dilemma when man fell. He wasn’t, of course, for He knew His own purpose from the beginning, but it sure appeared so.

God had created man to reveal His image to the universe. This is the reason God created the heavens and the earth, and, having finished them, said, “Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness.” Man was intended to be the visible manifestation and revelation (and source) of God to the whole of the physical creation. But man fell from that image of God into a condition of darkness and death where there is no longer a compatibility between the nature of God and the nature of man. This is why God first must reconstitute (transform) us into His sons through the justification of faith. Only then can He send forth the fullness of His own divine life in the Spirit into our hearts. As sons of God, we then become containers of Him – vessels of the very Spirit of God.

We are made to be containers, and God intends to be our content. Bottles are made to contain liquids; bags or cans contain food; tanks are designed to contain water; electric wires contain electricity. Each of these kinds of containers is “peculiarly made” to contain

a specific substance. Sons of God are also “peculiar” containers, for we have been designed by our Creator to contain a specific substance – the Spirit of God. If we do not come to know God as our only content, we become a meaningless contradiction. No matter how much of the world’s wisdom we imbibe, regardless to what heights of human recognition or position we attain or how skillful we become in human achievements, it is all meaningless, since we are purposely made to contain God as our sole content. To reveal Him is our unique purpose.

This word may seem elementary, but it is the heart of the “eternal purpose” of God (more accurately: His purpose for the ages of time). As it is written, “... to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things; in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to rulers and authorities in heavenly places. This was in accordance with His eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Eph. 3:9-11) That “eternal purpose” (purpose for time; the reason God created the ages of time) is: God is the content; we are the containers, uniquely fashioned into a new creation to express, reveal, and become the source of God for the entire universe. This is His Plan of the Ages: to form a many-membered son in His own image, displaying to all creation His own nature and character. God is love. Now He has a worthy Bride to lavish His love upon and express Himself through.

Jesus the Spirit comes into us to fulfill this high and holy calling. He comes within us as the all-sufficient Spirit, to make us all we must be as God-filled saints.

In our modern era, man has learned much about nutrition – the study of foods that help to grow the human body and make it strong and healthy. The body gets the nourishment it needs from the raw materials contained in various foods. When we ingest these raw materials, the body uses them to build strong bones, muscles, and other body parts, and to make blood. We call these raw materials vitamins and minerals. Each has its own function, but all are important. For example, iron helps build red blood cells. Calcium promotes proper formation of teeth and bones. Vitamin A aids in good eyesight. Vitamin B1 is good for the nerves. Niacin builds healthy skin. In order to get all the vitamins and minerals your body needs, you can go to the drugstore and purchase them in tablet form. There you will find bottles containing calcium, bottles containing iron, others of vitamin A, vitamin B, vitamin C, D, E, niacin, and so on. You could soon fill up your medicine cabinet with bottles of vitamins, minerals, and food supplements, and many do. But the vitamin companies have simplified all this for us by creating the “multi-vitamin/mineral” tablet. Just one of these tablets will contain sufficient daily amounts of every vitamin and mineral known to be needed by the human body. You don’t have to swallow twenty-five or fifty different pills; just take the one. This “one-a-day” type is the all-inclusive dose!

Friends, that makes a good illustration. Have we ever realized that Christ the Spirit is the best “dose” in all the world? He is the one complete dose which is enough to meet all our needs. The Spirit of Christ is all that God is. All the Father is, is in the Son. And the Son is the Spirit! Hallelujah!

The human body needs all the vitamins and minerals to develop and function well. The body of Christ, the new-creation man, needs the all-inclusive dose of the Spirit of Jesus, the last Adam, in order to develop and function as the perfect God-man. Soon now, that long awaited manifestation of the sons of God shall come to this sin-cursed world. Creation shall be set free from its bondage to corruption. We shall see the glory, wisdom, and power of the Son of God manifested in His fullness through a many-membered body right here upon this earth.

How the whole creation groans and travails for this! The work of preparation for this is even now taking place among God’s end-time saints. The body of Christ shall finally arrive at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Paul tells us that this is when Christ shall come “to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day.” (2 Thes. 1:10) How can we attain to this? By taking liberally of the all-sufficient and all-inclusive dose of the life of God in Christ Jesus the Spirit!

Adam had the opportunity to become the full revelation of the image and glory of God to the whole universe. This was offered to him in the tree of life. The tree of life was nothing less than the life of God in Christ. The tree of life was the all-sufficient “dose” which would have built eternal Spirit-life into Adam, even making him the source of that life. But instead, Adam chose to disobey God and take into himself a “dose” of death.

In the natural, a person who does not get enough vitamins may have rough skin, poor eyesight, sore gums, or rotten teeth. People who are too thin or feel tired much of the time may need more vitamins.

Ugly diseases like pellagra, scurvy, and beriberi occur when one does not get enough vitamins. Picture the miserable condition of a person suffering acute malnutrition. The eyes are large and protruding, the cheeks sunken, the stomach bloated, the arms and legs thin and bony... I have seen this scene many times in under-privileged countries. It is a heart-rending sight. And friend, this is the spiritual portrait of fallen Adam! This is but a picture of the horrible spiritual image into which Adam sank when he refused his “dose” of the all-sufficient life of God in Christ, and chose instead, the deficient and poisonous diet of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil: human knowledge, logic, knowledge after the “flesh” nature.

All of mankind today, enslaved under sin, are manifestations of Adam’s wretched condition of sickness, sorrow, and death. After six thousand years of degeneracy, mankind now bears little resemblance to what God intended in the beginning.

But, thank God! He has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ. “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved [from our wretched state] by His life.” (Rom. 5:10) Yes, we shall be saved completely by His life. Through the death of His Son, He has opened Eden’s gates, has brought us back into the garden of God, and has thus made available to us again the all-sufficient dose found only in Jesus by His Spirit within. All we need to be God-men is contained in the Lord the Spirit. We can become all man was intended to be. We can be sons of God. We need not cry, beg, or fear. We only need to accept the free gift – of Himself!

## **What is Christ the Spirit?**

Mat. 28:18-20; Lk. 11:13; Jn. 11:25; 14:6;  
1 Cor. 1:24, 30; Col. 3:11; 1 Jn. 4:8

How often we try to channel some of what God is into our lives. It is as though God is outside of us, and we are endeavoring to draw out from Him some of His virtue, nature, power, and life. I once walked that route myself. I was always expecting that somehow the Lord would pour out upon me, or into me, what I needed. But one day I discovered an important truth, “God is love.” (1 Jn. 4:8) Suddenly the “is” stuck out.

What dawned on me was something like this: It doesn’t say God has love, but God is love. If somebody has a thing, then it isn’t he himself, it’s just something attached to him, as if you have a pair of shoes on, or have some money in your pocket. You just have it, and you can share it. But the Bible doesn’t say God has love, but God is love. Love, therefore, must not be a thing I can have, for it is not something God has, that He can just give me a little of when I need it. Love is exclusively a person. God is love. He is a person. So love is a person. In truth, there is no other pure, self-giving love anywhere in the universe apart from God Himself. Love is exclusively the nature and character of one Being in the whole universe – and that one is not me, J. Preston Eby.

This set an entirely new trend of understanding going in my life. Suddenly I began to see that I don’t have one iota of love, never have, and never will! God is love – period. No one else. I cannot possess love, since I cannot possess God; I can only become love – to the degree that I take the reality of God into me, to the degree that God Himself is worked into my life.

As I surrender to God, I surrender to love. As I become filled with Him, I become filled with love. I will never be able to love. But God is always love, even within me.

Soon a whole new world began to open before me. I began to relate this principle to all those things which pertain to what I must become as a son of God. Suddenly, another truth burst upon me. The Bible says that Christ “is the power of God.” (1 Cor. 1:24) Not Christ has the power, but He is the power. Here too, I had thought power was something which God possessed, which He could “give” me some of, and after I got enough of it, I might become “God’s man of faith and power.” Now I knew that power is a person. Christ is the power of God.

Then I began to discover that God doesn’t “have” anything. He is everything. He doesn’t “give” us anything but Himself. He becomes everything within us.

Jesus assured his disciples that, “All authority has been given unto Me...” and implied that it would be theirs as they went out to make disciples of the nations, for, “I am with you always...” (Mat. 28:18-20) But He never gave it to them! No, instead, He told them to, “Stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.” Why didn’t He just give it to them right then? He couldn’t! Only the Holy Spirit within them could be their power and authority. “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give [the best gift!] the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?” (Lk 11:13)

Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” (Jn. 14:6) He doesn’t just show us the way, He is the way. He doesn’t just teach us truths. He becomes truth in us. He

doesn’t just give us life. He is life. He said to Martha, “I am the resurrection and the life.” (Jn. 11:25) The resurrection is a person, not a day. He becomes our resurrection life as He fills us with Himself. I want righteousness. “... we... become the righteousness of God in Him.” (2 Cor. 5:21, NASB), affirming that Christ is righteousness in us. I need wisdom. Christ is God’s wisdom to us. (1 Cor. 1:30)

Finally, I saw a verse which gathered it all together and put the capstone on top. Colossians 3:11 says of those who are in Christ that “Christ is all and in all.” Christ is all, not Christ has all. And if Christ is all, what am I? Zero, by the law of mathematics. Christ is all in all. It finally dawned upon me that the only reason for the existence of the entire creation is to contain and become one with the Creator. Everything outside of that is meaningless. Outside of that is left only the sorry picture of fallen man and the fallen creation, under the same sad sentence of darkness, disintegration, and death.

The Lord the Spirit is, indeed, the all-sufficient dose. Whatever I need to be a son of God, to fulfill my destiny in God, is mine, not by struggling to “be” anything or trying to “receive” anything, but by bending myself before Him, the Lord the Spirit who dwells within, that He may be all in all, in me.

“Now the Lord is the Spirit.” He is the Holy Spirit. He is the “whole Spirit.” He is the completeness of the Spirit. He is the seven Spirits of God, all the fullness of the divine Spirit. The seven Spirits of God are simply the “wholeness” of Himself totally and eternally revealed and manifested and ministered to the universe through Christ and His physical body – all those people who are becoming like Him – His image.

## Chapter 3 – The Spirit: a Gift? or the Fullness?

### What is the Spirit?

Jn. 4:24; Phil. 4:8; 1 Jn. 2:20, 27

To comprehend what is really meant by the “Holy” or “whole” Spirit, we must gain an understanding of what is contained in that Spirit, and what is the full measure of His ministries, functions, and operations. We must know what the Spirit is. I do not say “who” the Spirit is, but “what” the Spirit is. We know who He is – He is God. “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth.” (Jn. 4:24) To know what He is means to know His attributes, characteristics, and abilities. The Scriptures describe what the Holy Spirit is with various titles, often repeated or used interchangeably, giving us the assurance that they all relate to the same Holy Spirit, and that they, as a unit, constitute the “whole” or “Holy” Spirit of God. Looking into these Scriptures we see that the Holy Spirit is:

1. The Spirit of God (Eph. 4:30; Mat. 3:16)
2. The Spirit of the Lord (2 Cor. 3:17)
3. The Spirit of Jehovah (Isa. 11:2)
4. The Spirit of the Father (Mat. 10:20)
5. The Spirit of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:19)
6. The Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9)
7. The Spirit of the Son (Gal. 4:6)
8. The Eternal Spirit (Heb. 9:14)
9. The Free Spirit (Ps. 51:12)
10. The Good Spirit (Neh. 9:20)
11. The Spirit of Adoption (Rom. 8:15)
12. The Spirit of Burning (Isa. 4:4)
13. The Spirit of Counsel (Isa. 11:2)
14. The Spirit of Faith (2 Cor. 4:13)
15. The Spirit of the Fear of the Lord (Isa. 11:2)
16. The Spirit of Glory (1 Pet. 4:14)
17. The Spirit of Grace (Zech. 12:10; Heb. 10:29)
18. The Spirit of Holiness (Rom. 1:4)
19. The Spirit of Judgment (Isa. 4:4; 28:6)
20. The Spirit of Knowledge (Isa. 11:2)
21. The Spirit of Life (Rom. 8:2; Rev. 11:11)
22. The Spirit of Love and Power (2 Tim. 1:7)
23. The Spirit of Might or Strength (Isa. 11:2)
24. The Spirit of the Promise (Eph. 1:13)
25. The Spirit of Prophecy (Rev. 19:10)
26. The Spirit of Revelation (Eph. 1:17)
27. The Spirit of Supplication (Zech. 12:10)
28. The Spirit of Truth (Jn. 14:17; 15:26; 16:13)
29. The Spirit of Understanding (Isa. 11:2)
30. The Spirit of Wisdom (Isa. 11:2; Eph. 1:17)
31. The Breath of the Almighty (Job 33:4)
32. The Breath of Life (Gen. 2:7; Ezk. 37:5-6, 14)
33. The Comforter, Helper, “Paracleteos,” one called alongside to help (Jn. 14:16; 16:7)
34. The Power of the Highest (Lk. 1:35)
35. An Unction (spiritual motivating power, anointing) from the Holy One (1 Jn. 2:20)
36. The Holy Spirit (Ps. 51:11; Eph. 4:30)

Our Lord Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit at His baptism at Jordan. So likewise, the members of His body have received the same enduement. “But the anointing which you have received of Him abides in you... the same anointing teaches you...” (1 Jn. 2:27) “But you have an unction from the Holy One, and you know all things.” (1 Jn. 2:20)

The words unction and anointing evoke recollections of the holy anointing oil poured upon the heads of each successor to the offices of high priest and king in Israel. As the people of Israel were typical of the true Israel of God, so their priests and kings were typical of Christ, the great antitypical High Priest and King. And as their priests and kings were anointed with the “holy anointing oil” as an induction into office, so our Lord Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit at the time of the beginning of His ministry. He thus became the Christ of God. (Gk: “Christos,” meaning anointed, chosen, elect, consecrated to high office.)

The church is called a “royal priesthood” (king-priests) – “members of the body of Christ.” (1 Pet. 2:9; 1 Cor. 12:12-13, 27) The Holy Spirit of anointing which came into our Lord Jesus at His baptism at Jordan and with “all power in heaven and in earth” when He was raised from the dead by the Spirit of Holiness (Mat. 28:18; Eph. 1:19-20; Rom. 1:4), was poured out as the antitypical anointing oil upon the members of His body at Pentecost. There (remember the type) the anointing oil passed from the “head” to His “body” and thenceforth to all those who are truly united with Him as members of His body by the power of the Spirit. (See Ps. 133:2)

This consecrated, anointed body is now recognized as “the very elect” or “chosen” of God, anointed of God (in Christ) to rule and bless all the nations after first being “taught of God” under the guidance of the anointing Spirit.

The significance of unction (1 Jn. 2:20) (Gk: *chrisma*) is smoothness, lubrication, oiliness. The word customarily carried with it also the thought of fragrance, perfume.

How beautifully and forcefully this word represents the eminence of the nature and character of God displayed from those who come under this antitypical anointing: holiness, gentleness, kindness, knowledge, wisdom, power – love! What a sweet, pure perfume does this anointing of the Holy Spirit of God’s glory bring with it to all who receive it! However ungainly, coarse, rude, or ignorant the “earthen vessel” (the outer man), how speedily it partakes of the sweetening and purifying influence of the treasure of the “new Spirit,” the “new heart” within. The anointing of the Holy Spirit brings the man, as he is yielded and consecrated to the indwelling life, into beautiful harmony with “whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely.” (Phil. 4:8)

### **The Spirit “By Measure” and “Without Measure”**

Lk. 4:1; Jn. 1:1, 14, 16; 3:34; Acts 2:4; Rom. 12:3-4;  
Eph. 1:17-18; 3:17-19; 4:7, 15-16; 5:18;  
Col. 1:19; 2:9, 19

In relation to this anointing of the Holy Spirit upon both head and body of the many-membered Christ, there is one very important distinction to be remembered. Our Lord Jesus, the head of the body, received the Holy Spirit without measure, unlimitedly. (Jn. 3:34) In contrast, at least up to this present time, individual members of His body have received the Spirit only by measure, limitedly – a measure of the Spirit being given to every member in the body. Paul tells us, “For I say... to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think

soberly, according as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith. For... all members have not the same office... having gifts differing according to the grace that is given.” (Rom. 12:3-4) “But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ... from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” (Eph. 4:7, 16)

The reason for this difference between the measure of anointing on the head, Jesus, and the body is that He came and walked as a perfect man, while we, the members of His body, although accepted in the beloved as reckoned perfect (justified by grace through faith), have actually been imperfect. As the full expression of the eternal Father into our realm of time and space, Jesus and the Father are literally one. Thus, as a man, Jesus could (and did) come into perfect harmony with God and with His Spirit of holiness and power. But in proportion to the degradation through the Fall, our harmony with God and His Spirit has been impaired.

Imperfect mortals are incapable of receiving the Lord’s Spirit to the full, and it would be dangerous beyond comprehension for one to so receive even if he were capable. Can you imagine unlimited, almighty power at the disposal of men still walking with a carnal, fallen nature? How long would it be before that self-centered nature would rise up in pride, forget the Source of that power, and begin to terrorize our fellow man?

This is why the writer to the Hebrews exhorts us, “let us go on to perfection.” (Heb. 6:1) This is why God has placed ministry-

gifts in the body of Christ “for the perfecting of the saints... until we all come... unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” (Eph. 4:16)

Thus we see that it is only in perfection that one can know the fullness of Christ. Among all those who receive the Holy Spirit of adoption, we find the Spirit possessed in different measures depending upon the degree we fall short of the divine image and our degree of faith and maturity so far.

We who walk in God’s righteousness need not be disappointed at what God has given so far, nor anxious about what He will give. At this point, we must walk by faith, trusting that in His sovereign wisdom, power, and love He has given to us all that we need right now and will continue to give all that is best for us moment by moment. Yet this is not a passive acceptance or a resignation to the Father’s will, but rather a wholehearted yearning to be filled to the fullest and, as our capacity is enlarged, refilled again and again with the Holy Spirit.

To the extent that the apprehended ones commit themselves to the Lord, and, ignoring their own wills and way, seek to walk in His ways, they come to be “led by the Spirit,” “taught of the Spirit,” and can “serve the Lord in newness of Spirit.” To continue under this leading and instruction, they must have a “Spirit of meekness” (Gal. 5:22, 23; 6:1), so that the “God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,” can give them the “Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation in the knowledge of Him; the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, that they may know what is the hope of His calling, and what is the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.” (Eph. 1:17-18)

It is only through being “conformed to the image of His Son” that we can qualify, and become capable of receiving that same measure of the absolute fullness of the Spirit of God that Jesus possessed as a man. The initial infilling of the Spirit is a free “gift,” but the fullness of God must be appropriated from glory to glory. (2 Cor. 3:18)

In Ephesians 5:18, we are exhorted to be “filled with the Spirit.” The first disciples, on the day of Pentecost, were all “filled with the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:4) We have seen that Jesus received the Spirit without measure, and the Scriptures further state that He was full of the Spirit. (Lk. 4:1) We have also seen that the Spirit-filled body of Christ has received as yet only a measure of the Spirit. How can it be said that the disciples were filled with the Spirit, when in all reality they merely received a measure of the Spirit?

How can you be “filled” with only a measure – part of the whole? If the measure, the part one receives, fills him, how can he then receive more when he is already full? If the measure fills you, how can you receive that which is beyond measure?

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” (Jn. 1:1, 14) Here we find that Jesus was full of grace and truth. But then, “For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.” (vs. 16) This does not say that we received His fullness, but “of His fullness.” The Amplified Bible renders it, “For out of his fullness [abundance] we all received – we all had a share, and we were all supplied with – one

grace after another, spiritual blessing upon spiritual blessing, and even favor upon favor and gift heaped upon gift.” If I had a million dollars in the bank and withdrew “of” or “out of” my account, I would have only a part, a measure of my abundance. Similarly, Jesus was full of grace and truth, and as we receive “of His fullness,” we receive only a measure of that fullness which is in Him. But, bless His name, it is an ever increasing measure, for it is ever “grace upon grace” or “one grace after another.”

Fullness is relative to the capacity of that which is being filled. It is like a balloon. You can blow a puff of air into a balloon and the balloon is, by definition, full of air. There is air from side to side, from end to end, and there is no place within the balloon where there is not air. And yet, you can still blow more air into the balloon. The balloon is full, but it has the unique characteristic of being able to be expanded. Its capacity can be increased due to its ability to stretch. So, although at any given point the balloon is full, you can keep on blowing into it until the rubber stretches to its limit.

Thus it can be seen that it is possible to be filled and yet still have capacity for more after you have been filled. When we were first baptized in the Holy Spirit, we were “filled” with the Spirit like those on the day of Pentecost, but our capacity – our ability to contain Him – was extremely limited. We held all of God that we were capable of holding at that point. We were full of the Spirit, but we now know that we can receive more, becoming filled with ever increasing measures of His fullness. God is wanting to expand us from within, to increase our capacity, to enlarge our spiritual dimension.

It is right at this point that the average Christian sells himself short – especially the average pentecostal or charismatic. How many of the Lord’s saints who seek baptism in the Holy Spirit are mistakenly seeking a blessing or an experience? To speak with tongues is often their highest aim, or to be slain under the anointing of His power, and if they can attain such a phenomenon they are happy and satisfied in their belief that they have received all, or at least almost all, that God has for them in this life.

How pitiful is such an understanding! How desperately short we sell ourselves when we seek the baptism in the Holy Spirit as an “experience” that we are to attain instead of simply presenting ourselves as empty vessels, eager to be filled with all the incomprehensible inexhaustibleness of God!

This Spirit – who is God and is sent forth by God, full of wisdom and truth, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, power, grace, and glory – brings to us ever increasing measures of His own unlimited and unfathomable abundance. Yes, God would fill us and then expand us that He might fill us the more, and yet again, and again, until we attain unto that “measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,” which measure is nothing less than the absolute fullness of Him who fills all in all!

The measure of God unto which we have been called has been seen in Christ. “For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.” (Col. 1:19) “For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” (Col. 2:9) Though we, as members of His body, have received “of” that fullness, yet the Father is concerned in this hour that there come to pass a further enlargement of

our capacities to contain Him, for He seeks a body through which He can manifest all the fullness of Himself to the creation.

Paul prayed for the Ephesian believers unto this end, “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; so that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height [of capacity]; that you might be filled with all the fullness of God.” (Eph. 3:17-19) Only the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation can minister to our yearning hearts the complete comprehension of what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the supply of God in the Spirit and of our capacity to contain Him. But one thing God would have us understand in all simplicity: the increase of our capacity comes through our growth as members of Christ’s body.

“But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.” (Eph. 4:15-16) Yes, there is an increase, growth, a building up of the body, and with that increase comes an expanded capacity for containing Him.

A normal human baby begins eating solid food with only a small jar of baby food. When he has finished that, he is full. But at age six, will that be enough? Certainly not! His capacity is enlarged! He has grown, and he will keep right on growing, expanding, enlarging, increasing his capacity until he arrives at the full stature of manhood. Then he will be able to eat a seven course meal.

The saint too is growing, "... holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God." (Col. 2:19)

Press on saints, for we are growing with a growth from God. If you have been born again by the incorruptible seed of the Word of God, you have only been wrapped in the swaddling clothes of your spiritual existence. If you have been baptized in the Spirit, you have merely taken your first baby step into the Kingdom. If you speak with tongues, prophesy, see visions, heal the sick, and cast out devils, you are yet in the kindergarten of God's glorious reality.

The burning desire within my heart in the end of this age is that God's people might with me become aware that there is yet before us the comprehension of what truly is the breadth, length, depth, and height of that realm available to us where abides all the fullness of God. When the majesty of this transcendent potential breaks upon our groaning spirits, we shall cease to glory in the fact that we are evangelicals, or pentecostals, or charismatics, or even "end-time" saints, for we shall perceive that we are nothing as we ought to be. Truly, that portion of our inheritance which lies before us is far greater and grander than all we have possessed up to this present time!

### **The Sevenfold Brightness of God's Glory**

Isa. 30:26; 58:8; 60:1-3; SoS. 6:10; Jn. 14:12;  
Rev. 1:14-16; 4:1-6; 10:1; 12:1; 18:1

This fullness of which we speak is the seven Spirits of God. As previously noted, the seven lamps of fire burning before the

throne of God are the seven Spirits of God. The seven horns and the seven eyes of the Lamb upon the throne are the seven Spirits of God. John saw One sitting upon a throne; He looked like jasper and sardius gemstones. A rainbow circled round His throne, and from it came lightning and thunder. Before the throne burned seven lamps of fire, which are the seven Spirits of God. (Rev. 4:2-6) A rainbow splits the light into seven colors. The seven colors of that glorious rainbow represent the sevenfold intensified fullness of the Spirit of God, even as the seven lamps of fire, the seven horns, and the seven eyes are the seven Spirits of God.

When the fullness of these seven Spirits of God is realized in the body of Christ, then shall be fulfilled that which was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, saying, "Arise, shine; for your light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people, but the Lord shall arise upon you, and His glory shall be seen upon you. The Gentiles [nations] shall come to Your light, and kings to the brightness of Your rising." (Isa. 60:1-3) In that day, it shall also come to pass that "the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun [the glory of Christ] shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord binds up the breach of His people, and heals the stroke of their wound [the work of restoration in the last days]." (Isa. 3:26)

Malachi prophesied also of this day. "But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings... and you shall tread down [overcome] the wicked... in the day that I shall do this, says the Lord of hosts." (Mal. 4:2-3)

God promises to send forth the Sun of Righteousness (Jesus), not in the single light of the man Christ Jesus (Mat. 4:13-16), nor yet in the double portion of the Holy Spirit, the former and the latter rain upon the end-time body of Christ, but in the light of seven days concentrated in one. Many are the figures of this coming sevenfold glory of Christ upon His people. When Jesus was on the Mount of Transfiguration, His face shone as the sun. Saul of Tarsus, on the road to Damascus, saw that brightness and was transformed.

In John's vision, an angel (symbolic of a company of saints) came down from heaven and the whole earth was illumined with His glory. (Rev. 18:1) We read of a woman, the Bride of Christ, clothed with the sun, having the moon under her feet. (Rev. 12:1) John saw one like unto the Son of Man, even Jesus, glorified in that body of sons who are conformed to His image, and of Him he witnessed, "His eyes were as a flame of fire... and His countenance was as the sun shining in his strength." (Rev. 1:14-16)

Looking forward to this day, Isaiah described the dawning of the revelation of God's glory, saying, "Then shall your light break forth as the dawning, and your health [restoration] shall spring forth speedily; your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your reward." (Isa. 58:8)

Solomon affirms: "... the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, that shines brighter and brighter until the full day." (Prov. 4:18) He also wrote poetically of this army of the Lord, "Who is she that looks forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." (SoS. 6:10) Who indeed! She is clearly the Bride of Christ.

The church of Jesus Christ must move out of the darkness of tradition, bondage, carnality, immaturity, and limitation and move into the bright light of the fullness of the glory of God. The history of the church is a tragic tale of darkness, sorrow, slavery, and oppression. But, thank God, the rays of promise are even now beginning to break forth from the heavens, and there is a small company of apprehended ones who are even now rising up into realms of Spirit to drink in the intoxicating freshness of the morn. To them God is witnessing that He shall bring forth a light that is sevenfold in its intensity. Nothing can be hidden from it, and its heat and brightness will consume and destroy every satanic power that opposes. Nothing short of this will lift up this sin-cursed world out of the dominion of darkness into the Kingdom of God's dear Son.

The early church with all its glory and power did not bring in the Kingdom. Its glory was eclipsed, producing that which even secular history records as the Dark Ages. The Reformation in Martin Luther's day was unable to bring the Kingdom in. All the mighty revivals of church history failed to deliver the travailing, groaning creation. The pentecostal and charismatic movements have not done so either, nor shall they. All the methods and programs of religion, all the missionary and evangelistic crusades, all the deliverance ministries and the healing campaigns, have failed to turn this old world around from its dogged path to destruction. Bible societies, the door-to-door witnessing campaigns, tons of gospel tracts, prayer meetings, and all the other feverish activities and promotions by the world's churches have not gotten the job done.

All of us are thankful to God for what we have known so far. We rejoice for every evidence of the power and glory of God today, and we are thankful to God for everyone who is demonstrating any measure of the life of God and accomplishing anything unto His glory. But to break the dominion of sin and Satan over the nations in this hour of desperate darkness and gloom, will require a sevenfold revelation of the fullness of God. God will send forth this sevenfold brightness of His light, life, glory, grace, wisdom, love, power, peace, and joy in His saints.

Scientists tell us that on earth, there is no greater purifying and life-giving power than sunlight. The brightness of the light of God will bring judgment upon all the evil of this wicked and adulterous generation, as well as clarification and quickening in the minds and souls of mankind.

I would not want to be a politician in the governments of the world today. Every day, more darkness and perplexity descends upon the minds and hearts of the people. None of the princes of this world have the answers. But, blessed be God! He has the answer! His answer is to arise within the body of Christ in the sevenfold brightness of His glory. When that glorious company of God's sons is manifested, then shall come to pass that of which our Lord spoke when He said, "The works that I do shall you do also, and [sevenfold] greater works than these shall you do." (Jn. 14:12)

### **Moving from Gifts to Fullness**

Isa. 11:2; Zech. 4:6; 1 Cor. 12:8-31; 13:8-10

I have observed in the ministry of Jesus that He never faced never a problem that He could not solve, never a need that He could

not meet, no victory He could not win, no realm of revelation or relationship to God that He could not possess. Some of us speak of the exploits we have done in Jesus' name, but we seldom mention all the times we fail. Some of us fast and pray to wrest an answer from the Lord and then run squarely into another problem that we can't solve at all. If Jesus, the firstborn Son, needed the seven Spirits of God, the Spirit without measure, then we as His body need Him too.

It is interesting to note that nowhere in the Gospels is the supernatural ministry of Jesus Christ ever associated with the gifts of the Spirit. It never says that Jesus received or used a gift of the Spirit. However, like most of us, I assumed that He did. And I could always make it fit. Every time Jesus healed someone, I assumed that He exercised the gift of healing, although the Scripture didn't say so. Every time He prophesied coming events, I said that He exercised the gift of prophecy, although the Scripture never said so. Every time He spoke to a "Nathaniel," revealing the secrets of his heart, I said that He spoke a "word of knowledge" although the Record says no such thing.

Now I have learned that I was wrong. How is it that Jesus did not move in the gifts of the Spirit? Because when you function in the gift realm, you function in limitation. Paul said of this gift realm, "Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know [the gift of knowledge] in part, and we prophesy [the gift of prophecy] in part. But when that which is perfect [the full measure, the seven Spirits] is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." (1 Cor. 13:8-10)

Yes, my friend, the gifts are all in part. The secret of the ministry of Jesus, then, was that it was not in part, not in limitation. In the realm of that which is limited, one cannot meet every need that arises. “Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts.” (1 Cor. 12:29-31) Does Paul say, “To the whole church is given the word of wisdom”? No, “To one [member of the body of Christ] is given the word of wisdom.” (1 Cor. 12:8) “To another the word of knowledge,” or faith, or healing, or prophecy, and so on. In other words, there is a distribution here, so that no one person has all the gifts.

How can you meet every need if you don’t possess all the gifts? And how can you meet every need, even in the area of the gift you do possess, if your gift is in part? You can’t! You can try, you can fast and pray, you can think positive, you can boast of your faith and inheritance in Christ, but you can’t meet every need, solve every problem, in the gift realm which is in part. In that realm, it is always just a word here, a miracle there, a healing here, a success there, and then a failure here, a disappointment there. But the ministry of Jesus was not in the gift realm, not in the realm of New Testament church economy. His was the ministry of a Son of God in all the power and glory of the Father by the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

For many years now, there has been a deep and widespread moving of the Spirit of God across the land and around the world. It has manifested itself through many men on many levels. We have witnessed great new evangelistic ministries, divine healing

ministries, a restoration of New Testament church orders with its five-fold ministry of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, the gifts of the Spirit, and even confirmation of these ministries through prophecy with the laying on of hands.

But I can testify to you that none of these ministries that we have witnessed have come within the range of the ministry of Jesus Christ. No matter which of the healing evangelists you watched; no matter what prophet you heard; no matter what miracle, sign, or wonder; it did not measure up to the ministry of the Son of God. We kept saying, “We have the same anointing, the same Holy Spirit, the same power, and we can do all the works Jesus did.” But as hard as we tried and as much as we wanted to believe it, it still just wasn’t true. We had the same anointing all right, and the same Holy Spirit, and the same divine power, but we had it by measure – not without measure as did Jesus.

This puzzled me for many years. Then one day, the Spirit drew my attention to Isaiah. “There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots; and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge and of the Fear of the Lord.” (Isa. 11:1-2)

This does not say that Jesus would receive the “gift” of “the word of wisdom.” It says He received the Spirit of Wisdom. It doesn’t say that Jesus received the “gift of healing” or a “gift of miracles.” He received instead, the Spirit of Might. Jesus didn’t get the “gift” of “a word of knowledge.” He was filled with the Spirit of Knowledge – not just a fragmentary word of wisdom here, or a

fragmentary word of knowledge there, or a gift of healing operating tonight and a gift of prophecy operating tomorrow night. No! Upon the firstborn Son rested all the fullness of the sevenfold Spirit of Sonship, even as Isaiah prophesied of Him, saying,

The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him,  
The Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding,  
The Spirit of Counsel and Might,  
The Spirit of Knowledge and of the Fear of  
the Lord.

This sevenfold Spirit of God is the fullness of the wisdom, glory, nature and power of God. This is the Spirit without measure. This is the seven Spirits of God. This is the sevenfold brightness of God's glory. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord." (Zech. 4:6)

This is why Jesus Christ could heal every disease, could cast out every kind of devil, could raise the dead – even after they were decayed and stinking – could discern every thought and intent of men's hearts, could command all the elements of nature, and even die and rise again from the dead.

Some of us have been able to do a very limited amount of this. Some of us have had a gift of healing and have healed some sick people, but who has healed them all, even in one meeting? I heard Oral Roberts admit that only about one out of every five people he laid hands upon received any discernible touch from God. Some of us have been miraculously healed ourselves, but who among us has been healed every time? Some of us have prophesied or received a word of knowledge, but who has had every word he has ever spoken actually come to pass?

Some of us have had miracles of supply: gas added to our gas tanks, batteries charged, money from unexpected sources, and so on. But who among us has walked on the sea or fed the five thousand with five loaves and two fishes? Some have had their faces lit by the joy of the Lord, but who has stood on the Mount of Transfiguration shining as the brightness of the noonday sun?

## **Fullness at the End of the Age**

Dan. 11:32; 12:4; Jn. 3:34-35; 20:21; Rom. 8:19;  
1 Cor. 13:9-12; 2 Cor. 1:21-23;  
Eph. 1:14; 2 Thes. 1:10

When we look out into the natural realm in this hour, at the end of the age, we see the natural man doing exploits. We see man in atomic powered submarines sailing under the polar ice caps, soaring through the skies faster than the speed of sound, or going out in space to explore distant planets. In fields of science and technology, man is accomplishing the incomprehensible and breaking the bonds of prior limitations. This was prophesied for our day. "But you, O Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, even to the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase." (Dan. 12:4) But that natural revolution is only a shadow of things to come in the spiritual. Why this sudden progress in the natural world? Because it is now time for a great change in the spiritual world.

Is the church of Jesus Christ to end this dispensation in failure and defeat? Is a little flock of faithful saints to undergo a sudden emergency "evacuation" by a "rapture" at the last moment just before the devil takes over the whole world? Not according to the Word of God.

Said Daniel of this day, “But the people who know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.” (Dan. 11:32) God is going to have a people who will be “fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.” Yes, a people who, in the darkness of this hour, shall “arise and shine” (Isa. 60:1-3) until nations come to their light and kings to brightness of their rising. Hallelujah!

Some folks are saying that the “rapture” is the next thing on the agenda, that God must deliver us out of this “mess,” and that Jesus may come at any minute. Well, you can forget about that. He’s not coming at any minute. Why? Because there are some important things that must yet be fulfilled before He can return for His Bride.

“But this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down on the right hand of God; waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made His footstool.” (Heb. 10:12-13) That doesn’t say that Jesus is going to come again and make His enemies His footstool. No, it says that He won’t come again until His enemies have been made His footstool.

Jesus has been on the throne as head of His body for two thousand years, expecting His body to put all enemies under His feet. The head is the first member of the body to come forth; the head gives direction to the body – but the body does the work. Jesus has been expecting His enemies to be put under His feet, and after two thousand years, it doesn’t look like His body is any closer to accomplishing this than in the beginning. But, praise His name, He is still seated at the right hand of God, and according to the Scriptures, He will stay right there in heaven until His enemies have become His footstool.

“And He shall send Jesus Christ... whom heaven must receive [retain] until the period of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient times.” (Acts 3:20-21) All right then, what is our job? Is it our job to pray for Him to come, or to go out and put all His enemies under our feet? Daniel prophesied of the end of the age: “These great beasts, which are four, are four kings [kingdoms] which shall arise out of the earth [Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, Rome]. But the saints of the Most High shall take the Kingdom, and possess the Kingdom from that time on forever, even forever and ever.” (Dan. 7:17-18) Those four kingdoms have come and gone. It is now time for the end-time body of Christ, that glorious company of God’s sons, the saints of the Most High, to arise, seize, and possess the Kingdom.

Only under the sevenfold intensified fullness of the Spirit of God, can this mighty work be accomplished. We must understand that the gifts of the Spirit, the earnest (down payment) of the Spirit “by measure” is given for the edification (building up) of the body of Christ and not for knocking Satan off his throne and bringing in the Kingdom of God. The gifts of the Spirit are only in the initial moving of the Spirit – the Spirit by measure.

“On every lofty mountain [kingdom], and on every high hill there shall be streams, rivers of water [flowing with the life-giving Spirit of Jehovah] in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers [principalities and powers of darkness] fall. Moreover the light of the moon [the church] shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun [Jesus and the sons of God] shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days.” (Isa. 30:25-26)

God intends for His sons to move into the fullness of the sevenfold Spirit of Sonship in these last days. "For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives not the Spirit by measure unto Him." (Jn. 3:34) Jesus Christ, the firstborn Son sent by the Father, was unlimited. Now He says, "As My Father has sent Me, so send I you." (Jn. 20:21) "For whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." (Rom. 8:29) In these last days, Jesus is not sending His servants of the church age, for every church, revival, movement, method, and effort has fallen short of putting all enemies under His feet and taking the Kingdom. They have all failed, for they have all been in part. No, He is sending His brethren, sons of the Father.

"For the earnest expectation of the creation awaits the manifestation of the sons of God." (Rom. 8:19) The only way for us to be the sons of God is for God to give us the Holy Spirit without measure. This belongs to those apprehended to be sons. This is the anointing which God will send in this hour.

How often we ask, "Why are we still faced with failure? Why have we been so limited?" I will tell you why. Every time we see a few more people saved, a few more people healed, a few more baptized in the Spirit, a few more gifts and manifestations of the Spirit in our midst, we think, "Praise God, this is great!" and we settle for it. All of us are so constituted. If you have just enough to show that you are still alive and that God is still working, you are satisfied. But I tell you now, God is withdrawing His power from the "in part" realm of spiritual gifts, because He has a greater plan for us.

God has limited us. He has weakened us and cut off the flow of deliverance, and is confronting us with intensified problems. He is even allowing trials and persecutions that we can't handle. We're beginning to realize, "O God, we can do nothing to meet the need. We are nothing as we ought to be. The situations are too great for us."

God is doing this that we might not trust any longer in our partial success, that we might not rest in the "in part" realm of the gifts of the Spirit, but that we shall cry out unto the Lord until He moves afresh in the earth and brings forth in us the sevenfold brightness of his glory.

### **What Can We Do?**

1 Jn. 3:3; 2 Tim. 2:21; Rev. 19:7

What can we do? "His wife [the Bride] has made herself ready." (Rev. 19:7) "And every man who has this hope in him purifies himself, even as He is pure." (1 Jn. 3:3) "If a man therefore purifies himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor." (2 Tim. 2:21)

God will have a people in this end of the age who will be as Noah: perfect in his generation. God is raising up a people in this hour who will turn aside from the hustle and bustle of Babylon's feverish activity, from the preoccupation with all that is "in part," to wait upon God, to sanctify Him in their hearts, so that when God moves afresh, He will have sons ready to show forth His glory.

Upon whom shall the Lord arise in the fullness of His intensified glory and power? We trust that it shall be upon you and me. Today our hearts expectantly cry, "O Lord, let that sevenfold brightness be revealed. Let the glory of the presence of God fill our lives and shine forth across the whole earth."

# Chapter 4 – The Characteristics of the Holy Spirit

## Introduction

In the last two chapters, we defined the seven Spirits of God from Scripture, and we discussed God's unlimited, measureless nature in comparison to the finite capacity of our human nature. We discovered His intent in imposing such serious limitations on our human nature, so that we would never be content with such a small measure of His gifts, His wisdom, or His power, but rather would continue to pursue Him for the fullness of His divine nature. In this chapter, we're going to make it a little more personal: to apply the powerful logical and scriptural truths of the previous three chapters into a focused, concerted effort to go beyond the mere mental acceptance of truth into the realm of actually thinking, believing, and receiving with the mind of the Spirit.

Remember back to the first chapter in which we wrote of the great truth of God's eternal purpose to dispense Himself, through Christ and in the seven-fold fullness of His Spirit, into man. We saw that God manifests Himself in the three aspects of His Person to accomplish this.

Electricity can be used to illustrate this three-fold operation of God. It also includes a source, a manifestation, and a realization. These seem to be three different things, but in reality, they are one thing: energy. We cannot actually see this energy, but we know it exists because we can see its source, its manifestation, and its realization.

Its source is the generator producing it. We see its manifestation in many different ways: the hot coils of the stove, the lighted filament in the light bulb, the running motor in the machine, and so on. And finally, there is the realization of electricity – light comes from the light bulb to fill the room, heat coming from the stove cooks our food, work is accomplished by the motor, saving us hours of labor. As you read by the light you don't think about the bulb on the ceiling or the generator miles away. You just enjoy the light in the room. But without electricity in the bulb, there is no light, and without the generator there is no electricity in the bulb.

As electric energy is revealed in three different aspects, so there is one eternal God with three distinct aspects. God the Father is the source of our divine life – the generator. God the Son is the manifestation of that divine life – the bulb filled with electricity. And God the Holy Spirit is the realization of the divine life – the light illuminating our "room" – our hearts, minds, and bodies.

The electricity from the generator is energy, the power manifesting in the bulb is energy, and the light filling the room is energy. Not three different energies, but the same energy. Likewise, the divine life in the Father is God, the divine life in the Son is God, and the divine life transmitted to us as the Spirit is God. Not three different gods, but one God. The Holy Spirit in us is the very transmission of God, transmitting all that God is, in Christ, to and through us.

## Our Need of the Spirit

1 Cor. 2:9-10; Rom. 8:14

The great work of God in bringing many sons to glory could not be properly considered, nor clearly understood, if the work of the Holy Spirit were overlooked or ignored. At His baptism, our Lord Jesus received the anointing influence of the Holy Spirit to begin His ministry. By the Holy Spirit, His consecrated heart was enabled to see clearly and distinctly the Father's will, the proper course of His life, and the narrow way of sacrifice. Jesus was enabled by the Holy Spirit to appreciate the exceeding great and precious promises, whose fulfillment lay beyond His humiliation, ignominy, and death at Golgotha. Only by the Holy Spirit, therefore, our elder Brother was enabled to perform His great work, being continuously guided, influenced, and empowered to do that which was pleasing and acceptable to the Father. In the same way and for the same reason, the Holy Spirit is identified with Christ's body, the church.

Only in proportion as we receive the Holy Spirit of God are we able to come into proper lines of fellowship with the Father and with the Son so as to be able to "prove that good and acceptable and perfect will of God," and do it. Only by the Holy Spirit are we guided beyond the mere letter of the Word, into the glorious and eternal reality of "the deep things of God," even the "things which God has in reservation for them that truly love Him, which human eye has not seen, human ear has not heard, neither has entered into the human heart to understand and appreciate." (1 Cor. 2:9-10) And only by the Holy Spirit do we become the "sons of God," "led by the Spirit of God." (Rom. 8:14)

## The Meaning of "Spirit"

Jn. 3:8; Gen. 1:2; 6:17; 7:15; 8:1, 21; 26:35; Ex. 15:8, 10; 1 Sam. 1:15; 10:10; 2 Chron. 9:3-4; Job 12:10; Ps. 115:6; 148:8; Eccl. 3:19; Isa. 7:2; 1 Cor. 14:12; 15:45; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Jn. 3:2; 4:1, 6; Rev. 13:15

It is our purpose in writing these truths to set forth in both depth and simplicity the awe-inspiring and marvelous things of the precious Spirit of God. It is beneficial to ask right at the outset, what do the words "Holy Spirit" mean, as used in the Scriptures? What qualities or characteristics of God are represented by the word "Spirit"? Can we even comprehend the meaning of "Spirit" with our human mental facilities?

In one sense, we must apologize at this point for even trying to understand "Spirit" with our minds. "... no one has known the things of God except the Spirit of God... A natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor. 2:11, 14) Even reading the Bible with our human understanding (as the scribes and Pharisees did) is no help. "... the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." (2 Cor. 3:6)

On the other hand, God does indeed convey truth and life to us by His Holy Spirit inspiration through words. How does He do it? "But we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit from God, that we may know the things freely given to us by God... we have the mind of Christ." (1 Cor. 3:12, 16) "The Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father shall send in My name, He shall teach you all things..." (Jn. 14:26) So the only way to understand the meaning of "Spirit" is to have the Holy Spirit teach us, by giving us the mind of Christ.

Let's pause to ask Him to do that now.

Heavenly Father, we acknowledge the inadequacy of our natural minds and we turn away from our own understanding. In Jesus's name, please fill us with Your Holy Spirit to teach us Your truth, and give us the mind of Christ that we might know and comprehend all that You have for us in this book. We love You and long to know You intimately, even as we are known by You.

Amen and Hallelujah!

Now, believing that He has answered our prayer, let us pursue the Scriptures with a new focus on understanding the meaning of "Spirit" by the Holy Spirit's inspiration to our new mind, the mind of Christ in us.

The word "spirit" in the Old Testament is a translation of the Hebrew word "ruach." The primary significance or root-meaning of this is wind. The word "spirit" in the New Testament comes from the Greek word "pneuma," whose primary significance or root-meaning likewise is wind. The English word "ghost" used in the King James Bible, though now somewhat obsolete and not in general use, is also derived from the Greek "pneuma." Its original meaning is exactly the same, meaning wind, air in motion.

But let no one hastily conclude that we are about to attempt to prove that the Holy Spirit is just a holy wind, for nothing could be farther from our thought! However, we desire to present this subject in a way that will be helpful both to the learned and the unlearned. So we begin by acknowledging the root-meaning of these words. That will help us discover how and why they were used in this connection.

There are two basic characteristics of the wind which qualify it to so fittingly serve as the supreme symbol of the Holy Spirit. Wind is a powerful force, but it is invisible. "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit." (Jn. 3:8) You cannot see wind, and yet you are aware of its reality because of its power. The visible effects of that power is all around you. The wind has been widely used as a source of energy. Even primitive men knew how to use sails on a boat. They built windmills to harness the wind to turn grindstones, pump water, and do many other kinds of work.

Because the wind is both invisible and powerful, the words "ruach" and "pneuma" gradually took on wider meanings. They came to represent any invisible power or influence, good or bad. Since God's power is exercised through channels and by agencies beyond human sight, this word "ghost" or "spirit" came more and more to be applied to all of the Lord's dealings and operations.

From there, it also came into common use in reference to such human influences as are invisible. For example, the power by which man lives, which is invisible, became designated "man's spirit," or "the breath of life." And the power of the mind, which also is invisible, is called "the spirit of the mind." Life itself is a power and is invisible, hence it also, even in animals and plants, was called "spirit" by the ancients. "They [the animals] went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath [ruach] of life." (Gen. 7:15) These all originate in Jesus, from the breath of His mouth, for He merely spoke the word and all things were created.

A few illustrations of these various uses of the Hebrew word “ruach” and the Greek word “pneuma” may be helpful. “Ruach” in the Old Testament is translated “blast” four times, “breath” twice, “mind” six times, “smell” eight times, “wind” or “windy” ninety-one times, and “spirit” many times. In every case, the thought behind this word is some invisible power or influence. Some samples of these translations of “ruach” are:

- “... and the Spirit [ruach] of God moved upon the face of the waters.” (Gen. 1:2)
- “... and the Spirit [ruach] of God came upon him mightily, and he prophesied among them.” (1 Sam. 10:10)
- “And Hannah answered... I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit [ruach].” (1 Sam. 1:15)
- “And when the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon... there was no more spirit [ruach] in her.” (2 Chron. 9:3-4)
- “At the blast [ruach] of Your nostrils the waters were gathered together...” (Ex. 15:8)
- “... all flesh wherein is the breath [ruach] of life...” (Gen. 6:17; 7:15)
- “In whose hand is the... breath [ruach] of all mankind.” (Job 12:10)
- “For that which befalls the sons of men befalls beasts... yes, they have all one breath [ruach]; so that a man has no preeminence.” (Eccl. 3:19)
- “Which was a grief of mind [ruach] unto Isaac...” (Gen. 26:35)
- “And the Lord smelled [ruach] a sweet savor...” (Gen. 8:21)
- “... Noses have they but they smell [ruach] not.” (Ps. 115:6)
- “... God made a wind [ruach] to pass over the earth...” (Gen. 8:1)
- “You, O Lord, did blow with Your wind [ruach]...” (Ex. 15:10)

- “... stormy wind [ruach] fulfilling His Word.” (Ps. 148:8)

- “... as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind [ruach].” (Isa. 7:2)

“Pneuma” in the New Testament (besides “ghost” and “spirit”) is translated “life,” “spiritual,” and “wind,” as follows:

- “To give life [pneuma] to the image of the beast...” (Rev. 13:15)
- “... you are zealous of spiritual [pneuma] gifts...” (1 Cor. 14:12)
- “The wind [pneuma] blows where it wishes and you hear its sound ...” (Jn. 3:8)

From this can be seen that when the Scriptures declare that God is Spirit (e.g. John 4:24), they reveal that God is a powerful and invisible Being. Angels are also called spirits. They too are powerful and usually invisible to men. Jesus, as a man, was not called a spirit being, but ever since His exaltation, it is written of Him, “the last Adam was made a quickening [life-giving] Spirit.” (1 Cor. 15:45) “Now the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” (2 Cor. 3:17) Jesus is now the all-powerful God, the invisible Spirit. The sons of God are promised a complete change of nature and being, to the likeness of our Lord, as it is written, “Beloved now are we the sons of God, and... we know that... we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” (1 Jn. 3:2)

Satan and the devils under his control are also called spirits, for they too work their power from the invisible realm. Therefore the Word commands us to test, try, or prove the spirits. “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world... Hereby know we the Spirit of Truth, and the spirit of error.” (1 Jn. 4:1, 6)

## **Spirit Is Energy**

Rom. 14:17; Eph. 2:1-3; 6:12

“Spirit” is used not only of personality, but also of the virtues, disposition, attitudes, mind, will, and influences of a personality. For example, you exist as a personality, but inherent within your personality are all of your faculties, attitudes, abilities, and so on. These characteristics are all a part of what makes you, you – you would not be you without them. In fact, it is quite impossible to differentiate between two people without contrasting their various characteristics. You are able to express yourself or influence the world around you only through exercising the characteristics of your personality.

We must understand that life (spirit) is also energy. As a living personality, you are energy. Energy has many forms, but it is not something that you can see or hold in your hand. You can think of energy as something that can make things change. For example, a massive moving object has kinetic energy – it can change things by crashing into them. Heat is another form of energy. It is also a sort of motion – disorderly motion of atoms and molecules that make up all materials. Heat can melt ice or boil water. It can power the engines of cars or planes. Another kind of energy is called chemical energy, residing in the coal or oil we burn for heat. It is also in the food that nourishes your body and gives you the energy to keep you active. There is the energy carried by light waves, called electromagnetic energy. Light waves, streaming out of the sun, carry energy to us across many miles of space. When the light hits the earth, part of it changes to heat. Then there is atomic energy which can be split from the atoms of some materials.

Another kind of energy which we, the people of God, are aware of is spirit energy. In physics, energy is known as the capacity for doing work. The Greek word for energy is “*energeia*.” This word is used in the Greek New Testament several times. Because of the association between “doing work” and “energy,” the word is generally translated “working.” Since so much has been learned about energy in recent years, it would now be better to translate the word for just what it actually means – energy.

Let’s look at a few Scriptures: “... that you may know... what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working [*Greek: energeia – energy*] of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead.” (Eph. 1:18-20) Yes, it was God’s energy which raised Christ from the dead. The Record further states that He was raised up by the Spirit of God. And not only did Paul say that it was God’s energy which raised Christ up, but he went on to insist (Eph. 3:7), that it was that same energy of God which transformed his own life and made of him a minister of Jesus Christ. “Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working [*energeia, energy*] of His power.” Then on top of this, Paul declares that it is this spirit energy of God which is working within us to bring us unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. “From whom [Christ] the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working [*energy*] in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” (Eph. 4:16)

Finally, this energy of God shall so work in us, shall so change us, that we shall be changed even in the atomic structure of our bodies. “Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working [energeia, energy] whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.” (Phil. 3:21) Spirit is energy. It can exerting a force, an influence, upon our lives. God is the supreme and ultimate source of all energy.

These principles show us that God is a Spirit Being, possessing Spirit characteristics and exerting Spirit influences. Influences of God are no less God than is the Person of God. The characteristics of God, His nature, virtues, attributes, power, mind, and so on, are no less God than is the Person of God. God is supreme energy – able to influence and change all things! But the characteristics and influences of God are likewise energy, spirit energy. The Bible declares that God is love. It doesn’t say that God has love, but God is love. This is His nature. Did you know that love is energy? You won’t have to think about that very long to realize that it is true. Love is invisible, like the wind, but it is powerful! It is a force that can influence and change things. And love can be transmitted, invisibly, from person to person, even as light rays are transmitted from the sun to the earth. The qualities of love can be received and absorbed by those around us even as the life-giving qualities of the sun are absorbed and utilized by every living thing on earth.

“For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.” (Rom. 14:17) Do you believe peace is real? What does it look like? Is it round? Is it square? Can you measure it?

Can you buy a bottle full of peace? No! Peace is invisible, isn’t it? And peace is also powerful. So Peace is also spirit. And spirit is energy. You know when peace is present. You can sense peace, experience peace, speak peace, manifest peace, minister peace.

How about joy? You cannot put joy in your pocket or roll it up like a wad of bills. But can joy be found in the world today? Can we attain joy, individually? Yes, joy is real. Joy is spirit. Joy is energy.

What is righteousness? Is there any righteousness on this earth? Righteousness is living right, right attitude, right motive, a desire to right living according to God’s standard. When you receive a new spirit, the right spirit (the Holy Spirit) you are destined to right living – to righteousness. It is only attainable on this earth now because of the right spirit, the Holy Spirit, God’s Spirit.

I have good news! You can receive a new spirit, a new energy, the Holy Spirit, and as a result, attain a walk in right living, a walk in righteousness. This is what God is.

The above characteristics all qualify as spirit for they are realities which are both invisible but powerful. They also all qualify as energy for they are forces that can make things change. How we need a receptivity to these influences in the world today! Thank God, He is opening up such a receptivity in a first-fruits company of His chosen ones in this hour. If there were no receptivity in the trees, flowers, and shrubs, we would have nothing but desert around us. Plants spring to life because of their quiet receptivity of the energy of the sunlight and the rain. What they receive, they utilize. That is why the most basic function of all creation, animate and inanimate, is receptivity.

Our basic function is the same – simply to receive of that essence of God, bountifully poured into us through the Spirit!

Likewise, the Word teaches that Satan is a spirit being; he possesses an un-holy spirit mind, disposition, nature, and will, and he exercises an un-holy spirit influence. Satan is also energy – misdirected and used negatively, destructively. “At one time... you were following the course and fashion of this world... following the prince of the power of the air. You were obedient to him and were under his control, the demon spirit that still constantly works [Greek: *energeo*] in the sons of disobedience... For we are not wrestling with flesh and blood – contending only with physical opponents – but against the despotisms, against the powers, against the master spirits who are the world rulers of this present darkness, against spirit forces of wickedness in the heavenly [supernatural] sphere.” (Eph. 2:2; 6:12, AMP)

These verses forever expose the error of those who ignore the personality of Satan and his associated wicked spirits, believing that there is no evil being, and that man merely contends with his own carnal nature and mind. They are like those who reach the conclusion that there is no personal God, but merely good influences which they claim are inherent in man and are gradually being evolved to perfection. But you cannot have virtues, mind, or will without personality, nor can you have personality without these characteristics! Both the personality and the characteristics of God (and the personality and characteristics of the devil) are called “Spirit” in the Bible. Both are invisible. Both are powerful. Both are energy. Both can be transmitted. And both can change things.

## **Characteristics of the Spirit**

“Spirit” can be used to describe ideas, thoughts, attitudes, desires, mind, will, and all such characteristics. This is illustrated by a story I read recently. An elder was telling of a young lad in a certain congregation of the Lord’s body. This boy was a member of a little league, and a devotee of baseball. When the World Series ran, he came to the church meeting dressed in a baseball outfit, with a glove on one hand and a radio in the other. His pocket was stretched by a ball. He didn’t hear the message. His ear was glued to that radio. He refused to miss one word of the announcer’s description of the game. Now, that boy was filled with the spirit of baseball. He talked baseball, thought baseball. He even took his bat to bed. It was all he cared about. It was his life.

As I write, “equal rights” is a big issue in our land. Some people are filled with the spirit of equal rights. They are consumed with a desire to petition, lecture, organize, march. Nothing else matters. They eat, sleep, and dream equal rights. Their money, time, talents, and energies are exhausted as they pour themselves into the struggle for equal status for whatever group they feel is oppressed. These people are filled with a “righteous indignation” at the injustices in the world. It controls the thinking, attitudes, and disposition of multitudes of citizens.

Perhaps now we can understand what it really means to be filled with the Holy Spirit. It means to not only be filled with the Person and presence of the Holy Spirit of God, but also with the characteristics of the Spirit: His nature, will, mind, ways, virtues, disposition, purpose, desire and so on. Too many Christians settle for something far less.

In some circles it is popular to be a “Spirit-filled” or “charismatic” Christian. But truly I say to you that multitudes have settled for some superficial experience of “tongues,” or some “gift,” or “feeling,” and have never even dreamed of what it means to be literally filled with every characteristic of the divine nature and power of God!

There is nothing wrong with the gift of tongues, as far as it goes. But being filled with the Holy Spirit must do far more for us than cause us to repeat some “gibberish” or to become ecstatic in our emotions. To be filled with the Spirit means to be filled with all that the Spirit is. Jesus was so filled, for He possessed the Spirit “without measure.” And Paul prayed for the saints that they may “... be filled with all the fullness of God.” (Eph. 3:19) This fullness without measure is reserved for those whom God has called to be His end-time overcomers, His Bride.

I cannot overemphasize the importance of this! Let us take a closer look at some of the characteristics of the Holy Spirit. He is called, “the Spirit of God,” “the Spirit of the Father,” “the Spirit of Christ,” “the Spirit of Holiness,” “the Spirit of Truth,” “the Spirit of a Sound Mind,” “the Spirit of Liberty,” “the Spirit of Burning,” “the Spirit of Meekness,” “the Spirit of Grace,” “the Spirit of Promise,” “the Spirit of Glory,” “the Spirit of Counsel,” “the Spirit of Adoption,” “the Spirit of Prophecy,” “the Spirit of Understanding,” “the Spirit of Wisdom,” and so on. These various titles, often repeated and used interchangeably, give us full assurance that they all relate to the same Holy Spirit. Frequently the word “Holy” is combined, as for instance, “the Holy Spirit of God,” “the Holy Spirit of Promise,” and so on.

These various expressions describe the nature, disposition, power, and glory of God our Father, who is Spirit. They are also the nature, disposition, power, and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, the full expression of the Father into our realm. Likewise, it is the nature and disposition of all those who are truly His, in proportion as they have come into oneness or harmony with Him.

Each of these characteristics is a form of the energy of God. This energy can be transmitted to us, to produce its power in us, as electricity is transmitted from a battery to a light bulb. When the “Spirit of Holiness” is transmitted to us, we receive God’s holiness, thus becoming holy. When the “Spirit of Wisdom” is transmitted to us, we cease our natural reasonings and begin to think and act according to the higher wisdom of God.

Another opposing spirit is mentioned frequently throughout Scripture. It is called “the spirit of fear,” “the spirit of bondage,” “the spirit of the world,” the “foul [unclean] spirit,” “the spirit of slumber,” “the spirit now working in the sons of disobedience,” “the spirit of error,” “the spirit of antichrist,” “the spirit of jealousy,” and “the spirit of lawlessness.” This does not imply different Satans (though he has many demons). These terms signify in general the evil spirit – the nature, disposition, power, and will which emanates from Satan as its chief head; the same spirit manifesting itself in all who are receptive to his influence of darkness and sin. (Eph. 2:1-3) These are all characteristics of the one satanic spirit, even as “holiness,” “truth,” “love,” and “life” are characteristics of the one Holy Spirit. All are characteristics and influences of personality, invisible and powerful. All are spirit. All are energy.

## How Spirit Influences

Prov. 23:7; Isa. 26:3; Jn. 13:2; Acts 26:18;  
Rom. 1:29-31; 2 Cor. 4:3-4; 10:4-5; Gal. 5:22-23;  
Eph. 4:23; 6:11; Phil. 4:8; Col. 3:1-2; James 4:7

This gives us a wonderful understanding of the workings of spirit. We see that there are two invisible but very real spiritual forces in this world in which we live. You and I are the vessels in which they operate, through which they express themselves. Their power is spiritual power or influence.

The negative power, who is Satan, is an influence toward sin and unrighteousness, of deception and rebellion. This satanic energy permeates the very atmosphere around each of us. He is indeed the “prince of the power of the air.” But more than that, he is also the spirit that works within those who are lost. Of this spirit-influence Paul says, “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them who are lost, in whom the god of this world has blinded their minds.” (2 Cor. 4:3-4) This influence is clearly upon the mind of man. That is how we may be tempted, deceived, or overcome. “To open their eyes and turn them from darkness [perverted knowledge, a darkened mind and understanding] to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.” (Acts 26:18) “Supper being ended, the devil having now put it in the heart [mind, desire] of Judas Iscariot, to betray Him [Jesus]...” (Jn. 13:2)

Scripture declares that Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. (Mat. 4:1) How often, with our childish and immature understanding, have we pictured Jesus being confronted by that legendary figure in the red suit, with horns on his head and a pitchfork in his hand! But this is nothing but foolishness, for Satan is a spirit, and spirit is invisible to human sight.

How often have you been tempted of the devil? Can you count the times? How many times has he spoken to you, enticing, suggesting, compelling? Have you ever seen him or audibly heard his voice? Probably not. And yet, you have heard his voice, you have sensed his presence, and you have felt his power! It was all in your mind and in your emotions. How often our Lord speaks in the same way: the “still small voice,” the inner knowing, the hunger, the confidence, the awesome sense of His presence, though all totally apart from our natural senses. Just because it is in our mind, does not mean that it is merely imagination or hallucination!

The activity of the mind is primarily in the area of thoughts. Thoughts are very real. Thoughts are spiritual realities, transmitted energy, coming upon you through the gate of your mind. This energy is transmitted into your mind to cause you to act or react in a certain way. Thoughts do have an objective! You need to learn the objectives of the thoughts entering your mind. Every decision that you have ever made or ever will make has its origin in the invisible spiritual realm. Whatever thoughts come to us will have the characteristics of the spirit force influencing us. These are some of the characteristics that may accompany Satan and his demons: “... unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, malice, envy, jealousy, strife, murder, deceit; they are gossips, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful.” (Rom. 1:29-31) What a list! Search your own mind. Stop and think! Are any of your thoughts carrying these characteristics?

If so, then you know they come from Satan, the author of deceit and death. If you allow them to remain in your mind, you will tend to grow in the nature of Satan. Little wonder that we are exhorted to “put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” (Eph. 6:11) And, “Submit yourselves therefore to God; resist the devil, and He will flee from you.” (James 4:7) Yielding to God, setting your will to chose His ways of righteousness, and at the same time resisting Satan’s evil influence on your thoughts and rejecting his wicked ways, blocks Satan’s schemes and forces him to channel his energy in another direction.

“Be renewed in the spirit of your mind.” (Eph. 4:23 ) Commenting on this verse, a brother has written: “Note that it reads: in the spirit of our mind, for this is far more than just mental gymnastics of our own self-efforts. It is the energizing of His Spirit into us which in turn takes dominion over our mind and brings our mind into subjection to the Spirit of Truth. There are beneficial results in the power of positive thinking, even on natural realms. But true transformation comes when it is in the spirit of your mind. O Lord, may it become the norm of our life to just be thinking Your thoughts because of the enlargement of Your Spirit force within us!” Amen!

Now let us list some characteristics of the spirits (thoughts) which come from God. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” (Gal. 5:22-23) Thoughts carrying these characteristics come from God, the Author of life. Living with any one of these characteristics will cause you to become more like God, for they are

spirit energy producing the power of God’s divine nature in your life. What frame of mind do you find yourself living in much of the time? Think now! Is it creative, virtuous, joyful, loving, confident, life-giving, humble, moderate, peaceful? Or is it hateful, proud, self-centered, intolerant, angry, discouraged, depressed, frustrated, fearful? You are what you are because of what you have been thinking! You are constantly entertaining and being influenced by thoughts which originate in the spirit realm. Thoughts, like the wind, just “blow” into your mind. They are energy, motivating, directing, and even compelling your actions. They are powerful invisible forces that shape your destiny!

“For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.” (Prov. 23:7) “You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You.” (Isa. 26:3 ) “If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things [thoughts] which are above [godly] where Christ sits on the right hand of God. Set your affections [thoughts] on things above [heavenly], not on things on the earth.” (Col. 3:1-2) “Finally, brethren whatsoever things [thoughts] are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” These things are all thoughts. (Phil. 4:8)

This we can do, praise God, “... for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations [thoughts], and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” (2 Cor. 10:4-5)

## **You Can Minister Spirit!**

Acts 1:8; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 3:6-9; Gal. 5:22-23

“Who also has made us able [qualified, competent] ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.... If the ministration of death... was glorious... how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be even more glorious?” (2 Cor. 3:6-9)

As we discussed in chapter 1, these verses contain two very important phrases, “Who has made us able ministers of the New Testament... of the Spirit” and “the ministration of... Spirit.”

We have seen that the New Testament is not the black, leather covered book called the Bible. This book is what Paul calls “the letter.” It is the law, the record, the history, the form, which tells us many things about the historical man called Jesus. The twenty-seven books called the New Testament are merely the guide given to point us to the true New Testament: Jesus, the Christ of God.

Our text says that God has made us able ministers of the New Testament. To minister the New Testament does not mean to minister sermons, doctrines, laws, or facts about Jesus Christ. To minister the New Testament is to minister the very life of God, which is in Christ in the Spirit. “He has made us able ministers of... the Spirit.” The word “minister” means: to serve, impart, give out, guide, or wait on. As a member of the new creation, you have been called and empowered to be an able (capable) minister of the New Testament, of the Spirit of God!

You may say, “Who, me? A minister of the Spirit? Why, I can’t even testify without stuttering and my knees knocking! How can I ever be an able minister of the Spirit?”

We know how to minister tangible things. Your hands wash and clothe your body, minister food to your mouth, salve to sore muscles, and medicine to an infection. This is not hard to understand. But how can a person minister Spirit? We minister Spirit when we share with others what the Spirit is within us. As we walk in the attitude and will of God, we speak His words, impart His thoughts, and manifest His nature, resulting in a transmission of Spirit energy, influence, and power to energize those around us.

How can we describe the Spirit which comes into us at the time of our baptism in the Holy Spirit? We can describe the fruit of the apple tree by the characteristics of the apple, i.e. color, juiciness, crispness, stem, core, seeds, and so on. The characteristics make up the description of what an apple is. Similarly, we may describe the Holy Spirit in terms of the virtues or attributes of the Spirit. “... the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” (Gal. 5:22-23) Here are nine individual realities which are invisible to the natural eye, yet we know they exist, for like the wind we can observe their influence and effect. They are therefore spirit, energy.

What kind of fruit does a natural tree bear? You will answer, “Natural fruit, of course.” That is right. In nature everything produces “after its kind.” Apples produce apples, humans produce humans, monkeys produce monkeys, dogs produce dogs, and so on. If natural trees produce natural fruit, what kind of fruit should we expect from Spirit? The answer is simple: Spirit fruit! The fruit must be of the very same nature and substance as that which produced it.

God is Spirit. It follows that the fruit of the Spirit is also Spirit as much as the Spirit which produces it. To minister the Spirit, therefore, means nothing more nor less than to minister the virtues of the fruit of the Spirit. It does not mean to minister the letter of the Word, or give pronouncements of judgment, or preach sermons, or convince people by doctrinal arguments, or claim that they are wrong, ungodly, or under God's condemnation. No! That is all the ministry of the letter which kills. We are called to minister the Spirit which produces life.

God is not complicated. God is love. Love is not complicated. It has no problem communicating, influencing, ministering. When those around us are discouraged and distraught, we can minister encouragement to them by our words, attitudes, and deeds. When people around are sad and distraught, we minister joy unto them as ministers of Spirit. In the presence of fear or anxiety we speak confidence and faith. Our enemies who hate us receive love in return. When men curse us, we do good to them, bless them. When our friends feel lost, when they are doubting and frustrated, we manifest such peace and trust that will lift them from the gloom of despair into faith and victory. In the midst of strife, we are peacemakers. In the face of confusion, we offer wisdom and counsel. This is how we minister Spirit.

Don't think, dear friend, that in order to thus minister you must speak idle words, or put on a front, or exert some self-effort to impress someone. We are not speaking of Dale Carnegie's self-help plan to win friends and influence people, which is hypocritical, from the fleshly realm. But you do have the right to know that at the entrance of the

Holy Spirit of God into your life, all the virtues and abilities of the Spirit actually became resident within you. By recognizing and acknowledging this life and power of the Spirit within, we are enabled at any and all times to appropriate it for ourselves and to minister its reality to all whom the Father directs. "But you shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. And you shall be My witnesses..." (Acts 1:8)

Never forget, dear Reader, that all of the virtues and characteristics of the Holy Spirit are Spirit, and therefore are energy – power! In the areas of will, attitude, or mind there is always a transmission of energy. Haven't you noticed one person's attitude "rub off" onto another? If one begins complaining, soon everyone is complaining. If one gets argumentative, soon everyone is in a heated argument. Or, a group of people may feel frustrated or hopeless in a situation, and just one person can enter the room with a smile on his face, radiating the attitude of confidence and faith, speak a positive word of encouragement and victory, and soon the whole atmosphere is charged with this new expectation. The spirit of the entire group is raised up into hope and anticipation. What is this? It is the work of spirit. It is invisible, intangible energy – power! Invisible, but very real and very powerful.

In this world, a definite transference of spirit energy constantly flows from person to person. It can be positive or negative. The success of false religions, communism, rock music, immorality, and so on, are the direct result of negative satanic spirit influence transmitted to the masses through ministers of unrighteousness who are filled with and thus transmitters of the un-holy spirit.

I must make one thing very clear. In the final analysis, we only perceive two sources of spirit energy: from God or through the devil. If I am sowing discord among the brethren or proclaiming some false doctrine of “free love” in order to seduce beautiful young Christian girls to commit adultery, then the energy flow is satanic, corrupting, death producing. On the other hand, if my friend is depressed and discouraged and I speak a word of faith in love from the Lord, lifting him out of despair and bondage into the liberty of the Spirit, then the energy flow is from the Holy Spirit within me.

Many have believed in a third primary source of spirit energy: the human soul. The field of psychology pertains to the human soul. What is psychology? The word itself comes from two Greek words, “psyche” meaning soul and “logia” meaning study. Psychology is the science (study) of the soul. The soul is the human identity, personality.

The word “psychic” refers to one who works with “soul-power.” Most so-called “psychics” want you to believe that they are scientific rather than religious or occultic. Like psychics, psychologists try to convince you that most of what you think or do is completely amoral, neither good nor evil, like deciding whether to wear blue socks or brown. “It is your own personal preference,” they say, “and has no eternal significance either way. You just do whatever feels good and don’t feel guilty about it.” This is far too expansive a subject to really cover here; indeed, it would take an entire book in itself. But I assure you that there is a very grave deception in that kind of thinking, and it may have serious consequences for any who submit to such psychologists or psychics.

Either Jesus Christ is my Lord or He is not. If He is my Lord (and He is), then I do all things as unto Him. (1 Cor. 10:31) My basic motivation in even the smallest thought or deed is to find and do His perfect will for me at that instant. If He is not my Lord (God forbid!), then I live for self, having as my basic motivation seeking my own pleasure, acceptance, healing, and yes, even eternal life. I can be very religious and still have that basic self-for-self motivation. I could give all my possessions to feed the poor and give my body to be burned, but if I have not that self-giving love (which alone is truly divine love) then I am worthless. (1 Cor. 13:3)

The fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is still bad fruit, even when we choose the good, because it is the human self making the choice, rather than our Lord and King. The serpent was absolutely right when he said, “... you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” But, typical of Satan, he didn’t tell the whole truth. He should have admitted, “Yes, you will be like God, setting yourself up in contention with Him for the lordship over your life, knowing just enough about what is good or evil to make your own self-centered choices in life. And I (ahem) will be right there to guide you into all the depravity I’ve planned for you!”

Another has said it well, “Belief in an independent human nature is Satan’s lie and the root of sin. Non-Christians are really Satan-indwelt, expressing his lusts (Jn. 8:44), just as we have come to learn that Christians are Christ-indwelt, expressing His righteousness. (2 Cor. 6:16) Humans have no moral nature of their own, meaning that we are simply expressions of the indwelling deity nature, either of Christ or Satan.

“The human soul is an empty vessel created to be filled with spirit. In every case it is either filled by choice with the Spirit of God, or filled by choice with the spirit of Satan (which is overt rebellion against God), or deceived into believing that it is operating independently from either God or Satan, in which case, it has believed the lie first given to Eve in the Garden of Eden.”

A few examples before we move on. If I am trying to convince my six-year-old daughter that she should eat her vegetables for her own health's sake, one might say that I am exerting “soul power,” the influence, energy, or power of the human personality. Neither the Spirit of God nor the spirit of Satan are in direct operation here, they say. However, God judges not according to the outward appearance, but according to the heart. What is the heart motivation here? If my motivation is really a godly love and concern for her health and well-being, then the Spirit of God is operating in and through me to influence her. But if instead my basic motivation is, “She is my daughter; I want her to be healthy so she will look nice and I can be proud of her (not to mention so I can avoid the future medical bills)” then I am operating under that deceptive spirit of error which expresses itself as the “self-nature,” but is really Satan's own nature of rebellion against God and setting myself up as my own god. Even Peter, shortly after he had been commended for his revelation of Jesus as the Messiah, was literally called Satan when he (humanly, logically) opposed Jesus' crucifixion. (Mat. 16:23)

A doting parent will often think, “Oh, my Eddy is an innocent little angel; he was simply born with an unusually strong will.”

I've got bad news for you, young parent. Your “innocent little strong-willed angel” is filled with the satanic spirit of self-centered rebellion. Eddy was born with it all right; he inherited it from Adam. But it will still have to be crucified and buried with Christ at Golgotha before Eddy can ever be set free to walk with the sons of God. It is sad that so much of the devil's operations are called “psychic,” “soulish,” or merely “normal human nature,” thus deluding and deceiving multitudes of people into believing that it is ordinary soul power or the power of the human personality instead of Satan power.

The point we wish to emphasize here is that you have the unique potential to be a transmitter of the life-giving energy of God here and now. You will minister spirit, one way or another, but you can minister Holy Spirit! All the nature and character of God can be transferred through you to the world around you, thus producing harmony and reconciliation with God.

God in Christ is in us, transforming our character into His own, making it possible for us to consciously impart and share with others His virtues. Since we are the sons of our Father, the sons of God upon this earth, our responsibility now is to allow our bodies to become His vessels, the channels for God's life and glory to affect the world. God purchased us with the blood of His dear Son that we might become His expression to the whole universe. “What? Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own? For you are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.” (1 Cor. 6:19-20)

## **The Senses of the Holy Spirit**

1 Cor. 2:9-14; Rom. 8:7

The natural man judges his affairs by his five senses – sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste. But these five natural senses are subject to the influence and control of the spirit of error (lies – Satan the deceiver), for “the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Cor. 2:14) Also “... to be carnally minded is death... because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be.” (Rom. 8:6-7)

So these five senses of the natural man are not sufficient for the members of the new creation. They need other senses whereby to apprehend spiritual things, which cannot be seen, felt, tasted, heard, or smelled by the human organism. The Lord has provided for this through the Holy Spirit. So “... eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man [by any natural sense of perception] the things which God has in reservation for those who love Him – but God has revealed them unto us [the “new creation”] by His Spirit; for the Spirit searches out [discerns] all things, yes the deep things of God.” (1 Cor. 2:9-14)

The Holy Spirit does indeed possess all the senses that mankind possesses, except in that higher and purer realm of divine Spirit. When we are born of Spirit, every element of the Spirit’s personality, including the five senses of God, becomes an element of the personality of our new-creation man, our new life and nature in Christ. Thus we have a complete set of the five additional spiritual senses, corresponding to our physical senses.

Gradually, as we are quickened to become aware of these senses, “the eyes of our understanding” open wider and wider to the things not seen by the natural eye; by degrees the hearing of faith increases until every good promise of God is established as truth within; in time we come into touch with the Lord and His invisible powers; little by little, we taste and see that the Lord is good, full of grace, mercy, and truth; after a time, we come to appreciate and enjoy those sacrifices and incense-prayers and praises which are of sweet odor to the Lord. Just as the natural senses can be cultivated, so can the spiritual senses. It is the cultivation of these spiritual senses that marks our growth in grace – our development as sons of God – maturing in the glory and honor of the divine nature in Christ.

Since our baptism in the Holy Spirit, we are literally “plugged in” to God’s unlimited energy supply. Though this energy of the Spirit is invisible, its effects are tangible and visible. This can be illustrated by the electric power in your home’s wiring. The power is invisible, but when the cord is plugged into the outlet and the switch is turned on, the power manifests itself in the function of the appliance on the other end of the cord. The same power produces light from the lamp, heat from the stove, sound from the radio, pictures in the television, and so on. All of these, and many more, are the blessings of having electricity in your home. So the Holy Spirit is God’s spiritual power, which moves, enlightens, regenerates, transforms, renews, leads, instructs, and strengthens all who, having a proper relationship of open-hearted submission within themselves, are brought into connection with it.

*“The heav’ns declare Your glory, Lord  
Through all the realms of boundless space.  
The soaring mind may roam abroad,  
And there Your power and wisdom trace.*

*“Author of nature’s wondrous laws,  
Preserver of its glorious grace,  
We hail You as the great First Cause,  
And here delight Your ways to trace.*

*“By faith we see Your glory now,  
Receive Your wisdom, love and grace;  
In praise and adoration bow,  
Rejoice to see Your glorious face.*

*“Emptied of self and filled with thee,  
Dead to self – and so dead to sin,  
Spirit of God abide in me;  
Spirit divine, come reign within!*

*“In Christ, when all things are complete  
Things in earth and things in heav’n  
The heav’ns and earth shall be replete  
With Your high praises, ever given.”*

# Chapter 5 – The Spirit of Jehovah

## Introduction

Everything in the Old Testament given to Israel is for our instruction. (1 Cor. 10:11) For example, a study of the priesthood of Israel is valuable, as it wonderfully typified and foreshadowed that there would come forth into the world a Spirit-anointed body of people, a royal company of king-priests, to bring the redemptive blessings of the Kingdom of God to all families of the earth.

Under the law, priests were installed to their service in an “anointing” ceremony. For this purpose, they used “holy anointing oil.” This was a special ointment used only upon the priests. Everyone else was strictly prohibited from having it. (Ex. 30:25-33, 38) This oil typifies the Holy Spirit of adoption whereby the saints, the real (antitypical) “royal priesthood,” are sealed as the sons of God. Only the consecrated ones, the priests, are ever to be thus anointed.

The apostle Peter revealed who were typified by the Aaronic priesthood, when, addressing those who were consecrated and separated unto the purposes of God, he said, “... by the sanctifying work of the Spirit... You are... a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ... You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a special people for God’s own possession, that you may show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of the darkness and into His marvelous light.” (1 Peter 1:2; 2:5, 9)

The head (High Priest) of this priesthood is the Lord Jesus. “Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling [as priests], consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.” (Heb. 3:1) Aaron, the typical high priest, represented Jesus, the head. But Aaron also represented the entire priesthood, which is typified by the church as members of Christ’s body. Thus the Aaronic priesthood as a whole is a type, and Jesus, both head and many-membered body, is the antitype.

As Aaron had the holy oil poured upon his head (Ex. 29:7; 30:23-33), so the Lord Jesus, our head, was anointed with the antitypical oil – the Holy Spirit – when He was thirty years of age, at the Jordan, at the time of His manifestation as the Son of God. There He was “anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows” – as head over all who would become His joint-heirs, the church.

Subsequent to this anointing, Jesus was able to stand in the synagogue in Nazareth and read, “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the Lord has anointed Me...” (Isa. 61:1) and declare to His hearers, “This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears!” John testified of that anointing of the Spirit upon Jesus that it was “without measure,” in fullness, unlimited. (Jn. 3:34 ff) Peter adds his testimony, “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him.” (Acts 10:38)

It is important to note that in the Old Testament type, the holy anointing oil was poured only on the head of the high priest. Other priests were not anointed individually. They were recognized as members of the high priest's body, receiving their anointing only in him as their head. Hence also the antitypical priests of the royal priesthood are merely partakers of the Spirit and anointing of Christ. There is only one anointing. All who are "in Christ Jesus" are partakers of His anointing, which seals all those who will be recognized as the heirs of God's promises and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord.

The oil "ran down... to the skirts of his [the high priest's] garments," (Ps. 133:2) thus representing how all the members of Christ's body are to be partakers of the very same anointing after their head. And so we read, "The anointing which you have received of Him abides in you." (1 Jn. 2:27) The oil began to reach the body on the day of Pentecost, and flowed on down through the church age, anointing all who are baptized into Christ as king-priests unto God.

When all the members, the complete "seed of Abraham," come into this glorious body of sons, when the "holy anointing oil" runs down "to the skirts of His garments," bringing the full measure of His glory and power to each member, then will begin that great "manifestation of the sons of God" for which the whole creation is groaning. (Rom. 8:14-23) The kingly and priestly ministry of this many-membered company of sons shall usher in an age of deliverance and blessing on all the earth. For the glorious reign of this royal High Priest, head and body, we pray, "Your Kingdom come! Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven!"

## The Spirit of Jehovah

Gen. 17:15-16; Ex. 3:13-14; Isa. 11:1-9; 61:1;  
Mal. 3:6; Mat. 1:21; Lk. 4:18; Jn. 1:40-42; 5:26;  
Heb. 13:8; James 1:17; Rev. 5:6

Upon this many-membered body of royal priests, as upon their Lord and head, shall rest the seven Spirits of God even as the prophet foretold, saying,

"The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him,  
The Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding,  
The Spirit of Counsel and Might,  
The Spirit of Knowledge and the Fear of the  
Lord." (Isa. 11:2-3)

This sevenfold Spirit of God is the fullness of the wisdom, glory, nature, and power of God which rested upon and filled Jesus Christ. This is the Spirit unlimited, without measure. These are the seven Spirits continually before God's throne, by whom the world will be ruled in righteousness. Of the One who is anointed with this sevenfold Spirit Isaiah said, "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him... and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears, but with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth... righteousness shall be the belt about His loins... they shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. 11:2-9)

This sevenfold anointing is the "seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." (Rev. 5:6) The seven eyes of God's insight and understanding shall be sent forth into all the

earth to search the hearts of men and of nations, and the seven horns of God's power shall arise as a rod of iron to rule over all nations, bringing them into peace and righteousness before Him. Those blessed sons of God who are to share the fullness of this anointing, reigning with Him in His Kingdom, will not be those who have spent their time "beating the air" in man's programs and kingdoms, but those who through vital contact with Christ Jesus have fully partaken of the sevenfold Spirit of Sonship. Thus their wisdom, knowledge, and power will not come from seminaries, churches, rituals, or methods of the harlot religious systems of this world, but from the blessed fact that they have been with Jesus.

The first of these seven Spirits is called, "The Spirit of the Lord." Of the Spirit which was bestowed upon Jesus it is written, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because He has anointed Me..." (Lk. 4:18) Turning to the prophecy from which this quotation is made, the original Hebrew would be better translated, "The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is on Me, because Jehovah has anointed Me to proclaim good tidings to the humble." (Isa. 61:1) Similarly, Isa. 11:2-3 should read, "The Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge and the Fear of Jehovah."

Thus it can be seen that the very first aspect of this sevenfold Spirit of God is that it is the Spirit of Jehovah (Heb: YHWH, now commonly translated "the LORD"). It was the "Spirit of Jehovah" which was upon Jesus the head, and it is thus "The Spirit of Jehovah" which is communicated from the head to the elect members of His body.

No doubt you have heard the question, "What's in a name?" Though it is often asked facetiously, the fact remains that there is much in a name. In modern times, it seems the names we give our children have little significance. We may name them after a favorite relative, or choose a name because we like its sound or association. But in Bible times, names were often given by prophetic utterance or under divine inspiration so that they actually revealed the nature, character, and destiny of the person.

"You shall call His name Jesus," said the angel, "for He shall save His people from their sins." (Mat. 1:21) Jesus means "Jehovah is salvation," and the name expresses that glorious redemptive work accomplished only by and through Him. Abram, which means "father," had his name changed to Abraham, "father of many nations," as he has become. His wife's name was changed from Sarai, "dominant, contentious," to Sarah, meaning "Princess," for, said the Lord, "I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be of her." (Gen. 17:15-16) Jesus changed the names of James and John to Boanerges, "sons of thunder," because the name befitted these men who thought to call down fire from heaven to destroy the unbelievers. When Andrew brought his brother to Jesus, our Lord greeted Peter with these words, "You are Simon, the son of Jonas; you shall be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a stone." (Jn. 1:40-42) Peter later became the spiritual foundation stone of the apostolic ministry. Thus the name which the Lord gave Peter calls attention to his nature and ministry. This pattern is seen all through the Scriptures, from Genesis to the Revelation.

To properly understand what is meant by “the Spirit of Jehovah,” we need to understand the meaning of the name. Jehovah is an English form of the ancient Hebrew word “YHWH.” In the King James Version of the Bible, it is mistranslated “LORD” with all capitals. It is correctly rendered “Jehovah” in a few modern translations such as the American Standard Version. So when you see the word “LORD,” in capitals, it should be “Jehovah” or “YHWH.” This is the name by far the most frequently employed in the Old Testament, occurring 6,823 times.

The name “Jehovah” is derived from the Hebrew verb “hayah” meaning “to be,” or “being.” This word is almost exactly like the Hebrew verb, “chayah,” which means “to live,” or “life.” One can readily see the connection between being and life. Thus Jehovah means “the self-existent One” or “the eternal.” He is the One (the only One) who in Himself possesses life derived from no source other than Himself and dependent upon no other person or thing. Any being whose existence is dependent in any manner upon another, or upon conditions such as food, light, air, water, and so on, or even on some cosmic influence, is not self-existent.

This quality is inherent in Jehovah God alone, as it is written, “The Father has life in Himself.” (Jn. 5:26) His existence is therefore not derived from anything, dependent upon anything, or sustained by anything, but inherent and eternal within Himself. The Hebrew verbs for “to be” and “to live” denote both essential life and a state of being. Hence, the meaning of the name Jehovah says that God is not only eternal Himself, but all His nature and characteristics are as eternal and unchangeable as is His life.

The origin and meaning of the name Jehovah are especially seen in relation to Israel. When Moses at the burning bush said to God, “When I come to the children of Israel and say unto them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me unto you,’ and they say to me, ‘What is His name?’, what shall I say to them?” And God said unto Moses, “I Am That I Am. Thus shall you say to the sons of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me unto you.’” (Ex. 3:13-14) The origin of this name is exactly the same as that of Jehovah – being, existence – and denotes the One who always has been, is, and always will be: personal, continuous, independent, absolute existence.

“I Am That I Am” reveals God as the unchangeable One. In this name Jehovah is saying to Moses and the children of Israel, “What I am now, I always was and always will be. I am what I am unchangeably and eternally. Tell the people of Israel that the eternal, self-existent, unchangeable One has sent you. What I promised Abraham, I Am! What I promised Isaac, I Am! And what I promised Jacob and all his sons, I Am! And throughout all your days, in every situation and circumstance, even to the end of time, when you seek My face and call upon Me, you will find that I Am what I Am!”

Long centuries later, Jehovah spoke to the prophet Malachi these words, “I am Jehovah, I change not.” (Mal. 3:6) Of Him who came into the world as the embodiment and visible representation of Jehovah it is written, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.” (Heb. 13:8) The apostle James witnessed of Him, “Every good gift... comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” (James 1:17)

## Self-Existent Life

Isa. 11:2; Jn. 11:26; 17:2; Rom. 8:9-11;  
1 Cor. 15:45-47; 1 Tim. 5:6; 1 Jn. 5:11-12

Only Jehovah possesses eternal life and an incorruptible nature in Himself. Man was born without the vital essence that enables him to live forever. Man is mortal. Man is a breathing, eating, drinking, blood-circulating physical being. Never forget, dear friend, that “The first man Adam was made a living soul... the first man is of the earth, earthy.” (1 Cor. 15:45, 47) The first Adam was made with the potential for eternal life, but only by eating from the tree of life. As we all know, Adam and Eve chose the wrong tree.

This natural life, now under the curse of sin and death, is not really life at all. It is really death, as Paul so forcefully taught. “She that lives in pleasure [sensuality] is dead while she lives.” (1 Tim. 5:6)

Let us now contrast the glory of the last Adam, Jesus, with the state of that first man. The first Adam was “made a living soul,” but the last Adam was “made a quickening [life-giving] Spirit.” (1 Cor. 15:45) A life-giving Spirit! The first man was given only the “breath of life.” The second man contained all the fullness of divine life of His Father! “And the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon Him.” (Isa. 11:2) The Spirit of Jehovah is the Spirit of self-existent life, even the eternal, incorruptible, and unchanging life of God!

Jesus made a statement which the first Adam could never have made. He said, “For as the Father has life in Himself; so has He given to the Son to have life in Himself.” (Jn. 5:25-26) Life in Himself! Self-existent life! Jesus could say, “I am the life!” No other person before Him could say that. Jesus has the life in Himself because He is life!

The greatest wonder is not that Jesus possessed the self-existent life of God; it is that God made Him “a life-giving Spirit.” “This is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the [eternal] life...” (1 Jn. 5:11-12) Notice the result of having the Holy Spirit, “Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His. And if Christ be in you the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised up Christ from the dead dwell in you, He who raised up Christ from the dead [Jehovah] shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you.” (Rom. 8:9-11) If the Spirit of Jehovah dwells in us, He brings the power to commence eternal life within us!

Jesus said, “Father... glorify Your Son ... as You have given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.” (Jn. 17:2) From the incorruptible seed of Christ, placed in the womb of the believing heart, comes forth that incorruptible new creation which lives and abides forever. When John said, “He who has the Son has the life,” he was speaking of that incorruptible life which Jesus is. When Jesus said, “He who believes on Me shall never die,” (Jn. 11:26) He was not talking about the possibility of just extending our physical existence forever so we would never go to the grave. He meant that He was planting a new life within us: God’s own incorruptible, self-existent life. The life Jesus has made available is the life He is, the life of Jehovah, the life of eternity. It is the life which produces an eternal Spirit, nature, and essence of the same quality as the self-existent life possessed by God our Father.

Here, in receiving of this life, the “holy anointing oil” of Jehovah’s Spirit flows from the head to the body, giving unto the body the same self-existent life which originally was only in the Son. Thus, saints filled with His Spirit and life can now say, “As the Son has life in Himself; so has He given the sons, the members of His body, to have life in themselves!” This is the “eternal life” Jesus promised in John 3:15-16: the self-existent life of God in Christ. “It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me!” (Gal. 2:20)

### **The Well Within**

Jn. 4:6-14; 7:38-39; Col. 1:27; 1 Jn. 4:4

How many of the Lord’s dear children do not understand this one simple, sublime truth – that they have within them the self-existent life of God! How many weak and weary saints are constantly running around from meeting to meeting, from revival to revival, from preacher to preacher, from prayer group to prayer group, seeking life. These dear souls are those who always need to receive some kind of “blessing.”

Blessing seekers are yet babes. There is nothing wrong with beginning as a babe. But babies should grow up, fast! You can always spot a babe in Christ, because his whole world is on the outside. Babies are weak and helpless. A baby is often in a mess. He gets hungry or thirsty, needs a diaper change, has the colic, needs a bath, or gets hurt. And an undeniable fact about babies is that they can’t do anything about their problems themselves. The baby’s whole world is on the outside. He is totally dependent upon what others do for him. Someone else must always be ministering to his needs. Someone else must change him, feed him, bathe him.

Thus we see that there are three basic characteristics that accompany babyhood: (1) The baby has more problems than most older folk, (2) He is totally dependent upon others, unable to do anything for himself, and (3) When he has a need he cries until someone comes and meets it. What a picture is this of the babes in Christ!

Baby Christians are constantly loaded down with problems. They are always sick, or discouraged, or depressed, or offended, or confused, or upset, or worried, or fearful, or... They take up 90 percent of the elders’ time, strength, and patience in most groups. You must constantly be praying for them, encouraging them, counseling them, delivering them, and lifting them up. They will answer every altar call, stand in every prayer line, and follow every ministry where they may get another “blessing” or “experience.” They have the victory when everything is going well or when they are struck with some ecstatic experience such as “falling out under the power” or receiving a personal word of prophecy. But as soon as their new “blessing” wears off, they are so weak, they can’t make it without another spiritual “fix.”

What’s wrong with these folk? I will tell you. Their source of life is on the outside. Being babes, they are not yet aware that all-sufficient, self-existent life dwells within them. They are unable to appropriate that life for themselves. Their senses have not been exercised to discern that He who is in them is greater than he who is in the world. (1 Jn. 4:4) They have not yet matured to the place where they truly know Christ as the substance of their inward life, their all-in-all, sufficient to transcend every problem and conquer every enemy within or without.

Intentionally or not, many preachers keep their people perpetually on this baby level of immaturity by restricting their diet to “milk” and training their babies to always look to the pulpit to be taught, delivered, healed, inspired, or blessed. What a tragedy!

God is desirous of a people who come to know that they have life in themselves! This is a glorious company of overcomers, all those who are aware of the life within. They are strong. They are full of faith and the Holy Spirit. They have discovered the river of life flowing deep within their spirits, powerful and abundant. They are victorious. They are never discouraged by any situation, not upset by any circumstance. They are constant – not “up” one day and “down” the next. They seldom have prayer requests. They are always encouraging others but never needing to be encouraged themselves. They minister to many, but do not stop to “be ministered to.” They are not offended by what others say or do. They are not anxious, fearful, worried, depressed, or confused. They don’t quit when the going gets rough. They don’t whine about how “the old devil” has been after them all week. They don’t talk about their problems. They are not sad, sorrowful, or downcast – regardless of what happens. The word of Christ dwells in them richly. They sing a new song, even praise unto our God! They walk in wisdom and understanding, in confidence and faith in the faithfulness and purposes of God, and “rejoice in expectation of the glory of God.” They are always positive, always rejoicing in the Lord and walking in His victory. What is the secret of these people’s victory? I will tell you. They have life in themselves! Only one with life in himself can be an overcomer.

There was One who perfectly walked in this realm, and He overcame all things. Upon Him rested the fullness of the Spirit of Jehovah, the Spirit of self-existent life. Can you imagine Jesus plopping Himself down on a rock and calling to Peter, James, and John, “Boys, this depression has got to Me. Please come over here and pray for Me. I really need to be ministered to today. Ever since we left Galilee, the old devil has really been after Me. Lay hands on Me and rebuke this thing! I think it started last week when Father showed Me that Judas will betray Me. I’ve been so upset ever since. If I don’t get the victory pretty soon, I won’t be able to minister in Samaria like Father wants.” Ha! It seems blasphemous to even think it!

Jesus said, “The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life...” (Mat. 20:2) Jesus did not come to receive life, for He is life! He has life in Himself even as the Father has life in Himself. In that source of self-existent life is contained every element of victory He could ever need. When He needed power, it was in the life within Him. If He needed encouragement, it was in the life within Him. This is a life that is not dependent on anything from without, for it is self-existent life, a life all-sufficient and unchanging, neither requiring sustenance nor any external source.

This is the life we have in Christ and which Christ is in us! Nothing brings greater joy to my spirit than seeing the members of Christ’s body coming unto this “measure” of the stature of the “fullness of Christ” and “growing up into Him in all things, who is the head, even Christ” that they “henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind...” (Eph. 4:13-15)

Oh that God's people would seek Him until the Holy Spirit illumines their minds, filling them with a mighty revelation of the glorious and eternal reality now abiding in the spirits of all who are born of God, even the indwelling of the Spirit of Jehovah, the Spirit of self-existent life!

Jesus and His disciples decided to stop one day at Jacob's well in Sychar for lunch. Jesus sat in the shade of the well's shelter while His disciples went to the nearby town for food. After they left, a woman with a water pot on her shoulder approached the well. Jesus startled her by asking for a drink. Her response was brittle with the hatred between the two peoples, "How is it that you, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?" (Jn. 4:9) Jesus was unruffled, offering her the gift He had come to give to all, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." (Jn. 4:10)

She responded by saying, "You don't have a bucket, and this well is deep. How are you going to draw water from this well? Have you got some water that doesn't come from this well? Are you greater than our father Jacob?" She was a little provoked with this Jew who is speaking to her.

So Jesus told her a principle that she understood all too well in the natural. He said, "You've been drinking this water all your life, and you still have to keep coming back each day. You know how wearisome it is to trudge back and forth through the heat and dust with that water pot on your head. But if you drink of the water that I give you, you'll never thirst again! It will become in you as a well overflowing with life eternal!"

Jesus spoke to this woman of a truth more wonderful and glorious than the vast majority of Christians have ever grasped. How many of the Lord's people still come to the well? How many of us still get our water, our source of life – from the outside? We are still trying to pray something down from heaven. We are always looking up to some minister, some meeting, some prophet, some healer, or some experience from which we can draw life. And after all our running to and fro from well to well, we're still thirsty. We're still conscious of our need. So we keep looking for a well from which to draw to quench our thirst and meet our need. Some think it is normal, even commendable to always be thirsty, to ever be coming to the well, drinking again and again and again.

Oh, how "need" conscious are God's little children! Years ago I was in a meeting where a brother expressed the mentality of the majority of Christians today. He asked the congregation, "How many have a need tonight?" Every hand in the room shot up. The brother continued, "If you don't have a need, then you ought to!" How many of us are centered around our "needs"? If you removed the saints "needs" from the average church meeting, they wouldn't know what to do. Most of our meetings simply assume that everyone desperately needs God. But how many start with the assumption that we are already filled with God by His Spirit?

I don't want anyone to misunderstand me here. I am not opposed to meetings! It is right that God's people come together as a corporate expression of the body of Christ upon earth. That fellowship, and the work of God which emanates forth from it, is a vital aspect of Kingdom ministry.

But most saints need a change in the focus of the meetings. Instead of coming as empty buckets we should come together as flowing rivers! Remember that in Christ we are a new creation. The old creation comes together saying, "We're all here tonight because we need God, we need filling, we need a blessing." But if we come as the new creation in Christ, in the Spirit of Sonship, we will say, "We're here to be a worship and praise unto God, to delight Him and rejoice His heart, to shine with God's glory, to discern and do His will, to express Him to a dark and needy world!" What a difference!

Usually a preacher stands in the pulpit and says, "I hope you folks expect to get a blessing tonight." That is the highest expression of Christianity that most people know, but in all reality, it's not Christianity at all; it's the cry of children who are hungry, thirsty, and empty because they don't know where the well is. They have no life in themselves, so they are always searching for some water to quench their thirsty souls. How many Christians are deceived by the false idea that the one who is the most spiritual is the one who is most conscious of his need – the one who tarries the longest, prays the loudest, or travails and cries out to God the most? But I declare to you that this is not an expression of spirituality. It is an expression of spiritual poverty. It is the cry of babies.

We see these Christians coming to meetings all the time with their "buckets." "Brother Eby, fill 'er up! I've got to have a whole lot. I've got some real tough problems to face this week, and I've got to get enough to carry me through. I've just got to have a "touch" from God! Oh, I'm so hungry, so thirsty, help me! Please, fill 'er up!"

Show me some saints who know they have the well on the inside, and I'll show you a people who are never talking about how much they need a touch from God. They are not anxious about their own needs. They are focused on His fullness! How can one be conscious of his own need, of the need of a touch from God, when a literal Niagara of living water is gushing forth from his innermost being?

Now, don't misunderstand me! I don't mean that these are never weak, or that they never have any problems. Certainly they do! You would be amazed at all the devil throws at them, for they are a serious threat to his kingdom. But one thing they know: the well, the source of life, the answer to the problem is not on the outside, it's on the inside. When we know that the well is on the inside, then we'll understand what God is after in our meetings. It is our expression of His well, the manifestation within us of the self-existent life of Jehovah, spreading life, His life, to the world around us.

Jesus taught the Samaritan woman one of the most profound and blessed truths of the ages. He said that He has water to give you, and if you once drink His water, you can throw away your water pots because this water becomes a mighty artesian well within you. As long as the well is outside, as long as our source of life is without, then you have to trudge back and forth to the well to satisfy your thirst. And when you have to go to the well to drink, you know you are going to be thirsty again. So Jesus asked the woman, "How would you like to have the well on the inside? How would you like to have an abundant, all-sufficient well within you, springing up to eternal life?"

Let me ask you, dear Reader, can you even imagine how different your life would be with the well on the inside? This is what sonship is all about! It is, “Christ in you the hope of glory.” (Col. 1:27) Sonship, maturity, overcoming, perfection, and the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ – all of this is found in that blessed realm where we know, experientially, that we do indeed have life in ourselves even as the Father has life in Himself. This is the well on the inside! It is high time that we who are apprehended of God to be sons, stop going to the well. It’s time we learn to drink from the well inside.

After leading the Israelites out of Egypt, God told Moses to strike a rock to bring forth life-giving water in the desert. (Ex. 17:6) That smitten rock typifies Christ crucified, His blood bringing freedom and life to those who had been bound in sin. (1 Cor. 10:4)

Then in Numbers, when the Israelites reached Kadesh on their way to possess the Promised Land, God told Moses to speak to a rock, so that it would bring forth life-giving water. (Num. 20:8) This was to have typified Christ glorified in a many-membered body, bringing forth life within by His Holy Spirit. But instead of speaking to the rock, Moses angrily struck it, thus typifying those who “have tasted of the good Word of God and the power of the age to come, and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh.” (Heb. 6:4-6)

Moses was never allowed to enter the Promised Land because of this disobedience. But did that spoil God’s plan for a type of the Holy Spirit in the saints? No. A little later we read, “And from thence they went to Beer [a well]; that is the well whereof the

Lord spoke unto Moses, ‘Gather the people together, and I will give them water.’ Then Israel sang this song, ‘Spring up, O well; sing to it! The well, which the leaders sank, which the nobles of the people dug, with the scepter and with their staffs.’” (Num. 21:16-18) This well did not come so easily. The leaders had to work for it, typifying those heroes of faith who have gone before us, believing, but not yet receiving the complete fulfillment. (Ref. Heb. 11:13, 39-40) Yet when they finally did reach water, it sprang up like an artesian well. This is a type of Christ returning in the person of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

The rock typified Christ on the cross, smitten, so that the living water, which is the Spirit of life, may flow into us. But the well is Christ in us, springing up from within in full and abundant life. For the sons of God, it is no longer a matter of the stricken rock, but of the artesian well. Christ as the rock has already accomplished His work on the cross, which gave the water of life flowing into us from without. How many want to stop at the rock! But that is the source of life on the outside. As we move on, into His fullness, Christ as the well of living water springing up continuously within each of us, abundant and free, is becoming the reality for all who follow on to know the Lord.

“He who believes on Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” (Jn. 7:38)

This is the well on the inside. This is eternal life within yourself. This is the Spirit of Jehovah which rested upon the first-born Son. We can only move on into the full measure of the seven Spirits of God as we allow the reality of this first aspect to be fulfilled within us. Receive it, my friend!

# Chapter 6 – The Spirit of Wisdom

## Introduction

“These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God.” (Rev. 3:1)

“And the Spirit of the Lord [Jehovah] shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge, and the Fear of the Lord [Jehovah].” (Isa. 11:2)

The second Spirit to rest upon the sons of God is the Spirit of Wisdom. Just as the lampstand was seven branches yet one lampstand, so the seven Spirits of Sonship are one Spirit. As the rainbow round about the throne contained seven colors, yet was one bow, so also the seven Spirits of Sonship are one Spirit. As each color of the rainbow has its own manifestation and glory, so do the seven Spirits as they are given in all fullness to the sons of God, producing in them the image of Christ and the fullness of God.

How vital that we understand by divine revelation that wisdom is not a “thing” to be sought after. Wisdom is a living personality, one of the seven Spirits of God. How truly did the apostle Paul pen the words, “Unto them which are called, Christ [is] the power of God and the wisdom of God.” (1 Cor. 1:24) He then adds, “And of Him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom.” (1 Cor. 1:30) This does not tell us merely that Christ has the wisdom of God, but that He is the wisdom of God. And He does not just give us His wisdom, but is made wisdom within us.

Hear now the declaration of wisdom, personified in the person of Jesus Christ:

*I, Wisdom, dwell with prudence,  
and I find knowledge of discretion.  
The fear of Jehovah is to hate evil;  
I hate pride and loftiness, the evil way,  
and the perverse mouth,  
To me is counsel and sound wisdom.  
I am understanding; to me is strength.  
By Me kings reign  
and princes decree righteousness.  
By Me rulers rule, and nobles,  
even all the judges of the earth.  
I love those loving me,  
and the ones seeking me, find me.  
Riches and honor are with me,  
enduring wealth and righteousness.  
My fruit is better than gold, even pure gold;  
My produce is better than choice silver.  
I walk in the path of righteousness  
among the paths of justice,  
To cause all who love me to inherit wealth;  
I will fill up their storehouses.  
Jehovah possessed me  
in the beginning of His way,  
before His acts of old.  
I was established from everlasting,  
from the beginning,  
from the ancient times of the earth.  
When there were no deeps, I travailed; when  
there were no fountains laden with water.  
Before the mountains were settled,  
before the hills, I travailed;  
while He had not made the earth or the  
fields, nor the first dust of the world.*

*When He prepared the heavens, I was there,  
 when He inscribed a circle on the face of the  
 deep and made firm the skies above.  
 When He fixed the fountains of the deep,  
 When He set for the sea its boundary  
 that the waters should not transgress  
 His command,  
 When He laid the foundations of the earth,  
 then I [Wisdom] was at His side  
 a master craftsman;  
 and I was daily His delight,  
 rejoicing before Him at all times.  
 Rejoicing in the world, His earth,  
 and my delight – with the sons of men!  
 Now therefore listen to me, O you sons;  
 for blessed – happy, fortunate – are those  
 who keep my ways.  
 Hear instruction and be wise,  
 and do not ignore it!  
 Blessed is the man listening to me,  
 watching daily at my gates,  
 guarding the posts of my doors.  
 For the one finding me finds life,  
 and he shall obtain favor from Jehovah.  
 But the one sinning against me hurts his own  
 soul. All hating me love death.”*

(Literal interpretation of Prov. 8:12-36  
 from the Hebrew-English Interlinear.)

In this personification of wisdom, it is unmistakably clear that the living Word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, is the wisdom of God. No man can possibly be filled with divine wisdom without first being filled with Christ, any more than he can have eternal life without having received Jesus as Savior. It is only the elect, those individuals who are born from above of the Spirit of God, who may become recipients of true wisdom from the Spirit of Wisdom.

Those who have such wisdom flowing through them are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, sanctified by the indwelling Holy Spirit, and enabled to walk in righteousness through the life of Christ working within. This is why Paul exultingly cries out, “Of God are you in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom from God, both righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.” (1 Cor. 1:30, R.V. margin) Note carefully who it is that by God finds Christ made unto Himself wisdom. It is only those who are “in Christ Jesus,” which is to say only those who were chosen “in Him” before the foundation of the world. (Eph. 1:4-5)

Jesus Christ is not only the sacrificial Lamb to purchase, and the High Priest to secure, but also the Prophet and the King to reveal to us the redemption and glory which God has prepared for them that love Him. At creation, light was called into existence first, so that in it, all God’s other works might display their life and beauty. In the same way, wisdom (light to our minds) is mentioned first (1 Cor. 1:30) as the treasury in which are found the three precious gifts that follow – righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Christ’s life is the light of man. In revealing this life to us, we behold the glory of God. In that revelation of Christ, we are changed into His image – we partake of the divine nature. (2 Pet. 1:4) He becomes our wisdom. “In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” (Col. 2:3)

And you are in Him and have only to abide in Him (Jn. 15:1-8) to partake of these treasures of wisdom. In Christ you are, and in Christ wisdom is. Dwelling in Him, you dwell in the very fountain of all light and glory. Abiding in Him you have Christ the

wisdom of God leading and energizing your whole spiritual life, communicating to you in ever increasing measures of wisdom, knowledge, and glory. It is this connection between what God has made Christ to be to us and what God has made us to be in Christ, that we are to keep focused upon, better understand, and appropriate.

We shall thus see that all the realities prepared for us in Christ, as matured sons of God, cannot be obtained as special gifts in answer to prayer, or even by virtue of our faith, apart from abiding in Him. We do not simply receive wisdom by asking for it (though it is true we must ask), but wisdom is channeled into us through our union with Christ. The answer to every prayer comes in the vital union and intimacy of fellowship in Him, for it is in Him, the unspeakable gift, that all other gift treasures are hid, including the gifts of wisdom and knowledge.

### **The Wisdom of This World**

Gen. 1:26; 3:4-5, 22; 4:16-22; Num. 3:23, 38;  
Ps. 19:4-6; Ezk. 8:15-18; Mal. 4:2; Mat. 2:1-2; 24:27;  
Rom. 3:23; 1 Cor. 3:18-21; 2 Cor. 1:12; 11:3;  
Eph. 2:2-3; Heb. 6:1; James 3:15; Rev. 3:8

The apostle Paul was so concerned that we might be led astray from the simplicity of this wisdom of God in Christ that he wrote, "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted [away] from the simplicity that is in Christ." (2 Cor. 11:3) When Paul says that the serpent "beguiled" Eve, the Greek text reveals that he actually cheated her out of something, for the word used is "exapatao" which is a compound of the Greek word "ek" which means "out" and "apotao" which means "to cheat."

Eve was "cheated out" of something, being, as the Greek word indicates by virtue of its strength, "thoroughly deceived" or "sold short." That out of which she was cheated was nothing less than the glory of God Himself which was available to her in Christ, the tree of life. Thus it is written of the human family, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23)

The means by which the serpent beguiled Eve and cheated her out of that glory which was her inheritance in Christ, was through subtlety. This word in the Greek is "panourgia" meaning "craftiness, trickery, sophistry." The word "sophistry" is most interesting since it is derived from the Greek word for wisdom – sophia. Several English words come from the Greek word sophia including "sophistry" (the art of deception through perverted logic), "sophomore" (wise fool), and "sophisticated" (worldly wise). Each of these terms, you will note, speak of the kind of wisdom that appeals more to the natural man and the carnal mind. "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become foolish, that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, 'He catches the wise in their own craftiness.' And again, 'The Lord knows the reasonings of the wise, that they are futile.'" (1 Cor. 3:18-20) This worldly wisdom is further called "fleshly wisdom," (2 Cor. 1:12) as it is focused on the flesh, the physical realm, rather than the spirit.

Thus the means by which the serpent beguiled Eve was through the wisdom of this world, subtlety, sophistry, "Reasoning that is superficially plausible but actually fallacious," according to Webster.

Sophistry is also, “the art of deception through perverted logic.” What was the argument that the serpent used that sounded “superficially plausible” but was, in fact, “perverted logic”? Hear it! “You shall not surely die; for God knows that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” (Gen. 3:3-4)

There was a truth in that statement, for after the woman and the man had eaten, the Lord God Himself verified the serpent’s statement as being correct. “And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of Us to know good and evil.” (Gen. 3:22) The Lord was saying that Adam had become as a god himself! “You shall be as gods,” the serpent had said, and the truth of his words stand confirmed by the Almighty. Adam, and through him all mankind, has become as god! Now he could know good and evil for himself, without any input from God. Now he could make his own choices, apart from the wisdom and knowledge of God.

In fact, then, the serpent had a truth. He had employed the Word of God to tempt Adam and Eve, for God Himself had said, “Let us make man in Our own image and after Our own likeness.” (Gen. 1:26) But the serpent in his sophistry failed to reveal the whole truth. Independent of God, man can never be a partaker of the divine nature! This should have been a self-evident truth, but Adam failed to see it. He was deceived by a fact, a dead letter of the Word. He took the promise of God’s Word to make man in His image and likeness, and received it as a dead-letter fact, something attainable within himself, rather than as a life obtainable only in union with God.

Many of Adam’s descendants today have not learned the difference between fact and truth. Jesus never said, “You shall know the facts, and the facts shall make you free.” He said, “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (Jn. 8:32) Facts are a form of truth held by the carnal mind in the intellect, dead-letter concepts, doctrines, forms, rituals, ceremonies, presumptions – all true but containing no life which comes from union with God. The letter kills. Truth is life. Jesus said, “I am the... truth and the life.” (Jn. 14:6) The serpent did not preach truth. He preached facts – facts apart from life, form apart from essence, dead doctrines of self-effort and presumption – instead of truth brought alive through union with God.

In accepting the image and likeness of God as a fact, inherent within man, rather than as a life to be experienced in union with God, man was cheated out of the very thing he sought! In the former, there is the thought of independence; in the latter, the principle of total dependence. Though the terminology is the same – that is, “You are as gods” – the essence is not. “The man is become as one of Us” but in his independence and rebellion, he did not partake of the divine nature and life of God. Man received the knowledge of good and evil, but man did not become holy.

Instead, man received the wisdom used by the serpent, the wisdom of this world, sophistry. Man was created “very good.” In his disobedience, he added evil to his good, and a human knowledge to discern between the two for himself. In so doing, he was cheated out of true god-hood which is only found in union with God as partakers of His divine nature. The mind, will, and nature of Satan became the mind, will, and nature of

man to such an extent that it is written of this fallen race that they walk “according to the course [wisdom, knowledge, traditions] of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh... and were by nature the children of wrath.” (Eph. 2:2-3) “This wisdom descends not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.” (James 3:15) This world’s wisdom is the very same wisdom promised Eve by the serpent in Eden.

### **Sin and the World**

To properly understand the “wisdom of this world” which is “foolishness with God,” (1 Cor. 3:19) we must first understand what is meant by the “world.” The Greek word for world is “kosmos,” meaning any organized system, such as the solar system, the cosmos. But the scriptural use of “the world” means something far more sinister.

Let us compare “the world” to “sin.” Because both are abominable before God, they must be dealt with and purged from all who walk in sonship to God. However, the defilement of these two aspects differs. The contamination of sin appears savage, rough, and ugly; while the contamination of the world often appears cultured and refined, and may be beautiful in man’s eyes. Sin’s contamination is like greasy food spilled on a white cloth. But the world’s contamination is like a lovely, colorful pattern inked on the white cloth. From the human standpoint, a tablecloth with greasy food spilled on it is deemed dirty and undesirable, whereas a tablecloth with a colorful design is not dirty, but rather desirable and appreciated.

However, in the sight of God, both are undesirable! God’s standard has always been neither a dirt-stained nor a colorful piece of cloth, but a only pure white cloth. “And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints.” (Rev. 19:8) “He who overcomes, the same shall be clothed in white raiment.” (Rev. 3:5) Just as a dirty spot is not pure white, so also a colorful design detracts from the pure whiteness. Likewise, the world may appear better than sin, but in contrast to the divine nature, both are contaminating and require purging.

Furthermore, the damage to mankind caused by sin and the world differ greatly: sin contaminates and destroys man, whereas the world possesses man. It is just as serious for man’s life to be possessed by the world as to be contaminated by sin. If Satan only uses sin to defile man, he only causes man to be corrupted and shamed, but if he uses the world to control man, he gains man totally for himself. Sin is defined as disobedience to God, while the world may be defined as the result of man’s independence from God.

Though Adam was corrupted by sin, he still lived in the presence of God. He knew God’s presence outside the garden, being justified by the sacrifice of that animal with whose skin he was clothed, which was “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” (Rev. 13:8) Righteous Able also was justified in the presence of God by the blood of that Lamb, typified in the firstlings of his flocks which were offered unto the Lord. So, though man was corrupted by sin in his act of disobedience, he had not left the presence of God to walk out the ultimate end of his disobedience – independence from God.

## From East to West

“And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod on the east of Eden.” (Gen. 4:16) “Nod” is the Hebrew word for exile or vagrancy. Cain went out from God’s presence, away from his inheritance in God, into exile, to walk independent from God and outside of God. This “land of Nod” is stated to be “on the east of Eden.” After the Fall, man was driven out of the garden, away from the tree of life, driven eastward. (Gen. 3:24) Now Cain continued farther in an eastward direction away from even the presence of God.

Jesus Christ – who is the wisdom of God – is pictured by the psalmist as a bridegroom typified by the sun who comes out of his chamber to run a race through the skies. (Ps. 19:4-6) Malachi speaks of Christ as “the sun of righteousness, arising...” (Mal. 4:2) Everyone knows of course that the sun runs its “race” from east to west. Thus Jesus said, “For as the dawning [sunlight] comes out of the east, and shines even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.” (Mat. 24:27) In the Scriptures, this is the route of spiritual progression – from east to west.

Interestingly enough, the primary focus of God’s dealings through His church has, during the past 2,000 years, moved steadily from east to west. The first area of God’s moving by His Spirit, and the center from which the glorious light of the gospel shown forth to the world, was in Jerusalem. After the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD and the consequent scattering of the Jews, the center of spiritual activity moved westward into Asia Minor. As the Bishop of Rome gained prestige and power over the church,

the center again moved westward from Asia Minor to Rome. The next move was only slightly westward, but westward it was, as the center of God’s dealings was established during the Dark Ages among those saints which were later known as the Waldenses – hundreds of thousands of the Lord’s people who clung to the truth and thus were sorely persecuted by the Roman Babylon of their day, dwelling in the Alps of northern Italy, Switzerland, and southern Germany. Then the Reformation sprang up, and Germany and Switzerland became the most active center of this revival which shook the world. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the center moved once again, to England and Wales, as the Spirit moved in mighty power across that land in wave after wave of revival, which produced the Bible societies and modern foreign missionary movements. England sent out missionaries to her many colonies which circled the globe. Over the last 200 years the center moved again – westward, as always – as our country, the United States of America, became a great nation under God. From America flowed the majority of the revivals, revelations, printed literature, missionary activities, and so on, unto the world. Now, sadly for us, America has turned away from God, so His hand has moved on, this time to the Orient, primarily focused in South Korea and China, where great revivals sweep the land.

That “east to west” speaks of the route of spiritual progression is seen also in the tabernacle built by Moses in the wilderness. God instructed Moses to always pitch the tabernacle with the entry to the outer court in the east and the most holy place situated in the west. (Num. 3:23, 38)

Moving from a beginning experience in God into the fullness of His divine life and glory is, in symbolism, a moving from east to west. The wise men at the time of the birth of the Christ child were living in the east and travelled westward to where the star led them. In Ezekiel's temple, the Prince enters through the east door and departs out the west door. This represents the Sun of Righteousness running His course through the spiritual heavens. Spiritual progression is seen to always be from east to west, from the place of man's wisdom to the place of Christ – who is the wisdom of God.

All who would move on in God must move, symbolically, from east to west. The Lord denounced, in parabolic form, those who turn away from this westward walk in the Spirit of God. "He brought me into the inner court of the Lord's house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty five men, with their backs toward the temple of the Lord, and their faces toward the east, and they worshiped the [rising] sun toward the east. Then He said unto me, 'Have you seen this, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abomination which they commit here? Therefore will I deal in fury; mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity...'" (Ezk. 8:16-18)

Now we understand what happened to Cain. "Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden." (Gen. 4:16) What spiritual realities are hidden in this single verse of Scripture! Had it not been for sin, Cain would have been living in the Garden of Eden, which typifies the realm of the Spirit.

In spite of sin, because of the sacrifice of the lamb he was still able to know the presence of God, which typifies the anointing. Not the inner abiding anointing which is typified by the tree of life, but that anointing we see in the Old Testament in which the Spirit of God came upon men, working on and through them in special ways and times, ever coming and going, and always working from above and without, working inwards.

To Cain was given an opportunity to stand justified in the presence of God, under the anointing of God, being justified by the blood of the lamb. But now Cain is found rejecting the blood of justification and moving in the opposite direction from the course of the anointing, moving further from God's presence. His final end is that of an exile, a vagrant, living in a land never intended for him, not his true inheritance.

There, separated from the anointing of God's presence, the Scripture says Cain "dwelt." He "settled" there. Any man who understands the progressive dealings of God knows the anointing of God is ever from glory to glory. So as long as we still fall short of the incorruptible life of the most holy place, we must never "settle" anywhere. The condition of settling down indicates the loss of the anointing, for the Son does not settle until He stands on the pinnacle of Mount Zion in the heavenly sphere of life, glory and dominion. But men always "settle" when, following some spontaneous moving and revelation of God, they begin to organize and systematize it and build walls of creeds and dogmas over it, thus endeavoring to "preserve" it. But the Spirit who produced the outpouring in the first place, still exhorts, "Let us go on to perfection!" (Heb. 6.1)

## **“The World” began with Cain**

Sin began with Adam in the garden, for Adam sinned and was corrupted by sin, but he did not fall into “the world” at that point in time, nor was he usurped by the world. The world began with Cain. Cain invented “civilization,” which typifies the worldly system of independence from God. The scope of sin differs from the scope of the world. The field of the world is much larger than that of sin. Sin refers to all matters that are in opposition to the moral law of God, whereas the world includes all activities, men, and things which are outside of God. We cannot say that everything outside of God is sin; many “good” things are outside of God. However, we can say that everything outside of God is the world. The world includes sin, but sin does not include the entire world, though it be filled with sin.

In this context, we must differentiate between the “earth” and the “world.” They are often used interchangeably but are not the same. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” (Gen. 1:1) “... The earth is full of the lovingkindness of the Lord.” (Ps. 33:5) But, “He shall judge the world in righteousness...” (Ps. 9:8) “I will punish the world for its evil...” (Isa. 13:11) “The devil... showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory.” (Mat. 4:8) “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.” (Jn. 15:18-19) “The world hated them because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” (Jn. 17:14)

This is generally consistent in Scripture. “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein.” (Ps. 24:1) Those dwelling in the world, though in rebellion against God, are still under His dominion – He “owns” them.

Thus “the world” (as we have defined it) did not exist when man was created, but developed gradually after the fall of man as man removed himself from the anointing of Spirit and walked in his own independence from God. The civilization fostered by Cain was one which embraced three basic needs of mankind: (1) provision, (2) pleasure, and (3) protection. In order to maintain his own existence, man needs not only various kinds of provision, such as clothing, food, and so on, but also forms of amusement for his “happiness,” and some means of defense to protect himself from being hurt. Therefore, the entire need for human living is included in these three general categories.

### **Provision**

After Cain’s retreat from the anointing, out of his descendants came the founders of man’s provision for these three great needs in life. These were the three sons of Lamech. Jabel, Jubal, and Tubal-cain.

Jabal was the father of tent dwellers and cattlemen. (Gen. 4:20) Tents and livestock are for the supply of man’s living and therefore belong to the category of provision. In the beginning, God intended that He should be our provision and so made Himself available to man as the tree of life, that in union with Him, we should have all things, even the supply of God Himself. Jabel represents man’s own efforts, apart from the anointing, to make provision for himself. Spiritually,

this symbolizes the carnal religious systems with their creeds, rituals, ceremonies, and traditions designed to “feed” God into man. “Religion” is defined as man’s seeking after God. All religion is the invention of man in his effort to meet man’s spiritual need – apart from the anointing. Alas! they know not that the reality of God’s life is neither contained in nor ministered through their doctrines, programs, rituals, ceremonies, and traditions. Those who live in that realm know nothing of the mighty power of the personal inworking of the incorruptible life of God in Christ. Man’s religion is of the world, for it is outside of God, being apart from the anointing of the Spirit.

### **Pleasure**

Another of Cain’s descendants, Jubal, was the father of all that handle the harp and organ. Playing musical instruments is for enjoyment and thus pertains to the category of pleasure. This worldly aspect is fulfilled, spiritually, in the maze of social activity in religion, as well as in most of the music, programs, and sermonizing, all of which is structured to be pleasant and to entertain the people. I personally have little use for most of the special singing, musical groups, programs, showmanship, and humorous sermonizing which constitutes much of the so-called “ministry” among God’s people today. It is without doubt very appealing to the carnal mind, which is ever wanting to feed upon soulless entertainment rather than drink of the fountains of living water. God gave us apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers for the perfecting of the saints, whereas the carnal, worldly church system has given us Pat Boone, Johnny

Cash, André Crouch, Bob Harrington, and a host of other popular religious shows for the entertaining of the saints.

Most solemnly do I declare unto you that all such are of the world and not of the Father. Their methods and means are outside of the anointing of the Spirit and can never lead God’s people on to perfection. Thank God that a people in these last days are arising who are finding their way out of Cain’s pleasure land of entertainment and sentimentality, back into Eden, back to the tree of life, where they become partakers of the sublime truth that “... In Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand there are pleasures forevermore!” (Ps. 16:11)

### **Protection**

The third son, Tubal-cain, was the inventor of a forging process to make brass and iron implements. These were formed for the purpose of defense, thus referring to the category of protection. Not knowing the power of the Spirit, with what pompousness do the religious systems construct about them their walls and implements of defense! Church history is replete with examples of revival after revival in which people were sovereignly caught up into heavenly places of glory and power, only later to have man put his hand of flesh upon the working of God, to control, protect, and preserve it – as though the sovereign God needed man’s wisdom or regulation to preserve His mighty works! Out there in Cain’s world you must have the earthly brass and iron implements of Tubal-cain – implements of organization, denominations, creeds, regulations, boards, doctrines, programs, or “church” buildings, to defend and preserve the work.

But, blessed be God! As one moves “westward” into the anointing of God’s presence and life, the omnipotence of the Spirit Himself becomes our fortress and our exceeding strong tower! The psalmist writes, “Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound. They shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Your countenance. For You are the glory of their strength, and in Your favor shall our horn be exalted. For the Lord is our defense; and the Holy One of Israel is our King.” (Ps. 89:15-18) That is an expression of someone who comprehends the ways of God.

### **Worldly Wisdom**

In these three inventions of the sons of Cain, man found within himself an answer to his need of supply, amusement, and defense. Man found no need for God or for the anointing as he set about to establish his own world independent from God. This was civilization after the human race lost God – the world – a godless existence created by men. This present world system of things is patterned after the order of Cain. It is outside of God. That does not mean that it is all evil. Some of it is very good! Cain too had inherited the knowledge of good and evil. It simply is not of the Spirit. How clear it is that in this world, the politics, economics, education, and religion are outside of God!

When we have learned how the world was formed, it is easy to define the world. Originally, man belonged to God, lived by God, relied entirely upon Him, and had (for the appropriating) all the fullness of God. Now Satan, through subtlety, sophistry, the carnal mind, and the wisdom of this world, has established and organized the world to provide for man’s needs without God.

Forsaking the anointing of the Spirit, man relied fully upon the world and was overcome by the world. Therefore, the world consists of everything that replaces God as man’s ultimate source of all things. When people, activities, or things – whether good or bad, desirable or undesirable, beautiful or ugly – enslave mankind, they comprise the world. Anything causing man to disregard the Spirit, to be removed from the anointing, or to be independent of God, is the world.

Cain built a city, as did Nimrod after him. “And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch; and he [Cain] built a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch.” (Gen. 4:17) There was no city in Eden, no system, no carnal arrangement of things. Adam had one way to go – if he would – and that was up into God via the tree of life. Not a system, but life! But Cain chose instead to develop a system by which to live, and God’s people today still cling to the world, the system, rather than choosing to live in life.

The cry of man’s heart for the world system finds expression in denominations, in creeds and doctrines, in religious rituals and ceremonies, in programs and methods, in committees and boards, in seminaries and trained preachers, in expert seminar leaders and glib speakers – all of which constitute the city of Enoch, the city which Cain built.

Enoch is a most interesting word, for in the Hebrew it comes from the root “chanak” which means “to narrow, initiate, dedicate, train up, or discipline.” The second Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, speaks of the positive aspect: one who comes under the discipline of God by the Spirit, discovers the narrow way of God’s eternal

purposes, and is initiated into the realm of God... the heavenly sphere. But Enoch son of Cain typifies the negative aspect, one who devises his own system of discipline which restricts mankind and brings them under bondage to the flesh. It is self-discipline, law, legalism, the rule of flesh rather than Spirit.

How God's people need to learn the one simple but sublime truth that only that which is of the Spirit is of God! The wisdom of the world always seems so logical to the carnal mind. Often it seems to make more sense than divine wisdom. Satan gleefully causes carnal wisdom to prosper because it is a denial of the life of the Spirit of God.

Many times, so-called Christians and churches operate contrary to the Spirit with the argument, "It works!" The "program" of the church may be contrary to spirituality and be built around flesh-appeal activities, but they continue in it because "it works" and causes the church to prosper in numbers and finances. Men build their cities of Enoch, their means and methods, apart from the anointing, outside of the life of the Spirit. Little do they realize that after they cover sea and land to make one proselyte, when he is made, he becomes twofold more a child of the world than they themselves. (Mat. 23:15)

### **The Wisdom of God**

Gen. 3:6; Lk. 2:40, 52; Rom. 1:22; 2:17-20;  
1 Cor. 1:30; 2:4-15; 7:6; James 1:5; 3:14-17; 1 Peter  
5:1; Rev. 2:7; 14:13; 21:5; 22:17

Paul contrasts the spirit of the world and the Spirit of God. "My preaching was not in persuasive words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of

God. Yet we do speak wisdom among the perfect, a wisdom, however, not of this age; but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, even wisdom that has been hidden, which none of the princes of this world knows. But unto us God revealed it through the Spirit. But we received, not the spirit which is of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things... of God; which things also we speak, not in the word which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Spirit teaches." (1 Cor. 2:4-15)

This contrast is especially evident in the area of wisdom. It was in seeking wisdom that man fell. "And when the woman saw that the tree was... a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat." (Gen. 3:6) It was in the pride of wisdom that humanistic paganism had its origin: "professing themselves to be wise [in and of themselves, without God], they became fools." (Rom. 1:22) It was in wisdom, philosophy, and the search after truth, that the Greeks sought their glory. It was in the knowledge of God's will, "the form of the knowledge and of the truth of the law," (Rom. 2:17-20) that the Jew made his boast. And yet when Christ, the wisdom of God, appeared on earth, Jew and Greek combined to reject Him. Man's wisdom, whether in possession of a revelation or not, is utterly insufficient for comprehending God or His wisdom. As his heart is alienated from God, so his mind is darkened that he cannot know Him aright. Even when, in Christ, the light of God in its divine wisdom and love shone upon men, they knew it not and saw no beauty in it. They condemned His divine wisdom and crucified Him when He would not deny the Father as its source.

At His baptism, Jesus was filled with the Spirit of Wisdom. How did it manifest? In His waiting to hear what the Father said. "... He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to listen as a disciple. The Lord God has opened my ear; and I was not disobedient, nor did I turn back." (Isa. 50:4-5, prophetic of Jesus in His incarnation) Meekness (teachableness) distinguished the first-born Son on earth. It also distinguishes all sons. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God..." (James 1:5) As we listen to the Spirit in us, He teaches us wisdom by what He works in us. "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise." This work begins within us.

Two stages of wisdom are revealed in the life of Jesus. First, He grew in wisdom, experienced in childhood. "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. ... And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him." (Lk. 2:40, 52) Second, He was filled with the Spirit of Wisdom at His baptism when the Spirit fell on Him. By then He knew how to hear the Spirit's voice, so from then on, He lived only according to the Spirit of Wisdom.

This second stage of wisdom is where we are presently being exercised in our walk as sons. We are no longer babes; we know how to hear the voice of Spirit. But in order to receive the Spirit of Wisdom, a yielded condition of the heart is necessary. We must possess humility. Selfish pride will receive nothing from God. We must see this above all – Christ must be made unto us wisdom. Through the unveiling of His mind within, we must see the wisdom of making a full consecration to the will of the Father and following up that consecration in a life of

daily sanctification and commitment to do the Father's will. In every action we take, wisdom is the principle thing. All through the life of growing consecration, at every step of the journey to Mount Zion, we must receive the wisdom that comes from above. The apostle describes this as – "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." (James 3:17)

The wisdom of this world operates along lines of self-centered pride: selfishness, self-will, self-esteem, self-righteousness, and self-sufficiency. As the apostle points out, these things lead to bitter envying and strife, because this wisdom, instead of being from above, is "worldly, sensual, devilish." The heavenly wisdom, in contrast, is in harmony with the divine nature of God, the nature of self-giving love, mercy, and truth. In this wisdom we must grow, as did Jesus.

Christ, the wisdom of God, is made wisdom unto us. Yes, dear friend, learn to abide in Jesus as your wisdom. Seek to maintain the spirit of waiting in dependence on Him, always seeking His mind and will to not move except as the heavenly light moves ahead. Withdraw from needless distractions, close your ears to the voices of the world, cease from the meaningless activity of this world's religious systems, and be as a docile learner listening for the heavenly wisdom that the Master has to teach. Surrender all your own wisdom; seek a deep conviction of the utter blindness of natural understanding regarding the things of the Spirit. Wait for Jesus to teach and to guide both as to what you have to believe and have to do. "When He, the Spirit of Truth, comes, He will guide you into all the Truth..." (Jn. 16:13)

Remember that the Spirit's teaching and guidance come not from without. It is by His life in us that the divine wisdom does His work. Retire often with Him to the inner chamber of the Spirit where the gentle voice of the Spirit is only heard if all else be still. Even in the midst of darkness or apparent desertion, hold fast in unshakable confidence His own assurance that He is the light and leader of His own and He will never leave us nor forsake us. Above all, live day by day in the blessed truth that, as He Himself, the living Christ Jesus is your wisdom. Your first and last care must ever be this alone – to abide in Him. In this abiding, His wisdom will come to you as the spontaneous outflowing of a life rooted in Him.

The wisdom of God is not for spiritual infants, nor for spiritual children, but for those who have gone beyond the “salvation” stage and the “baptism in the Spirit” stage, and moved on to maturity in Christ, the wisdom of God. In his letters to the carnal Christians of Corinth, Paul speaks of the spiritual infancy of those believers who were still arguing about baptisms and boasting about gifts. Their tragic condition was based on the fact that they were still in the nursing stage of spiritual babyhood, happily playing with basic doctrines and gift manifestations instead of applying themselves to growing up in Christ the wisdom of God. (1 Cor. 14:20)

Much of the spiritual immaturity that is rampant among God's people today is due to the fact that their church services are used to “reach the lost for Christ” or for the saints to “get a blessing,” when they should be focused on the edification (1 Cor. 14:5, 26) of the saints, “till we all come... unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the

fullness of Christ.” (Eph. 4:13) In most churches, the believers are still eating baby food which, although it is good for babies, will never bring a child of God into sonship. People who attend churches that only labor “the plan of salvation” or “water baptism” or even “the baptism in the Spirit” and “ecstatic utterances” are limiting themselves to be stunted midgets, shutting themselves up from the high and holy purposes of God. They place themselves in a position where they can never gain divine wisdom, which is realized only through the deep and vital inner dealing of God with His sons.

As one reads the epistle to the Hebrews, he discovers that Jewish Christians were having the same problem of spiritual infancy rather than growing up in God that they might be perfected in wisdom. (Heb. 5:11 – 6:2) If you are content to “settle” in that kind of fellowship, your life-flow will be on that level, and you will never progress in the Spirit beyond the realm of babes in Christ.

## **The Spirit of Wisdom**

The second stage in divine wisdom is the fullness of wisdom received by Jesus when He was anointed as a Son after His baptism in the Jordan. Jesus then received the Spirit of God without measure, even the seven-fold Spirit of Sonship. These seven Spirits, significantly, are revealed in the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation. Revelation points to the “last day” – the day in which we now live. Thus the age revealed in the book of Revelation is the age of the seven Spirits. So praise God for the book of Revelation! Note from verse 1 that it is not just a revelation of truth; it is specifically “The Revelation of Jesus Christ,” the Truth.

Revelation is entirely different from all other books. Other New Testament books are built on the Old Testament, as evidenced by many Old Testament quotations. But in the book of Revelation, we cannot find one Old Testament quotation. It is not based on anything that had been given before. It is altogether a new book – everything is new. It is a revelation fresh from God's throne!

In this book, God reveals to us a new name (nature), a new song (message), the new Jerusalem (people), a new heaven (rule, government), a new earth (world order), and finally God proclaims, "Behold, I make all things new!" (Rev. 21:5) Hallelujah! God's purpose in this book is to declare the passing away of all that is of the old order, and the establishment of all that is new.

Then what is here? The seven Spirits! There is a Lamb with seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God. (Rev. 5:6) The Lamb has seven horns, which are the seven Spirits of God. Before the throne are seven lamps of fire, also the seven Spirits of God. (Rev. 4:5) We only see the Lamb upon the throne with the seven-fold intensified Spirit! That is all. All the utterances of this book are made by the seven-fold Spirit; all reveal that which is entirely new and fresh. There is nothing old, nothing dead; everything is "from the seven Spirits" (Rev. 1:4) in a new and living way!

In addition, every utterance to the body of Christ in this book is the utterance of the seven-fold Spirit. It is always the Spirit who is speaking! "He who has the seven Spirits says..." (Rev. 3:1) "Yes, says the Spirit." (14:13)

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." Seven times in chapters 2 and 3 (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22), we read that it is the Spirit who is speaking

to the churches. And seven times the Spirit says, "He who overcomes..." or "To him who overcomes..." (2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21) He who hears the seven-fold Spirit will be an overcomer. He who overcomes will be a son. He who is a son shall inherit all things. He who inherits all things receives the seven Spirits of God, for He is our inheritance.

How different from the Old Testament prophets who prophesied, "Yea, My people, thus saith the Lord..." How different from the apostles who say, "This I [Paul] say..." (1 Cor. 7:6) or "I [Peter] exhort..." (1 Pet. 5:1) Now it has become, "The Spirit says... the Spirit says... the Spirit says!" Hallelujah!

Who are these overcomers filled by the seven-fold Spirit? You know who: the Bride! So the book of Revelation concludes with, "And the Spirit and the Bride say..." (22:17) At first the Spirit is speaking to the churches. But by the end of the book, the Spirit and the Bride have become one. They speak as one. Glory to God! The overcomers are one with the seven Spirits, and the seven Spirits have been fully worked into the overcomers. This is God's goal for all He has chosen in Christ.

And after this is achieved, what is the ultimate conclusion? "... to bring to light [reveal] what is the administration [fellowship] of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things; in order that the manifold wisdom of God [the Spirit of Wisdom] might now be made known through the church [this is the Bride speaking as one with the Spirit] to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places [Satan and his princes of the power of the air]. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose [purpose of the ages] which He carried out in Jesus Christ our Lord." (Eph. 3:9-11)

# Chapter 7 – The Spirit of Understanding

## Introduction

“These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God.” (Rev. 3:1)

“And the Spirit of the Lord [Jehovah] shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge and of the Fear of the Lord [Jehovah].” (Isa. 11:2)

The third Spirit of Sonship is the Spirit of Understanding. Since the inspiration of the Almighty has called this the “Spirit” of Understanding we must free ourselves from any notion that this understanding is in any way a function or product of the natural or carnal. How clear it is that the source of this kind of understanding is the Spirit of God and not the mind of man. Hence we read, “But the natural man will not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.” (1 Cor. 2:14, 16) We cannot learn spiritual understanding as we would learn mathematics or the laws of science, for such facts are dead, lifeless things that can as well be performed by a computer as by man. The seven Spirits of God are the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne. One of these seven lamps is the Spirit of Understanding. (Rev. 4:5). It is one of the seven Spirits who dwell continually before the throne of God – and in the hearts of His apprehended sons.

It is Jesus, first of all, who has received the sevenfold intensified Spirit of God. “And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne stood a Lamb as having been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven Spirits of God.” (Rev. 5:6) When Jesus was baptized and anointed with the sevenfold intensified fullness of God’s Spirit, He was given something way beyond the realm of cold, calculative human logic. He became that living understanding of God the Spirit!

## The Mind of Understanding

Ezk. 36:25-27; Rom. 12:2; 1 Cor. 2:11-12, 16;  
2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 2:9; 3:9-10

Understanding is an ability and faculty of the mind. Without mind there can be no understanding; understanding corresponds precisely to the condition of the quality of the mind. Every created life-form possesses mind, and the understanding of the creature is limited by the quality of its mind. Quality of mind is primarily inherited. For instance, a cat thinks like a cat, understands as a cat, and acts like a cat because it was born a cat – therefore possessing the brain and mind of a cat. We have a cat in our home. He will come and sit in the living room while I watch the evening news on television. But the cat has positively no interest in the news. He couldn’t care less! It’s not that he doesn’t see the pictures flashing across the screen. He can see them, but he doesn’t understand – it is impossible for him to understand – so he just curls up on the carpet for a nap.

Humans are of a different order from cats. Cats may see men and observe their movements, yet a cat's knowledge base is very different from a man's. It discerns only things pertaining to its own realm. It has positively no understanding of the ways of man. Cat minds function on the level of cat nature, while human minds function on a higher level, that of human nature.

Likewise, God is of a different and higher order of life and nature from humans. The mind of man functions on the level of human nature, whereas the mind of God functions on the level of divine nature. There is no common ground of knowledge or understanding between the two. A natural man is totally incapable of comprehending anything that pertains to the realm of God. For natural man to comprehend spiritual things is just as impossible as for cats to comprehend human things. Until humans receive of God's Spirit – the Spirit that knows and understands those things that pertain to God – it is impossible for them to have any understanding, either of God, of His Word, or of His ways. "For who could really understand a man's inmost thoughts except the spirit of man himself? How much less could anyone understand the thoughts of God except the very Spirit of God? We have now received not the spirit of the world but the Spirit of God Himself, so that we can understand something of God's generosity towards us." (1 Cor. 2:12, Moffatt)

After men receive God, the depth of their knowledge and understanding is wholly in proportion to the measure of the indwelling Spirit. Jesus was a man, but God was in Him. (2 Cor. 5:19) "In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." (Col. 2:9)

He did not receive the Spirit by measure as do we. (Jn. 3:34) He has all the fullness of God. And therefore He had and has all the discernment and understanding of the Almighty! But we faltering mortals cannot claim in fullness what Christ possessed until we stand upon Zion's holy hill, completely conformed to the image of the Son of God. Upon being born again, we become actual sons of God, yet babes – "babes in Christ." Though now spiritual, the understanding of newborn babes is limited in the extreme! They cannot have a deep knowledge and comprehension until they have been filled with the mind of God; until they have grown to spiritual maturity, the spiritual mind being fully developed within them.

One thing we want to see in this study is that understanding is a faculty of mind, and mind is inherited. Yes, a mind must be developed and matured, but, the quality of mind, the kind of mind, and the potential of mind is received at the time of conception.

In the Old Testament period, the Spirit of God did not indwell men. Before Christ, the Spirit of God came upon men to move them to do God's work. The emphasis was upon the power of the Spirit of God moving through men to work, fight, write, or speak for God. God's Spirit merely descended upon man, but did not enter into man as his life; He bestowed a divine power upon man, but did not impart to man the divine nature and being. Therefore, in the Old Testament, we see some who possessed God's power, yet had nothing whatever of God's life, nature or mind. Samson is a good example. (Judg 14-16) He had the supernatural power of God upon him, but at the same time, he did not have the nature of God in him at all.

Samson's power was beyond belief, yet his nature remained incompatible with God. With respect to power, Samson had the Holy Spirit upon him, but with respect to life, he did not have the Holy Spirit within him.

It is not until New Testament times that the Holy Spirit actually enters into man and indwells him, that he might possess not only God's power, but also God's life, nature, character, and mind. Mind is a faculty of life; to possess divine life and divine nature means that you also have divine mind.

The prophet Ezekiel saw this day of the New Testament, of the remarkable regeneration by which men would actually be born of God to become sons of God. He prophesies, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean... a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and thus you shall [be able to] keep My judgments, and do them." (Ezk. 36:25-27) In Christ, we not only are forgiven of our sin, but there is an impartation of new life, the divine life of God. We are impregnated by the Spirit of God, and a baby spirit – a divine nature – is conceived within us!

This new life is the off-spring of God in Christ so that God becomes, not figuratively or mystically, but very literally our Father – the Father of our spirit. Therefore, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." (2 Cor. 5:17) Deep within ourselves, beyond the realm of our conscious knowledge, grows a divine life – the child of God's Spirit, under His loving care, working in stillness, ever unwearied, never exhausted, ever growing

and maturing to gain control of our whole being and transform us into the image of God. This is the life that will be manifested in all fullness as the seven Spirits of God in and through the sons of God at the end of this age of preparation.

This new creation of which the Spirit speaks, this new spirit being, is blest not only with a new heart, but with a new mind as well. The mind which is produced in the new creation is in truth, the mind of Christ. "Who has known the mind of the Lord? But we have the mind of Christ." (1 Cor. 2:16) "... lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and put on the new self [identity], which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth." (Eph. 4:22-24) The believer who is born of the Holy Spirit is a new creature, a man with a new heart, a new spirit, and a new mind.

We will never in this age be fully able to comprehend the boundless power of the mind of man. Amazing miracles come forth from the mind of man, both of good and of evil. Though understanding not the things of God's Spirit, the natural mind is capable of astonishing wonders. All the marvelous inventions of the world have proceeded from the mind of man, though that natural mind receives not any of the things of God.

As heaven is higher than earth, so are God's thoughts and ways higher than man's. The most brilliant of mankind, even the best educated, most skilled in his field, most intelligent and innovative, most productive and inventive, still cannot understand the wisdom or ways of God, for his mind is darkened and his spirit is dead.

The man who receives of God's life is renewed in the spirit of his mind; that is, he takes on a new mind originating in Spirit life so that he thinks and acts as an entirely new creation, a new man. If he follows on to know the Lord, he will find that his darkened mind will come alive to this new-creation mind which is the mind of Jesus Christ. Paul wrote, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Jesus had His Father's mind, thus He was able to affirm, "I and My Father are one." The mind that was in Christ Jesus is freely offered to everyone who believes on His name, that he might be one with Christ and one with the Father: a son of God in unity with the Son of God.

How does God rule the universe? First, He rules through Christ Jesus, who said, "All authority has been given to Me..." (Mat. 28:18) But in those glorious ages to come, "... His bondservants shall serve Him ... the Lord God shall illumine them; and they shall reign forever and ever." (Rev. 22:3-5) How can they do that? Those bondservant-sons, every one, will have the Father's mind. God the Father gave His mind to His Son, Jesus Christ, and He in turn gives that same mind to us. As the hands and feet of a healthy body act in harmony with the head, so each member among the sons of God acts in harmony with the head, even Jesus, because one mind is in them all. Hallelujah!

All understanding is in the mind; therefore, God's understanding is in the mind of Christ, which is the mind of the Spirit, which is the mind of the new-creation man. My natural mind, the mind that understands how to drive my car, cannot understand the spiritual realities of God or the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. Not at all. It is the

new mind, the mind of Christ within me, that understands things spiritual.

When Jesus was baptized into the seven Spirits of God, He received the Spirit of Understanding. This was not the understanding of the same mind by which He made furniture in Joseph's carpenter shop. This Spirit of Understanding is one aspect of the fullness of the mind of God – to discern and understand as God understands.

The mind of Christ within must be developed. Understanding is a product of the development of the mind. The things of God are sensed in the spirit, but they can be understood only in the mind, even in the new-creation mind. We may know something of God in our spirit, but if our spiritual understanding is not adequately developed, we will not understand in practical terms what we sense. Sometimes, as we wait upon the Lord, it may take weeks or even months before we are able to understand what we sense in our spirit. Many times we sense in our spirit that a certain thing is true in God, but we cannot explain it from the Scriptures or put it into words. As we seek the Lord about it, understanding begins to come. Scriptures start to leap out of the Bible. Finally the truth of it crystallizes within our understanding, taking on form. We then understand what before we only sensed.

I have had this happen many times. Many of the truths we write in these pages began as something sensed in the spirit but not understood in the mind. As we waited on the Lord, the new-creation mind was able to pull it all together. Finally, we understood! The truth then declared is not a product of learning by the natural mind, but of the development of the mind of Christ within.

How we need the understanding in our mind to interpret what we sense in our spirit! The things of the Spirit of God are sensed by the function of the intuition in our spirit, but they can only be understood by the function of the understanding in our spiritual mind.

However, remember that we are yet both natural and spiritual; we possess both the natural and the spiritual minds. With your natural mind you may do your work, play, scheme how to make money, and do a thousand other natural things. But it is not that same mind that sees and understands the things of the Spirit. This is why we have so much dead religion in the world; men with their natural minds have endeavored to interpret spiritual things but since the natural mind neither receives nor understands the things of the Spirit of God, the doctrines, traditions, ceremonies, and programs of those carnal religious systems are no more of God than the Empire State Building in New York City is of God. They all belong to the same category; all are simply the products of the natural mind of man, unrelated to the Kingdom of God.

God is not in the business of improving the old, carnal, natural mind. He does not ask us to “reprogram” our natural mind, but to “put off” the old and “put on” the new. (Col. 3:10) “Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.” (Rom. 12:2) This is a total transformation. It will change our thoughts towards almost everything. Our thinking in the new-creation mind will reflect the image of Christ. The understanding of our mind (as renewed by the mind of Christ) will then be spiritual.

For example, many young Christians in colleges or universities today have the same thoughts about their studies and degrees as worldly young people. But if they would be renewed in the Spirit of their minds, putting on the thinking and understanding of Christ, their thoughts would change. This does not mean that they would give up their studies, but their focus, their worldview, would be different, giving them new goals and desires relating to their courses and teachers.

## **The Darkened Understanding**

Jer. 17:9; Prov. 3:5; 4:7; 9:10; 10:23; 16:16, 22;  
1 Cor. 14:20; 2 Cor. 4:3-6; Eph. 1:18; 4:17-18; 5:17;  
Col. 1:9-10; 2 Pet. 1:19; 1 Jn. 5:20;

“Wisdom is the principle thing,” said Solomon, “therefore get wisdom, and with all your getting, get understanding.” (Prov. 4:7) “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the holy is understanding.” (9:10) “It is sport to a fool to do mischief, but a man of understanding has wisdom.” (10:23) “It is better to get wisdom than gold, and understanding is rather to be chosen than choice silver.” (16:16)

Hear it! “Understanding is a wellspring of life unto him who has it.” (16:22) Certainly one reason so many billions of humans are lost upon this earth is that they neither know who, where, nor why they are. Truly, a great darkness is upon the human family. This condition is explained to us by the apostle Paul: “This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.” (Eph. 4:17)

Notice these conditions in the life of the unregenerate man:

1. Vanity characterizes his mind.
2. His understanding is darkened.
3. He is alienated from the life of God.
4. His alienation is because of ignorance.
5. This ignorance is blindness.

In this verse we learn, among other things, this simple truth: to be in darkness means to be ignorant. Ignorance is a condition of the mind in which the mind lacks knowledge and understanding. Paul tells us that men have “the understanding darkened” because of the “ignorance that is in them.” It is this condition of ignorance that causes the whole world of men to walk in darkness, being lost, “alienated from the life of God” in Christ.

There is a big difference between darkness and bondage. Darkness is the absence of something; whereas bondage is the power of something. Darkness is the absence of light, while bondage comes from a power (or force) that usurps and controls. The darkness in men is simply the absence of light – understanding. Men walk in spiritual darkness because they do not have light – truth. The blindness of their hearts has kept the glorious light of Christ from penetrating into their lives. But men are in bondage because they have been usurped by a power – Satan. They are slaves to his power over them.

It just takes light to dispel darkness, but only life can break bondage. The Lord told Paul that He had called him “to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.” (Acts 26:18) The people who sat in darkness saw a great light when Jesus came, but when

He healed the woman with the “spirit of infirmity” he said, “Ought not this woman whom Satan has bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond?” So you see that those who are walking in darkness, are also under bondage.

The bondage comes as a result of being in darkness, but the two are not the same. According to Paul, men in darkness are “alienated from life.” Because there is no life or strength in them, they also are usurped by the devil who brings them under bondage to his power. Since it is darkness that alienates men from life, receiving light enables them to see and appropriate life, and the life then gives them power to break the bondage. Light alone will not break the bondage in the lives of men, only life can do that.

“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them who are lost, in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ – who is the image of God – should shine unto them. For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (2 Cor. 4:3-4, 6) From this we learn that the glorious gospel of Christ is light, but this light is hid from those in whom the god of this world has blinded their minds, keeping them from understanding for, “Understanding is a wellspring of life unto him who has it.” (Prov. 16:22)

Lack of understanding puts men in darkness, darkness alienates men from life, and alienation from life allows men to be usurped by Satan and put under bondage to his power. Little wonder, then, that Satan is so interested in blinding men!

You can see this veil over the minds of men. Many times when an unbeliever comes to hear a good message of the gospel, we think, “Oh, tonight this man will surely be influenced toward the Lord; certainly he will be saved!” But when he leaves, his mind is still blank. The mind is the understanding organ, and the god of this world has blinded his mind. Regardless how good the message is and how much he has heard, Satan blocks it by blinding his understanding.

Some years ago a brother preaching the gospel said that God’s intention was not for us to “do good,” as our “good works” do not merit anything with God. He stressed this point so much that it was very clear. Another brother had brought a friend. From time to time during the message, he noticed that he was nodding his head positively as if he understood. The brother was so happy, thinking his friend was listening carefully and receiving what was being ministered. But afterwards the brother asked his friend, “What do you think about the message?” He replied, “Yes, all religions encourage people to do good!” This indicated that his understanding had been blinded by the enemy.

As participators with God in bringing His Kingdom to pass in this earth, we must bind the god of this age from his blinding operation upon men. I declare to you that this can be done in the power of the Holy Spirit. The true light has now shined in our hearts, giving the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (See 2 Cor. 4:6) “And we know that the Son of God is come, and has given us an understanding that may we know Him who is true, and we are in Him who is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ.” (1 Jn. 5:20a)

It is true that the light of Christ has now shined into our hearts, yet I know that we have not at this present time experienced the fullness of that light. When we were first saved, just enough light shone in to reveal Jesus to us as Savior. We joyfully embraced what was revealed unto us in that measure of light, but what a great darkness prevailed even yet in so many areas of our lives!

Peter writes, “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; to which you do well to pay attention, as unto a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the day star arises in your hearts.” (2 Pet. 1:19) Peter states that this light shines in a “dark place.” And I ask you, dear Reader, what darker place could there be in the universe than the heart of man? The Almighty told Jeremiah that, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” (Jer. 17:9)

Now truly the glorious light has shined in that dark place of the heart of man, yet, we still await that “arising” of the day star in our hearts, which shall be as the brightness and glory of the noontime sun. We praise God for that measure of light that has shined, and we eagerly await the arising of the day star – the Sun of Righteousness. “The path of the just is as the shining light, that shines brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.” (Prov. 4:18)

How many of the Lord’s people are still satisfied with the first dim glow that awoke the dawn of their spiritual experience? How many have tasted God at the baby level of the gifts and are content? How many never follow on to know the fullness of the arising Sun of Righteousness, who would flood their whole being with the transcendent glory and majesty of the glory of the Lord?

The dead carnal church systems were built by men who were saved by receiving just enough light to know Jesus as Savior, and then, out of the overshadowing gloom of darkness yet untouched in their carnal hearts, they proceeded to build upon the foundation of Christ every kind of grotesque institution of tradition, error, and worldliness: towering edifices of hay, wood, and stubble soon to be consumed in the fire of God's judgment. The day of judgment shall declare before the eyes of all exactly what proceeded from the darkness of man's carnal hearts, in contrast with what was born of the Spirit of God.

Let us not forget that understanding is the key to everything in God. Faith comes by understanding the will of God. This is why Paul wrote, "Brethren, be not children in understanding; yet in malice be children, but in understanding be men." (1 Cor. 14:20) Paul's prayer for the Ephesian brethren was, "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know [by understanding] what is the hope of His calling, and what riches – the glory of His inheritance – are in the saints." (Eph. 1:18) Again, "Wherefore be not unwise but understanding what the will of the Lord is." (Eph. 5:17) "For this cause we also, since the day we heard of it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." (Col. 1:9-10)

Faith comes by understanding. How could any of us get saved before we came to understand that we were lost, sinners, and that Jesus died and rose again for us? Was it not when we came to understand the simple gospel that faith was born in our hearts unto salvation? This came by the Holy Spirit.

Show me a man who doesn't understand that Jesus died for him, and I will show you a man who isn't saved. Show me a man who doesn't understand that the Lord has provided a baptism in the Holy Spirit, and I will show you a man who has not been Spirit-filled. Show me a man who doesn't understand that saints are supposed to go on to perfection, and I'll show you a carnal Christian who is not actively experiencing the means God uses to produce perfection. Show me a man who doesn't understand that the hope of creation is the manifestation of the sons of God, and I'll show you a man who is just waiting to be whisked away to some far-away heaven somewhere at the "rapture" and knows nothing of the deep and vital dealings of God that produce mature sons. The degree of our faith is proportionate to the degree of our spiritual understanding, which corresponds to the amount of light and truth that has shined into our minds and hearts by the Holy Spirit. We will be filled with light (understanding) to the same degree that our new-creation mind has been developed.

Have you ever prayed that God would open the eyes of your understanding that you might know what is the hope of His calling and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints? Ah, how much better this would be than to seek the passing vanities of this present world to the detriment of your devotion to God. God provides us with many good things, and we should receive and enjoy them as well as share them to encourage others. But the heart of the Father is truly pained when He beholds His sons diligently rushing about "doing good," while missing the best of all.

Walk no longer in the vanity of your mind, having the understanding darkened, while alienating yourself from the life of God through ignorance. Set your priorities on things above, not on things of this carnal life, for they make themselves wings and fly away, never to yield any eternal reward.

We are exhorted, “Be not children in understanding, yet in malice be children, but in understanding be men.” (1 Cor. 14:20) But for centuries God’s people have been men in malice but children in understanding. The pages of church history show that from Bible times, the church has been a vast feuding ground of malice, envy, bitterness, and strife, full of pettiness, peevishness, debate, whisperings, deceit, backbiting, gossip, and evil speaking. Have they not then been men in malice and children in understanding?

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not unto your own understanding,” says the Lord. (Prov. 3:5) Yet how often the Lord’s people are found leaning to their own understanding, and generally that is nothing more than the faulty understanding of other men whose traditions, interpretations, and deductions they have accepted.

Human understanding is so terribly limited! It is limited because it contains nothing of God’s understanding, and is, therefore, as faulty as is the nature of man. Just as the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, so the knowledge of the holy is understanding. (See Prov. 9:10)

Understanding will never be yours by following the traditions of the dead church systems, for they know nothing of the things of the Spirit of God. From the beginning, it has been Satan’s policy to misrepresent truth and distort and carnalize the Word of God,

in order to hinder mankind from seeing the beauty and majesty of the eternal purposes of God. The more absurdities Satan can get interwoven into man’s creeds, doctrines, and concepts about God, the church, the world, sin, eternity, the destiny of man, and so on, the better he succeeds in separating men from God. Thus for centuries the adversary has been working most successfully. He has hidden the most precious and wonderful truths under the most specious and repulsive errors, and progress of the Lord’s people has been correspondingly slow.

But, thank God, we are now living in the time when the veil of ignorance is being dissolved and the Lord’s people are being drawn by the Spirit to look away from the creeds, systems, and programs formed for their enslavement during ages past, to look directly to the Word of God itself and to the living God of the Word – bless His name! Therefore lean no longer upon your own understanding. Judge neither after the sight of the eyes nor the hearing of the ears, but seek that living Spirit of Understanding that comes from God alone.

## **Two Aspects of Understanding**

Gen. 8:20-22; 1 Chron. 28:9; Isa. 11:2-5;  
Ps. 103:13-14; 119:73, 102-104;  
Heb. 2:16-18; 4:14-16; 5:1-2; 2 Pet. 3:18

The understanding of the new-creation mind functions in two directions: toward God and toward man. The godward aspect includes all spiritual understanding of God Himself by which we are able to see and know the realities of the Spirit of God. In this aspect of understanding, we constantly “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (2 Pet. 3:18)

The second function of divine understanding is also an understanding issuing from the nature and life of God; however, its direction is manward. This area of understanding is the ability to see and understand men, together with their ways, actions, intents, and condition, in that same spirit and attitude in which God Himself views them. No man shall ever be qualified to rule over the nations until he has first been made a partaker of this Spirit of Understanding from God. This is what the Spirit indicated when He inspired the prophet to write, "And the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding... and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes neither reprove after the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked." (Isa. 11:2-5)

Divine understanding does not judge either by the sight of the eye or the hearing of the ear, but with righteousness it judges the poor and decides for (in favor of) the meek and downtrodden. In the face of the condemning multitudes it cries, "... judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise of God." (1 Cor. 4:5)

It was not only love and forgiveness that led Jesus to tell the woman accused of adultery, "Neither do I condemn you, go and sin no more." It was also the Spirit of Understanding. In dealing with humanity, God never forgets that we are "dust," and

He remembers just the kind of muck from which our bodies and souls came. He knows the lies and traditions we have inherited. The eye of the all-seeing God certainly sees what we sometimes see, that men have in their up-bringing, their education, even in their very blood, been saturated with sin and the world. God knows that as a result of Adam's transgression, men have lived and died mired in godless attitudes and actions, in deceptions and heresies, in diseases and fears – miserable creatures who by inherited nature are the children of wrath, blinded by the god of this world, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ – who is the image of God – should shine into them. (2 Cor. 4:4)

David admonished his son Solomon as he was about to take the throne of Israel, "And you Solomon my son, know the God of your father and serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts, and understands all the imaginations of the thoughts." (1 Chron. 28:9) David understood something of the justice of God which proceeds from understanding the frailties of mortal man, for he wrote, "As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on them that fear Him; for He knows [understands] our frame; He remembers that we are dust." (Ps. 103:13)

This aspect of the Lord's understanding was revealed early in human history. When Noah came forth from the ark following the deluge, we read, "And Noah built an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled the sweet savor; and the Lord said in His heart, I will never again curse the ground on account of man; for the intent of man's heart

is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy everything living as I have done. While the earth remains, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.” (Gen. 8:20-22)

When the Lord smelled the sweet savor of Noah’s sacrifice, He said within Himself that He would never again destroy all living things because of man’s wickedness. This was a council made with His own heart, a decision made by His own will. He made an unconditional covenant with Himself concerning the whole earth, never again to kill all living creatures throughout the ages of the earth. This Noahic covenant will never cease. God purposed never again to curse the ground, no matter how evil man would become, “for” said He, “the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth.”

The next time you feel like condemning men for their slowness to see God’s glories, just defer to the Spirit of Understanding that it may possess you; then you will know that the god of this world has blinded the minds of men – God alone can open the eyes of him who was born blind!

We pity a man who is handicapped because of a physical defect from birth, for understanding teaches us that his affliction is no fault of his own. Why then do we cast aside the Spirit of Understanding by thinking that he whose spiritual eyes have never been opened ought to be able to see the mountains filled with the hosts of the Lord? If the men who crucified the Lord of glory had not been blinded by the god of this world, they would never have done it; therefore, the Spirit of Understanding guiding Jesus’ soul prayed, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

For many years, there was an area in which I was extremely intolerant toward people possessed of a particular fault. When someone would fall into that error I would contend, “I don’t understand how anyone could ever do that and think God led them into it!” I understood how a carnal Christian could stumble into this sin, but I couldn’t understand how someone claiming to be walking by the Spirit of God could walk into it believing that God led him there.

Then one day, due to some unforeseen and complex circumstances, the very same spirit of error came upon me. I found myself irresistibly drawn toward the same sin that I had condemned in others. The deception was so cunning that I found myself actually believing that it was the Lord leading me! Suddenly wrong felt so right! Under this attack, my values got so distorted that I was ready to call the flesh Spirit and the Spirit flesh. It all seemed so right, so logical, yes even so – spiritual! God, who is exceedingly gracious and altogether faithful, delivered me from that snare of the devil ere I fell into the trap so craftily laid for me. Today, I am as much opposed to that particular error as I ever was, for the Word of God opposes it. But one thing the Lord taught me for sure: never again can I say, “I don’t understand how anyone could do that and think God led them into it!” Now I do understand.

This personal example is one aspect of understanding God ministered to my own heart through experience. But look not to me, only to Jesus. On Him rests the abundance of that Spirit of Understanding in fullness! Marvelous is the realization that this One on whom rests the Spirit of Understanding is both our Savior and also our High Priest.

“Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, who is passed into the heavens – Jesus the Son of God – let us hold fast to our profession. For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Heb. 4:14-16)

One of the requirements for priesthood, under the typical laws of the Old Testament, was that the priest be a man of compassion – that kind of compassion which sprang from his own experience, as he himself also was bound by infirmity. “Every high priest is selected from among men and is appointed to represent them in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is thus able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness.” (Heb. 5:1-2)

This wonderful type was fulfilled in our great High Priest, Jesus. “Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared their humanity... For surely it is not angels He helps, but Abraham’s descendants. For this reason He had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest... that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because He Himself suffered when He was tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted.” (Heb. 2:14, 16-18) Yes Jesus became man to pay the penalty for our sin and show us the way to the Father, but He also became man to fulfill the type of the high priest who has suffered every weakness and temptation, and thus for those bound by sin is able to show mercy and forgiveness.

As the “royal priesthood” of God, and as the “body” of our great High Priest, Jesus Christ, we are destined to reign as king-priests over all nations during that glorious age now dawning. Therefore, we need to understand this principle of the priesthood: the condition that develops compassion in us is that we ourselves get beset, hedged in, by the same problems, needs, and difficulties that are going to come upon the people to whom we minister. If we are intolerant of certain faults in others, it may be because we have never been afflicted by that particular weakness, nor faced the same pressure, nor been tormented by that temptation; therefore we lack a spirit of understanding and a heart of mercy and compassion.

This Spirit of Understanding is one of the seven Spirits of Sonship that shall rest like a cloud of glory upon the sons of God. By these shall the glory and order of God’s Kingdom be established across the earth. Any man who would reign in that glorious Kingdom must first partake of the fullness of these seven Spirits. Let us pray for the Spirit of Understanding. May the deep and fervent cry expressed from the heart of the psalmist become even the cry of the sons of God in this hour, “Your hands have made me and fashioned me; give me understanding that I may learn Your commandments.” (Ps. 119:73)

How readily the Lord inclined His ear unto the psalmist’s earnest petition! He sent forth the answer immediately. It is found in verses 102-104. “I have not departed from Your judgments, for You have taught me. How sweet are Your words unto my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through Your precepts I get understanding, therefore I hate every false way.”

# Chapter 8 – The Spirit of Counsel

## Introduction

“These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God.” (Rev. 3:1)

“And the Spirit of the Lord [Jehovah] shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge and of the Fear of the Lord [Jehovah].” (Isa. 11:2)

The fourth Spirit of Sonship is the Spirit of Counsel. Since the Word of the Almighty has called this the “Spirit” of Counsel we must understand that this counsel is not in any way an operation of human counsel, which is nothing more than the deliberation of the carnal mind. Carnal men toil for long years in schools of “higher education” to learn this world’s systems of psychology, psychiatry, psychoanalysis, and methods of psychotherapy. These at best deal only with the effects of man’s problems and not with the real causes. The wisdom and counsel of God is rejected by the counselors of this evil world, for in their darkened minds, they deal only in the realm of the soul. They deny the entire realm of heaven and hell and God and Judgment Day – the realm of the Spirit. They start with the premise that there is no God and we evolved from pond scum, so how can you expect to have any truth left?

Thus they can recognize neither the glory of God nor the power of Satan. They do not understand that the whole world of mankind is indeed, “dead in trespasses and sins, in which at one time you also walked.

You were following the course of this world. You were under the sway of this present age, following the prince of the power of the air, obedient to him and under his control, the demon spirit that still constantly works in the sons of disobedience... Among these we as well as you once lived and conducted ourselves in the passions of our flesh – our behavior governed by our corrupt, sensual nature; obeying the impulses of the flesh and the thoughts of the mind – our cravings dictated by our senses and our dark imaginings. We were then by nature children of God’s wrath and heirs of His indignation, like the rest of mankind.” (Eph. 2:1-3, AMP)

The only real solution to the chaotic problems in men’s lives is found in the very next verses. “But God! So rich is He in His mercy! Because of, and in order to satisfy, the great and wonderful and intense love with which He loved us, even when we were dead, slain by our own shortcomings and trespasses, God made us alive, together in fellowship and in union with Christ. He gave us the very life of Christ Himself, the same new life with which He quickened Him. For it is by grace – by His favor and mercy which you did not deserve – that you are saved [delivered from judgment and given eternal life in Christ]. And He raised us up together with Him and made us sit down together – giving us joint seating with Him – in the heavenly sphere by virtue of our being in Christ Jesus the Messiah, the Anointed One.” (Eph. 2:4-6, AMP)

Many years ago, in my early days of ministry, I found it very difficult to counsel people in their problems. People came with such miserable bondages, enslaved to such wretched circumstances and conditions, in such tangled and hopeless messes in their lives, with such involved family situations, financial problems, physical and emotional problems, so unbelievably desperate, that more times than not I felt overwhelmed, empty and helpless before them.

To improve my ability to help people in their problems I sought to study books on counseling, psychology, and so on. But alas! To my dismay, I soon discovered these books were as empty of life and truth and as full of weakness and death as I myself.

I thank God for that blessed day when the answer came from heaven, the light of God's Holy Spirit of Counsel burst like the noonday sun upon my understanding, and the voice of Jesus resounded like thunder in the ears of my spirit, "I am the way, the truth, and the life!" (Jn. 14:6)

In one instant of time, I clearly saw that there are not twenty-five different solutions to twenty-five different problems – there is only one solution for every single problem of every single person on the face of this earth. There is only one answer, the same answer, to a zillion problems, from the petty troubles of individuals to the staggering, frightening dilemmas of nations and civilizations. Jesus is the answer. There is no other answer, no other way, no other counsel. The question always boils down to, "How can I find life, real life, as it ought to be?" And the answer is simply, "He who has the Son has the life, and he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life." (1 Jn. 5:12)

With sorrow did the Master reprove a people 2,000 years ago (who were not one whit different from the masses that walk the land today) declaring, "The Father who sent Me, He has borne witness of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. And you do not have His Word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent.... *and you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life.*" (Jn. 5:37-38, 40, emphasis added) Life is only found in Christ.

How greatly this one sublime truth simplified, for me, the giving of counsel unto men in their problems and sorrows! What life and power were released to heal, deliver, and transform these poor people out of every kind of pit of bondage and despair!

How many of the world's peoples, how many of the world's Christians, enmeshed in the carnal system of religion which calls itself the church, seek human counsel which is, in all reality, nothing more than the advice of men who are walking in fallen, unregenerate, carnal minds. As a worm looks at things through the eyes of a worm with its limited understanding, so fallen men see all things through carnal minds and give their darkened counsel. Often the counselor is in greater darkness than the counseled.

It is ludicrous to hear what the world accepts as counsel. Students seek to counsel the faculties of our universities. Adolescents counsel their parents. Divorced people serve as marriage counselors to those with marital issues. The unmarried instruct the married. The childless counsel fathers and mothers in the arts of child-rearing. Those who have spent their lives in ivory-towered academia train pupils to live "out there in the world," "... the blind leading the blind." (Mat. 15:14)

The carnal mind has nothing more to offer in counsel but darkness and death, for the carnal mind is dead, and knows nothing at all of that which pertains to life. For the children of God to seek counsel from the experts of this world, whether psychologists, psychiatrists, marriage counselors, or even the ministers of religion in the harlot church systems, is as futile and worthless as seeking counsel from a corpse.

“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” (Rom. 8:6) In the Amplified Bible this is rendered, “Now the mind of the flesh, which is sense and reason without the Holy Spirit, is death – but the mind of the Spirit is life and soul-peace now and forevermore.”

The carnal mind today is even more corrupt and dark than in past ages, for it has suffered the unrelenting process of 6,000 years of deterioration and degeneration. You have only to follow the news which daily flows forth from the radio, television, and newspapers, and it will soon be clearly seen that the counsel given by the wise men of the earth gives naught but greater fear and frustration until men’s hearts fail for fear at the things that are coming upon the earth.

Hear now the counsel of God penned long centuries ago by one who had learned the wisdom of the counsel of the Lord. “Blessed – happy, fortunate, prosperous, and enviable – is the man who walks and lives not in the counsel of the ungodly, following their advice, their plans and purposes, nor stands in the path where sinners walk, nor sits down where the scornful gather. But his delight and desire are in the law of the Lord – the precepts, the instructions, the teachings of God – in these he habitually meditates by

day and by night. And he shall be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, ready to bring forth his fruit in its season; his leaf also shall not fade or wither, and everything he does shall prosper and come to maturity.” (Ps. 1:1-3, AMP)

Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, says the Lord. How naïvely many of the Lord’s people accept it as something of great spiritual and national import when our president announces that he begins each day with a prayer asking God to help him make the right decisions for our nation. Laudable as that seems to the unenlightened mind, yet, I ask, how can one receive counsel and direction from the Lord if he asks but then refuses to listen to the counsel of God and straightway goes out and receives his counsel from the carnally-minded “wise” men of the world? Truly can I say to you that God does not channel His counsel through the ungodly labor leaders, dictators, world bankers, college professors, businessmen, communist governments, and especially the other politicians with whom our president daily confers and from whom he seeks advice and counsel.

Being a nominal Christian does not qualify any man to rule our nation in the wisdom and righteousness of God, for truly such are merely “babes” in Christ. The inspiration of God has this to say of babes, “I could not talk to you as to spiritual men, but as to nonspiritual men of the flesh, in whom the carnal nature predominates, as to mere infants in the new life in Christ. For you are still unspiritual, having the nature of the flesh – behaving yourselves after a human standard and like mere unchanged men.” (1 Cor. 3:1, 3, AMP)

Any president could lead in greater wisdom and in greater blessing to the nation and the whole world, if he would call as his advisors prophets of God in whose mouth is the sure word of the Lord and if instead of holding a cabinet meeting with unregenerate “experts,” they would begin each day with a prayer meeting, seeking the counsel of God, and then simply do what the Spirit directs.

“Cause me to hear Your loving-kindness in the morning; for in You, O Lord do I trust; cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto You.” (Ps. 143:8) “Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Your countenance.” (Ps. 89:15)

### **The Counsel of God**

Isa. 11:2, 4, 9; 40:13-14; Acts 15:18;  
Rom. 9:19; 11:34-36; 1 Cor. 1:17;  
Eph. 1:4-5, 9, 11; 3:11; Col. 1:14-15

The carnal church system, having rejected the counsel of the Lord, seeks to reign through creeds, doctrines, laws, shame or fear manipulation, and political influence over human leaders. Again, none of those things have life. Their result “with God” is no better than the world systems without God. It is still the blind leading the blind.

But blessed be God, the age is very near at hand when the sons of God shall reign with Christ in transcending glory and power. The mind of Christ shall dwell richly in all the sons of God, and from that divine mind shall flow forth the counsel of the Lord.

Counsel is advice; the counsel of God is the advice of God. However, counsel is much more than mere advice. There are three important words which keep company in the Scriptures: will, counsel and purpose.

Some of the words translated as will and purpose are actually related to the Greek word translated counsel, for they all derive from the same stem. One of the Greek words translated will is *boulema*. (Rom. 9:19) One of the Greek words translated purpose is *bouleoumai*. (1 Cor. 1:17) The primary word for counsel in the Greek is *boule*. (Eph. 1:11)

You don’t have to be a Greek scholar to look at these three words and tell they are related. They are related because purpose proceeds from will and is then expressed as counsel. So the counsel of God is the advice of God, but it is more than advice. It is also the very will and purpose of the Almighty. Counsel from the Lord reveals the deliberate purpose of God. It is discernment and good judgment, taken by consultation with the Lord. Thus it is the Lord’s own judgment.

The counsel of God begins as His own sovereign will, the eternal purpose which God holds in His own heart and mind. Since God is the first and highest life-form in the universe, the cause of all things and the effect of nothing, He did not from eternity receive counsel from any being nor did He form His purposes in consultation with any other. Thus we can understand that which is written of Him, “Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He has purposed in Himself.” (Eph. 1:9)

The verses surrounding this verse speak of how the Father chose us “in Christ” before the foundation of the world “that we should be holy and without blame before Him, in love having predestined us unto the adoption of children [placement as sons] by Christ Jesus unto Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.” (Eph. 1:4-5)

In purposing and planning for this vast family of sons who are finally to come into the glorious image of that first-born Son, the Father was not prompted nor inspired to this purpose by selecting some suggestions from the celestial suggestion box, nor by holding a council and collaborating with His peers. He “purposed in Himself!” When my wife and I made the decision to have children in our home we didn’t ask our neighbors if they thought this was a good idea, neither did we consult my parents nor my wife’s relatives. We purposed in ourselves.

Let it be forever established in our mind and heart that, “Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world.” (Acts 15:1) We are participators, “actors upon the stage,” in the actual playing out of those “works” of God because we were “chosen in Him,” and “in Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will.” (Eph. 1:11)

Isaiah asked this rhetorical question, “Who has directed the Spirit of Jehovah, or being His counselor has taught Him? With whom took He counsel? Who instructed Him or taught Him in the path of judgment? Who taught Him knowledge, or showed to Him the way of understanding?” (Isa. 40:13-14) Paul reiterates the same question, “For who has known the mind of the Lord... or who has ever been His counselor? Or who has first given God anything that he might be paid back or claim a recompense? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.” (Rom. 11:34-36) J. B. Phillips renders that last verse, “For everything began with Him, continues its existence because of Him, and ends in Him.”

The answer, of course, is obvious. No one has been His counselor. Seeing that “He is before all things, and by Him all things consist,” (Col. 1:17) how could anything have been a counselor unto Him who created it?

The purposes and plans of God are as eternal as is the God who purposed and planned. We must understand that God did not sit down one day on His glorious throne and just “think up” the idea of creation, nor of His glorious Kingdom, nor of His family of sons who would share His glory.

If God is omniscient (all-knowing), as the Scripture affirms He is and has always been, it follows that there never was a time when He did not know what all His actions would be. Then there never could have been a time when He had not already planned and purposed in His own mind and heart for all that He would bring forth from Himself for all time; for then there would have been a time when He was not omniscient – indeed a time when He was not God!

God has always been God; He has always been omniscient and omnipotent; He has always known all things; He has always planned and purposed for all things. This is why God’s purpose is called “the eternal purpose.” (Eph. 3:11) The purpose is fulfilled within the framework of “the ages” of time, but His “purpose” originates from eternity.

Eternity is timelessness, beyond time. It is changeless, for it requires time to change. In eternity, God is all and in all, perfect and complete in matchless splendor, along with everything He ever thought to accomplish. Thus His “eternal purpose” transcends time. His glorious “plan of the ages” was perfect and complete before time began and is not dependent on anything happening in time.

## **The Wonderful Counselor**

Isa. 9:6-7; 11:2, 4, 9; 28:29; Jer. 32:17-19; Rev. 11:15

The hour is near at hand when the whole world shall come under the Spirit of Counsel manifested in God's sons, for God has said of this corporate Son (head and body), "And the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon Him... the Spirit of Counsel... with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth... they shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain [kingdom]; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. 11:2, 4, 9) The exact counsel that Jesus Christ Himself will give will be the counsel of the whole body of sons, for upon them shall rest the Spirit of Counsel. The sons of God shall be the embodiment and full expression of the whole counsel of God for all the earth. Christ shall rule the earth by the Spirit of Counsel through His sons – they shall faithfully manifest in the physical realm what their head is saying in the realm of Spirit.

This sevenfold anointing of the fullness of God's Spirit rested first upon the glorious head of the house of sons. Isaiah 9:6-7 is a wonderful prophecy of the birth of Jesus and worldwide growth of His government. To help us grasp more fully what His rule will mean for the nations, this prophecy assigns to Him some significant titles. "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Some Hebrew scholars claim that no punctuation should follow the word "wonderful;" that it is an adjective, like "mighty" in the title, "the mighty God," or "everlasting" in the title, "the everlasting

Father." We know, of course, that Jesus is "wonderful." No matter how we view Him, He is altogether "wonderful!" But it does seem reasonable, and in harmony with the revelation of God, that He is here telling us primarily that "Wonderful Counselor" is one title for Christ Jesus.

The term "counselor," as used in this prophecy, means far more than just one who gives advice. It includes the concept of an attorney – one who represents a client before the bar of justice. It is in this capacity that Jesus now represents the church, His body, and in this capacity, He will act on behalf of the whole world in His glorious reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. His work as counselor will be closely akin to His role as judge, for the judge is the counselor. In both respects, He will deal with the people for the purpose of reconciling them to God, and on this basis, point them all toward life and the blessings and benefits of the Kingdom.

Indeed, Jesus is a wonderful Counselor and a righteous Judge! Isaiah declared of Him, "This also comes forth from the Lord of hosts, who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working." (Isa. 2:29) It is almost possible to hear the exultation in Jeremiah's voice as he proclaims, "Ah Lord God! Behold, You have made the heaven and the earth by Your great power and out-stretched arm, and nothing is too hard for You... the great, the Mighty God, the Lord of hosts is His name, great in counsel, and mighty in deed." (Jer. 32:17-19) "The Spirit of the Lord [Jehovah] shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge and of the Fear of the Lord; and... with righteousness shall He judge..." (Isa. 11:2-4)

I stand in awe before such wonderful words. Truly, One with such qualifications will deal justly with the people, and we can be assured that under His righteous reign, there shall be a worldwide turning unto God in which every prophecy shall see its long awaited fulfillment, “And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ [head and body], and He shall reign forever and ever.’” (Rev. 11:15) “He says, ‘It is too small a thing that you should be My servant to raise up [only] the tribes of Jacob, and to restore [only] the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make you a light of the nations so that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth.’” (Isa. 49:6)

### **Counselors in the Kingdom**

Judg. 3:9-11; Ps. 96:10-13; 98:4, 8-9; Isa. 1:24-26; 26:9; Dan. 7:21-22; 1 Cor. 6:2; Heb. 10:26-29; James 2:13; 2 Pet. 3:7; Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21; 14:6-7; 20:4

Not only will this Wonderful Counselor reign in righteousness over the earth, but that great company of overcoming sons shall reign with Him. “And He who overcomes... to him will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron.” (Rev. 2:26-27) “To him who overcomes will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame and am seated with My Father in His throne.” (Rev. 3:21) “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them. Judgment was given unto them... and they reigned with Christ a thousand years.” (Rev. 20:4) “And they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads... because the Lord God shall illumine them, and they shall reign forever and ever.” (Rev. 22:5)

Centuries before John penned those verses, Isaiah prophesied of the day of God’s divine government in and through His sons. “Therefore says the Lord... I will be relieved of My adversaries, and avenge Myself of My enemies; and I will turn My hand upon you, and purely purge away your dross, and take away your tin; and I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counselors as at the beginning; afterward you shall be called the City of Righteousness, the Faithful City.” (Isa. 1:24-26)

Jesus is the Wonderful Counselor, but there shall also be a restoration of counselors and faithful judges to God’s people and eventually to the whole world. Who these judges and counselors are is not difficult to determine, for the testimony of Scripture is unified in declaring that judgment shall be given to the saints of God. “... until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the Kingdom.” (Dan. 7:21-22) “Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world? Do you not know that we shall judge angels?” (1 Cor. 6:1-2) “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” (Rev. 20:4)

“Let the godly ones [the saints] exult in glory; let them sing for joy on their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute [God’s] vengeance [judgment] on the nations, and punishment on the peoples; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute on them the judgment written; this is an honor for all His godly ones.” (Ps. 149:5-9)

Understand now the precious truth that even as Jesus is both judge and counselor (lawyer, representing us before the bar of justice, pleading our cause), so the sons of God are given not only as judges of the world but also as counselors to the nations. The Old Testament book of Judges gives a description of how God raised up judges to execute justice, turn the people back to God, and relieve oppression among God's people. They were anointed to be Israel's "saviors" by a special endowment of the Spirit of God. Throughout the administration of the judges, the people were blessed. Especially when Israel was under oppression by their enemies because they had forsaken God, when they cried out to God, Israel was released from bondage and blessed through the judges. Thus we read, "When the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer, who delivered them... Othniel... and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war... and prevailed... and the land had rest forty years." (Judg. 3:9-11)

Similarly, the church and the world have been under the power and oppression of the adversary, Satan. God does not wish them pain, yet He has allowed it to bring them to the place where they will cry out to Him for deliverance. Then He who paid for the sins of the whole world with His own precious blood will take His great power and reign. He, through His sons, will deliver and judge those whom He so loved as to redeem, just like He sent the judges to Israel when they cried out to Him. With this conclusion all the prophetic declarations agree. "... with righteousness shall He judge the world, and the people with equity." (Ps. 98:9)

When God declares that in the last days He will raise up, "your judges as at the first, and your counselors as at the beginning," (Isa. 1:26) this does not mean that the judges and the counselors are two different classes of people. This is a form of Hebrew poetry, in which the thought of the first phrase is repeated in the next, using different words. In the Old Testament economy, when God ruled Israel through the judges, the judges were the counselors. These are two aspects of ministry embodied in the same person.

A distorted picture often comes to mind when we speak of "judgment." The only judgment most people know is the judgment of God's wrath and condemnation, as on "Judgment Day." The view generally held is that of Christ coming to earth seated sternly upon a great white throne. He summons every sinner in rank and file before Him to be judged, amidst terrifying convulsions of nature – widespread earthquakes, opening graves, falling stars, rending rocks, and crumbling mountains. Trembling sinners will be brought from the depths of woe to hear their many sins rehearsed, only to be returned to an eternal and merciless doom of unspeakable torture. The saints will be brought from heaven to witness the misery and despair of the condemned, to hear the Judge's favorable decision in their own cases and to return to heaven and to their rewards.

This is a crude concept, and it is out of harmony with the full biblical picture of judgment. It is true that God's judgment has the aspect of wrath and condemnation – every sinner has certainly earned God's holy wrath! All should stand in reverence and godly fear before the prospects of a judgment such as that spoken of in Hebrews 10:26-31.

“For if we sin willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries. He who despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, do you suppose, shall he be thought worthy who has trodden under foot the Son of God and has counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and has insulted the Spirit of Grace? It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” Peter also speaks of a judgment of destruction: “But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition [punishment in hell, damnation, destruction] of ungodly men.” (2 Pet. 3:7)

The judgments of God, however, are much broader and more glorious than just that one aspect of judgment would indicate. May we be enabled by the gracious Spirit of the merciful God to fully comprehend what the apostle James meant when he penned the following words, “For he shall have judgment without mercy, who has showed no mercy; mercy rejoices against judgment.” (James 2:13) The New American Standard Bible renders this, “For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; but mercy triumphs over judgment.” Jesus said, “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” (Mat. 5:7, NASB) David wrote of the Lord, “For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endures to all generations.” (Ps. 100:5) “Your mercy, O Lord, endures forever; forsake not the works of Your hands.” (Ps. 138:8)

Mercy triumphs over judgment in the heart of God! The judgments of God are not limited to wrath and destruction. Revelation expresses a higher purpose of judgment: “Then I saw another angel flying in mid-air, with an eternal gospel to tell the earth’s inhabitants, to every race, tribe, language, and people. And he cried with a mighty voice, ‘Revere God and give Him glory, honor and praise in worship, for the hour of His judgment has arrived. Fall down before Him; pay Him homage and adoration; worship Him who created heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.’” (Rev. 14:6-7)

The Scriptures are filled with references to the judgments of God on the earth, giving assurance that it will be a most wonderful and glorious time. In fact, we are exhorted to rejoice because of the coming of the Lord to bring judgment! “Say among the heathen that the Lord reigns; the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved; He shall judge the people righteously. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein; then shall all the trees of the woods [common people] rejoice before the Lord; for He comes – for He comes to judge the earth; He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth.” (Ps. 96:10-13) “Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth; make a loud noise, and rejoice and sing praise... Let the sea [peoples] roar, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. Let the floods [multitudes] clap their hands, let the hills be joyful together before the Lord, for He comes to judge the earth; with righteousness shall He judge the world, and the people with equity.”

(Ps. 98:4, 7-9) “The judgments of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether. They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold. Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is Your servant warned and in keeping of them there is great reward.” (Ps. 19:9-11) Many other Scriptures talk about how God’s mercy is found even in His judgment, and tell us that His wrath (judgment) is but for a moment, while His mercy endures forever. (For example, Ps. 30:5; 78:34-38; 103:9, 14; 118; 136; Jer. 3:12 ff; Isa. 26:20-21; 28:21-22; 54:7-8)

Much of the Gospel of Isaiah speaks of judgment, but always with the promise of redemption woven in. (Some good examples are Isa. 30:25-26; 32:14-18; 33:13-24; chapters 34 and 35; 40:1-11; and many others.) “Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations... A bruised reed He will not break, and a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish; He will faithfully bring forth justice [judgment]. He will not be disheartened or crushed until He has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands will wait expectantly [eagerly] for His law.” (Isa. 42:1-4)

Not only shall the Lord bring judgment across the earth but, with that judgment, counselors. A counselor is more than one who gives advice. As noted before, the term also includes the concept of judge-advocate or attorney – one who represents a client before the bar of justice to plead his cause. Through these ruling judges who are also counselors, the nations shall be turned to the Lord. In the Old Testament, that was always the primary purpose of the judges, to restore the people’s relationship to their God.

Bear in mind that these judges rule. They are not kings, for they don’t rule in their own authority, yet they do rule for the King of kings under His authority. The time of the judges was actually supposed to be a true theocracy, for at the end, God said to Samuel (Israel’s last true judge), “... they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being King over them.” (1 Sam. 8:7)

In the age to come, we see the sons of God ascending their thrones. “And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them.” (Rev. 20:4) The result of this manifestation of the fullness of God is glorious. “The city [the government of God] has no need of the sun nor of the moon to give light to it, for the splendor and radiance of God illuminate it, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations shall walk by its light and the rulers and leaders of the earth shall bring into it their glory. And its gates shall never be closed by day, and there shall be no night there. They shall bring the glory – splendor and majesty – and the honor of the nations into it.” (Rev. 21:23-26, AMP)

Thank God! The very thought of an age governed by the sons of God who are full of the sevenfold Spirit of God, upon whom rests the glorious Spirit of Counsel, leaves me breathless. Words are totally inadequate. Human ability to articulate the wonder of such a thing fails completely. Our faltering minds cannot fully grasp or appreciate the wonder of Isaiah’s prophecy, “In the way of Your judgments, O Lord, have we waited for You; with my soul have I desired You in the night; yes, with my spirit within me will I seek You early; for when Your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.” (Isa. 26:8-9)

## Qualifying As Counselors

Ps. 16:7; 73:24; Prov. 12:15; 19:20-21; 20:5;  
Isa. 25:1; Jer. 23:18, 22; Mat. 11:12; 28:18;  
Lk. 16:16; Col. 1:13; Heb. 5:9

Christ shall reign through the sons of God to bring the nations into reconciliation and harmony with God in much the same manner as the southern states were dealt with (on a carnal level) after the rebellion of the confederate government. The southern states for a while were not allowed to govern themselves by electing their own officers, for fear they might not follow the constitutional laws of the union. So governors, with full power to act, were placed in control for the purpose of reconstructing the southern state governments and bringing them back into harmony with the union.

Our ministry in that coming age will be to bring all peoples and nations back into reconciliation and harmony with the union – God’s Kingdom, (see 2 Cor. 5:18-19) so that all nations shall come and worship before Him, as it is written. (Zech. 14:16 ff; Isa. 66:19 ff)

If you are among the number who know and experience from deep within the cry, the groaning, the travail, the insatiable desire to see the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness, to behold the glory of the coming of the Kingdom of God, then hesitate not to count yourself as one apprehended of God, marked out beforehand, to walk as a son of God as a counselor in His Kingdom. Then follow your acceptance of that divine appointment by unreservedly consecrating yourself to be led through the deep and vital dealings of God to be conformed to His image, to express nothing but His will and glory in the earth, and to be filled with the sevenfold Spirit of Sonship.

We must first submit ourselves unto God in the totality of our being, for none shall dispense the counsel of the Lord except those who have both received and obeyed it from the heart. We must become the visible expression of the Spirit of Counsel – that Spirit resting upon and manifesting through our being in a practical outworking of His will and purpose. What the Spirit is, must ultimately be expressed in the nitty-gritty of even our everyday living in order for that Spirit to be communicated to the people in the world. They must see the counsels of the Lord and the righteousness of our God by our “state of being,” our life before them.

The route to becoming a counselor is to become a visible demonstration of mercy, forgiveness, love, joy, peace, faith, wisdom, power and righteousness. It is to not become vindictive or judgmental toward anyone, but extend mercy and blessing, reconciling the wayward back to God. It is to live in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, speak by the Spirit, work by the Spirit, and display the nature and character of God’s Spirit to man.

We cannot speak of being counselors, kings, priests, or sons upon whom rests the Spirit of Counsel, when our own lives and relationships with our brethren, our families, our neighbors, our business associates, and even our enemies are a feuding ground of malice, envy, anger, bitterness, peevishness, strife, whisperings, shadiness, debate, deceit, backbiting, evil speaking, vindictiveness and other such manifestations of carnality. God is not passing out honorary degrees or titles. He is not pinning little lapel buttons on our coats reading “Counselor” if, in fact, in our nature, attitudes, and relationships we are anything but counselors!

God is conforming sons to His image. We speak of an anointing, which becomes expressed as a ministry in both what we do and in what we are. This is the high calling of God upon our life. It is not a free gift, as is salvation, but a prize to be won, just as the prize is won by the winner of a race. The apostle Paul was certainly “saved,” yet he insisted, “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 3:14) And Paul exhorted us to, “... run in such a way that you may win... I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.” (1 Cor. 9:24, 27)

“... the Kingdom of God is preached, and every man presses into it.” (Lk. 16:16) The NASB renders this, “... the gospel of the Kingdom of God is preached, and every one is forcing his way into it.” For over nineteen centuries this message, this offer of God’s Kingdom, has been doing its intended work of calling the “elect,” the “overcomers” from the world. During this entire age, these have waited the Father’s time for their exaltation to power, as His kings and priests, to rule and to teach the nations, and thus lead them into the blessings and life of the Kingdom. Yet all this time, these Kingdom people have suffered violence at the hands of Satan within his blinded servants, the Esaus and the Ishmaels of this world. As our Lord affirmed, “The Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.” (Mat. 11:12) Jesus, the head of the Kingdom, suffered even to the death. All His followers are likewise persecuted (2 Tim. 3:12) by those who hate the fact that we are translated out from their powers of darkness and into the Kingdom of God’s dear Son. (Col. 1:13)

This submission for twenty centuries to the violence of dominant evil has not been because of a lack of power on the part of our risen, ascended, glorified Lord to protect His people. After His resurrection, He declared, “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.” (Mat. 28:18) But the exercise of His power is delayed for a purpose. In the Father’s plan, there was a “due time” for the great sacrifice for sin to be given, (Gal. 4:4) and another “due time” for the Kingdom to be set up in power and glory to bless all the families of the earth. (Acts 1:7) These were just far enough apart to permit the calling and preparing of the “overcomers” to be joint-heirs of the Kingdom with Christ.

The evil influences of the world and the opposition of Satan have been permitted for the purifying, testing, and polishing of those “called” to be rulers, kings, priests, judges, and counselors in the Kingdom. As with the head, so with the body, it is God’s design that each member shall, as a new creation, be made perfect through suffering. “Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered. Being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all that obey Him.” (Heb. 5:9)

How we act and react to the pressures and problems of this evil time determines whether or not the nature and character of a counselor is being formed within each one. Christ was not “made perfect” because He had been fleshly or sinful. He was “made perfect” as a Son. All of the characteristics of sonship were perfected in Him – matured, polished, tuned to their ultimate precision, much like a fine musical instrument is tuned to absolute perfection under the hand of a master musician before he begins a concert.

Let us open our hearts wide to these admonitions, “You, O Lord shall guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.” (Ps. 73:24) “Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it out.” (Prov. 20:5) “Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that you may be wise in your latter end.” (Prov. 19:20) “There are many devices in a man’s heart; nevertheless it is the counsel of the Lord that shall stand.” (Prov. 19:21) “I will bless the Lord, who has given me counsel.” (Ps. 16:7) “O Lord, You are my God; I will exalt You, I will praise Your name; for You have done wonderful things; Your counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.” (Isa. 25:1)

### **Counsel “Offered” and “Predetermined”**

Isa. 14:24, 27; 46:9-11; 46:9-10; Prov. 1:25-26, 30-31;  
Lk. 7:30; Acts 2:23; 4:28; 5:38-39; 13:48; Rom. 8:29;  
Heb. 6:17-18; Rev. 3:16-18

Before closing this study, I wish to share with you, dear Reader, yet one more aspect of the counsel of God. As I was studying the Scriptures in which the counsel of God is discussed, I observed that some counsel is “offered” (for what it may be worth to the one being counseled), but other counsel is “determinate.” What is the difference?

“Offered counsel” has a special purpose beyond mere counseling. It also reveals the relationship between the counselor and the counselee (the one being counseled). If he acknowledges the wisdom of the counselor by openly accepting and acting upon his counsel, it affirms that he is pleased with the purpose and will of the counselor. On the other hand, if the counsel is rejected, so is the will and purpose of the counselor.

An example of this principle can be seen in the New Testament as the counsel of God is proclaimed through John the Baptist. “All the people who heard Him [Jesus], acknowledged God’s justice, being baptized with the baptism of John, but the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God for themselves, not being baptized by John.” (Lk. 7:29-30) The fleshly pride of the Pharisees and lawyers rebelled against the counsel of God through John, who called upon them to repent publicly and be baptized. They were not “common people,” and most assuredly they would not join that mongrel crowd of tax collectors and sinners! They considered themselves to be the elite of society. The thought of public acceptance of the counsel of God to repent and be baptized – along with all those who were so obviously in need of doing so – was simply “too much to ask.”

The common people, by submitting to the counsel of God proclaimed by John, “acknowledged God’s justice.” By their obedience to John they declared that God was right and righteous. But the Pharisees and lawyers, by rejecting the counsel of God through John, declared themselves to be the righteous ones and not God! To reject the counsel of the Lord is the same as rejecting the Lord, the Counselor. It is disbelieving His wisdom and questioning the purpose behind His will. Thus the religious leaders put themselves under condemnation, guilty of blaspheming the very One they pretended to worship! To them God says, “But you have rejected all my counsel, and did not want My reproof. They would not accept My counsel... so they shall eat of the fruit of their own way, and be satiated with their own devices.” (Prov. 1:25-26, 30-31)

How sad it is that in our day, too, the system of religion which calls itself the church has rejected the counsel of God. Its ministers, bishops, overseers, and popes dare to give counsel from their carnal minds, from doctrines, traditions, psychology, and everything else that they learned in their seminaries and schools of higher learning, but this results only in death. Yet they will not hear or even acknowledge the prophets of God who are attuned to the Spirit of Counsel, that they might have life.

Two thousand years ago, the apostle John looked down through the telescope of divine revelation and beheld at the end of this age a church neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm, ready to be spewed from the Lord's mouth (removed from being His "voice" in the earth). He saw how rich they were in gold and silver, in the increase of goods and property, in fame and prestige, in governmental recognition and collaboration, in traditions, rituals, pomp, and piouness, and he heard them boast, "We have need of nothing!" But they knew not that they were "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." (Rev. 3:16-18) They knew only the counsel of this natural world, only the wisdom of the carnal mind, so they could neither see nor comprehend their wretched estate from God's perspective.

Hear now the counsel and wisdom of God to them, "I counsel you to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich; and white raiment, that you may be clothed and that the shame of your nakedness not appear; and anoint your eyes with eyesalve, that you may see." This counsel is "offered counsel." What the church of this hour does with it reveals their true state.

"Offered counsel" may be rejected or accepted by the counselee, for its object is to display openly the spiritual condition of the one to whom the counsel is offered. If the receiver is reprobate, he will reject the divine counsel of God. If he is apprehended by God, he will certainly receive and do it. If he is "saved" but of little faith, he may or may not accept it. Either way, he will be judged on the basis of how he responds (or does not respond) to this offered counsel, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed according to what he has done in the flesh, whether good or evil." (2 Cor. 5:10)

The "determinate counsel of God" is another matter. This counsel is never offered on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. It is guaranteed to come to pass, precisely as planned, for it is predetermined by a sovereign God whose will and Word cannot fail. "Determinate counsel" is immutable; it changes not. "The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of His heart to all generations." (Ps. 33:11) Almighty God alone has the wisdom to will a perfect plan "purposed within Himself." "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He has purposed within Himself." (Eph. 1:9) Thus He who framed the ages and is the architect of all creation can boldly declare, "Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass, and as I have purposed so it will stand... I am God and there is none other! I declare the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things not yet done; saying, My counsel shall stand. I will do all My good pleasure... Truly I have spoken; I will also bring it to pass. I have planned it; surely I will also do it." (Isa. 14:24; 46:9-11)

Carnal men may take counsel together, determined to accomplish their will, but they are unable to guarantee the outcome. The League of Nations was formed “to end all wars.” How’s that working out? Too many unforeseen things can prevent the fulfillment of human counsel. The purposes of man, expressing his own human will, are easily frustrated by other men. But the purposes of almighty God will stand. Only He is able to bring to pass all that He has decreed in His counsel, absolutely, perfectly, faithfully, and completely down to the very last detail, without the slightest possibility of mistake or failure. Only our God possesses determinate counsel which is immutable and eternal.

An example in the New Testament of the importance of wise counsel is seen in the advice given the Sanhedrin (the chief council of Israel) concerning the testimony of the apostles as they proclaimed Jesus to be the Messiah. Gamaliel (a teacher of the apostle Paul) warns them, “If this counsel be of men, it will come to nothing; but if it be of God, you cannot overthrow it, lest perhaps you be found to be fighting against God!” (Acts 5:38-39) Gamaliel was a wise old rabbi. He knew that if human counsel is contrary to divine counsel, it will surely fail. On the other hand, if the counsel preached by Jesus’ followers was given by God, it would surely stand, for such counsel is determinate. It is fully guaranteed to come to pass.

On the day of Pentecost, Peter declared with boldness that the reason the Jews had succeeded in murdering Jesus was that their will and purpose expressed by their own counsel, fulfilled the will and purpose and counsel of God Himself. Thus Peter could say of Jesus, “Him being delivered by the

determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken, and by evil hands have slain.” (Acts 2:23) The disciples declared in prayer that the self-will of Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, and the men of Israel, all acting in one accord against Jesus, were gathered together “to do whatever Your [God’s] hand and Your counsel determined before to be done.” (Acts 4:28) The purpose of those who slew Jesus was to get rid of a “troublemaker” who was disrupting their religious order. Yet, as they thought and executed this evil against the Lord’s Anointed, they unknowingly fulfilled God’s own purpose to redeem the world “by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb slain, without spot and without blemish.” Now, that is “determinate council!”

The overcoming sons of God are the “heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ,” whose salvation and ultimate perfection is based upon God’s ordained and determinate counsel. (Acts 13:48; Eph. 1:4-5, 11) This should encourage any who may still be struggling to discover their place in Christ. The counsel of God our Father is fixed and can never be altered or hindered by the enemy. “Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise [saints] the immutability [unchangeability] of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation [encouragement], who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.” (Heb. 6:17-20)

I have unquenchable hope that I shall one day stand upon Zion's holy hill among a glorious band of God's overcoming sons. "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestine to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren... what shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:29, 31) My heart is overwhelmed with desire to see God's purposes fulfilled in His elect sons in this hour, and to behold the majesty of the Kingdom of God as it comes in power and glory through His "vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory." (Rom. 9:23)

I admit that I see myself as falling far short of that image of the beloved Son, as Paul also confessed that he did not count himself as having apprehended. (Phil. 3:13) The perfection of the body of Christ, the glory that shall follow, a glory so transcending that it shall reconcile the entire world back to God, seems so remote at times, even though the sure Word of the Lord has been firmly established in our hearts. As some ignorantly misjudge the wisdom or skill of a famous architect by his unfinished work, so also in their ignorance, some misjudge God by His unfinished work. But when the rough scaffolding of carnality and evil (which God permits for the processing of His sons and instruction of mankind) has been removed and the rubbish destroyed, God's finished work will universally declare His infinite wisdom and power, and His plans will be seen to be in harmony with His glorious character. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself... He has committed to us the word of reconciliation; therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ." (2 Cor. 5:19-20)

Since God tells us that He definitely has a fixed purpose, His plan of the ages, and that His purpose shall be accomplished, it behooves us, as His children, to inquire diligently what His plans are, that we may be found in harmony with them. Notice how emphatically the Lord declares the firmness of His purpose, "I, even I, am the Lord, and there is no savior besides Me... I am God, even from eternity I am He, and there are none who can deliver out of My hand. I act, and who can reverse it? ... The people whom I formed for Myself will declare My praise." (Isa. 43:11, 13, 21) "... like clay in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel." (Jer. 18:6) However haphazard or mysterious God's dealings with men may appear, those who believe the declaration of His word must accept that His original and unalterable plan has always been and still is progressing systematically to completion.

Those groping blindly in darkness and ignorance will have to await the fulfillment of God's plan before they will realize the glorious character of the Divine Architect. But it is the privilege of the Spirit-led child of God to see it by faith and by the light of the revelations God has given. Only the saint can understand and appreciate the otherwise mysterious dealings of God. As sons of God, heirs of a promised inheritance, we separate ourselves from every system of man, from all works of the flesh, to consecrate ourselves wholly and unreservedly to the counsel of God by the fullness of His Spirit of Council, thus making ourselves available for His use as ambassadors for God in these last days. By His bountiful grace and divine enablement, we shall apprehend that for which we are also apprehended of Christ Jesus.

# Chapter 9 – The Spirit of Might

## Introduction

“These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God.” (Rev. 3:1)

“And the Spirit of the Lord [Jehovah] shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge and of the Fear of the Lord [Jehovah].” (Isa. 11:2)

The fifth Spirit of Sonship is the Spirit of Might. The kingdoms of this present evil world flex all their economic and military muscles, arrogantly displaying their power and might. The might of the nations is seen in the building and equipping of immense armies and powerful navies, the invention of new and awesome instruments of war, mass production of powerful explosives including now the atomic bomb, development of the frightening neutron bomb, the stationing of hundreds of multi-warhead missiles and spy satellites all over the earth, and “defense” budgets totaling untold billions of dollars annually, draining natural resources in every land for military purposes. One can hear the mutterings of the angry nations as they all stand armed to the teeth, scowling upon one another, assembling daily in the halls of the misnamed “United Nations” to blast one another with their political rhetoric. These are all examples of this present evil world’s distorted and grotesque concept of what constitutes might. They cry, “Peace, peace!” but there is no peace. And there will never be peace if it is up to the efforts of man.

Do not forget for even a moment, dear friend: God is in control of all these things! Do not think for one second that anything upon this planet is out of God’s control or that Satan is winning the victory, for Satan has no power at all except that which God gives him. “For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God.” (Rom. 13:1)

The words of Daniel, penned nearly twenty-six centuries ago, stand confirmed and irrefutable upon the pages of history, “Blessed be the name of God forever and ever; for wisdom and might are His, and He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and sets up kings; He reveals the deep and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, and the light [truth] dwells with Him.” (Dan. 2:20-22) The hope of God’s people was beautifully expressed by King Jehoshaphat when, besieged by his enemies, he prayed, “O Lord God of our fathers, are not You God in heaven? And the God who rules over all the kingdoms of the heathen? And in Your hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand You? O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no might against this great company that comes against us; neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon You.” (2 Chron. 20:6, 12)

Let all men know that power and might belong unto the Lord. “Behold the nations are like a drop in a bucket, and are counted as the small dust on the scales; behold He

takes up the isles like a very little thing. All the nations are as nothing before Him; they are regarded by Him as less than nothing, and emptiness. It is God who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants appear as grasshoppers; it is He who stretches out the heavens like curtains and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in; who brings dignitaries to nothing; who makes the judges and rulers of the earth as chaos – Yes, these men are scarcely planted... when the Lord blows upon them and they wither, and the whirlwind or tempest takes them away like stubble. ‘To whom then will you liken Me, that I should be equal to him?’ says the Holy One.” (Isa. 40:15, 17, 22-25, AMP)

While the nations rattle their swords, vainly boasting of their powerful weapons, God is secretly preparing His sons of might, the many-membered Son, head and body, upon whom rests the Spirit of God’s might. Even now, the stone is being cut out from the mountain without noise and without hands to smite the earthen feet of the image man has built (Dan. 2:34), that the kingdoms of this world may become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His mighty Christ, His many-membered son, and He shall reign forever and ever! (Rev. 11:15) Hallelujah!

The glorious age now dawning will know the glory of the Spirit of Might as He manifests through God’s holy anointed sons. At long last, the world will know the wonder of true authority and might, with wisdom, counsel, and understanding. He judges with righteousness. He smites the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He slays the wicked. Every yoke, every bondage is being destroyed, for all power in heaven and earth is given unto Him.

The nations shall be ruled by the Spirit of Might, irresistible might, until righteous order is established in the hearts of the men of every nation under heaven. Every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Phil 2:10-11) as the sons of God administer the power and glory of God’s Kingdom upon the earth. This work of bringing the Kingdom of God to pass in the whole earth belongs to the sons of God, as it is written, “And he who overcomes, and keeps My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers [brought into total submission] even as I received of My Father. He who overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son.” (Rev. 2:26-27; 21:7)

This smiting and breaking by the rod of iron will be the authority of God’s Word in the mouths of His kings and priests saying to babbling, clamoring, self-assertive humanity, “Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the peoples, I will be exalted in the earth.” (Ps. 46:10) This is the work of “laying justice to the plumb line and righteousness to the level” (Isa. 28:17) in all the affairs of each individual of Adam’s race, all of whom will be “taught of God” through Christ (head and body), the great Prophet, King, and Priest: Prophet declaring God’s will; King ruling in authority, power, and might; and Priest as counselor or mediator who, having redeemed, is now the people’s advocate, reconciling them unto God. Praise God, this work has begun in those sons who have opened up their hearts to receive the fullness of God’s seven-fold Spirit.

## Reigning with Christ

Gen. 1:26; Isa. 11:2; Ps. 8:3-9; Mat. 4:17; 7:29; 12:28;  
Jn. 14:10; Acts 10:38; Rom. 8:19-21; 2 Tim. 2:12;  
Heb. 2:6-9; Rev. 5:9-10; 20:4, 6

Of the seven Spirits of Sonship, the “Spirit of Might” is the one most closely connected to God’s sons reigning with Him. “If we endure, we shall also reign with Him.” (2 Tim. 2:12) “You were slain, and you have redeemed us to God by Your blood... and have made us kings and priests unto our God, and we shall reign on the earth.” (Rev. 5:9-10) “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them... and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” (Rev. 20:4)

Simply speaking, to reign with Christ means to exercise the authority of Christ – to rule all things and in particular to deal with all His enemies from His perspective, by His sevenfold Spirit within us. God, from the beginning, had a two-fold desire and intent for man. Firstly, God purposed for man to possess His image that man might express His nature and character to the universe. Secondly, God planned for man to represent Him with His authority and might, to take dominion and rule over all creation.

In creating man, God ordained his dominion. It was never His intent that man should be subservient to angels or devils, or even to material circumstances or elements of earth. Man was created to have dominion over all the works of God’s hands. (Ps. 8:3-9; Heb. 2:6-9) God said, “Let us make man in our image.” (Gen. 1:26) Therefore, when God created man, on the one hand, He created him in His own image and likeness that man might be like Him in nature and wisdom, and on the other hand, God gave to man

“... dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing [including even the ancient serpent, Satan] that creeps upon the earth.” (Gen. 1:26) God gave man authority that he might reign for Him over the earth. Thus, the two ingredients in God’s original intent for man were for man to share God’s nature and exercise God’s authority.

Even after Adam’s fall, many instances are recorded in the Old Testament of men reigning for God. Genesis tells how Noah, being warned of God of things not yet seen, moved with fear, and prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by which he condemned (judged) the world and brought in a new era. (Heb. 11:7) Then in Exodus, Moses triumphed over Pharaoh and led two million Israelites out of Egyptian slavery to become a nation of God’s people. All the fearful signs and wonders wrought in Egypt by his hand, the parting of the Red Sea, and all the mighty miracles in the wilderness were acts of Moses’ reigning for God. The book of Joshua records how Joshua, in the last hours of the critical battle at Gideon, commanded the sun and the moon to stand still and the very constellations of the heavens hearkened to the voice of a man and were stayed in their orbits at his word. All the great exploits in the conquest of the land of Canaan are examples of Joshua reigning for God. Elijah reigned by closing up the heavens to stop the rain for three and a half years. Then he prayed, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit. And what shall I say more? Space fails us to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and Jephthah, and David, and Samuel and the prophets,

who by faith subdued kingdoms, obtained promises, administered justice, closed lion's mouths, extinguished the power of raging fire, escaped the sword, out of frailty and weakness were made strong, even mighty and irresistible, putting to flight alien hosts. (from Heb. 11:32-34) All these glorious stories show us that through the ages, as long as there are men willing to come into union with God and His plans and purposes, God grants them authority that all things might come under His dominion through them.

This matter is even more evident in the New Testament, for it is in the person of Jesus Christ, the last Adam, the Son of God, that all God's purposes in man are summed up. When Jesus began His ministry as the Son of God He declared, "Repent; for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." (Mat. 4:17) The strong implication here was that the kingdom of earth, the kingdom of Satan, wherein Satan ruled, held sway; but now the Kingdom of Heaven, the Kingdom of God, had come upon this earth to take over. In essence Jesus was saying, "Repent, for I am come to set you free from Satan's kingdom and to invite you into My Kingdom, which is the Kingdom of Heaven."

Peter witnessed of Jesus' ministry, "How God anointed and consecrated Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with strength and ability and power; how He went about doing good and curing all that were harassed and oppressed by the power of the devil, for God was with Him." (Acts 10:38, AMP) Even in the flesh, before His ascension and glorification, Jesus reigned. He said, "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom [reign] of God is come unto you." (Mat. 12:28)

Every aspect of the dominion delivered to Adam was demonstrated in Jesus in His sojourn upon earth. He manifested control over the animal kingdom, the beasts, the birds, the fish; over the human family, the rich, the poor, the learned and unlearned; over the elements of nature, the sea, the wind and rain; over trees and the vegetable kingdom; and over the spirit realm that was related to man, the angels, the devils, Satan himself, and the human mind. Furthermore, He "taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes." (Mat. 7:29)

Jesus came as the pattern Son, as the model manifestation of what the Kingdom is, how the Kingdom operates, and how the Kingdom shall subdue all things upon earth. Into just such dominion as this, a company of God's sons are destined to rise. (Jn. 14:12) Intermittent demonstrations of it are already being seen in the lives of some; however, the fullness of the new dominion is yet to be realized. We will know it in "due time."

In the Old Testament, before the Holy Spirit was given as an indwelling life, men reigned for God – on His behalf. In Jesus we have a higher dimension of reigning – God reigning through man. "And the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon Him... the Spirit of Counsel and Might." (Isa. 11:2) "Believe you not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself; but the Father who dwells in Me, He does His works." (Jn. 14:10) It is one thing for man to reign for God, as "borrowing" His authority and power. But it is quite another for God Himself to reign through man. God's one intention is that He may gain man for Himself, so that He may reign over the universe – through mankind.

This was God's stated purpose when He created man. (Gen. 1:26) Even more, this was God's intention in redeeming man. "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." (Rom. 5:17) "And they sang a new song, saying... You have redeemed us to God... and have made us kings and priests unto our God; and we shall reign on the earth." (Rev. 5:9-10)

Therefore, from the point of view of authority, reigning is the final goal of God's salvation. It is the summit of our spiritual experience. If God does not so fully and completely save and transform us to the extent that He can reign through us, then His salvation cannot be considered fully accomplished. Although this reality of reigning with and in Christ will not be completely realized until the time of the manifestation of the sons of God, when the Spirit of Might shall rest fully upon the house of sons, yet, today it must have its beginning within us in the "first fruits of the Spirit" already given us of God. As for us, if God is not establishing within us His victorious reign, if we have not yet reached the point of reigning in life by one, Jesus Christ, then we know nothing yet as we ought to know of what it means to be a son of God.

Those apprehended ones with whom the Father is dealing in this hour are not only finding forgiveness for sin and a filling with the Holy Spirit, but also their flesh nature is being put to death, they are overcoming the world, they are achieving real victory in their everyday life circumstances, and they are learning to experientially

appropriate their joint-seating with Christ in the heavenly realms, far above all worldly principalities, power, might, and dominion. They are learning to daily reign with Christ in all things, whether in the ministry of the Spirit, affairs at home, in business, or in any encounter in their environment – they can reign and rule over all that God sets before them. There is no discouragement, defeat, or despair to those who learn to reign! There must be such a people gained by God in redemption, that through them the authority of God can be executed and the Kingdom of God can come upon the earth.

Today, although the Kingdom has not yet completely come to pass upon this earth, although God has not yet gained a sphere wherein He can exercise His authority in a full way, and although His glory has not yet been made fully manifest, nevertheless, there is a small place, a small sphere where there exists the condition of God's partial reign, which thereby manifests a portion of God's glory. Can you guess where that is?

It is the body of Christ, the saints of the Kingdom. Today the Spirit-filled and Spirit-led members of the body of Christ are the expression of God's reigning here on earth. What God desires today is to perfect and expand His reigning sphere over, within, and through His saints. It is through the body of Jesus Christ that God will bind Satan and destroy his power. It is through the body of Christ that life and blessing shall be ministered so that all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Thus, His name will be honored, His Kingdom established, and His glorious will done in the whole earth. This is the commission of God's sons. This is the final purpose of our redemption.

## **The Power of the Kingdom**

Isa. 2:4; Mat. 4:17; 1 Cor. 15:28; 2 Cor. 10:3-5; Eph. 6:10

The Spirit of Might which shall rest upon God's sons is not the same kind of might known by the people of this world. It is not the might of force, marching armies, clanging swords, tanks and bombs, laws, militias, or policemen, for all these exist only in the fleshly realm of carnal might. God's might is not carnal. It is spiritual. Many of God's precious saints are no further advanced in their understanding than were the fleshly-minded Jews of old – still viewing the Kingdom with carnal eyes, expecting to sit upon literal thrones with political power. But the power of the Kingdom of God is not political, military, police, or legal power. "For though we walk in the flesh, we are not carrying on our warfare according to the flesh and using mere human weapons. For the weapons of our warfare are not physical ... but they are mighty before God for the overthrow and destruction of strongholds, inasmuch as we refute... reasonings and every proud and lofty thing that sets itself up against the knowledge of God; and we lead every thought and purpose away captive into the obedience of Christ." (2 Cor. 10:3-5, AMP)

If our eyes are open by the Spirit of God, we will see that the nature of all our work in the Kingdom of God is spiritual. The power of the Kingdom is spiritual. The work of the Kingdom is to deliver the world of humanity from the power of sin and the flesh and the devil. It is the work of rescuing men out of the power of Satan and driving out the satanic power of darkness from within men, that they may be reconciled unto God. It is the work of imparting unto

all men the very life and Spirit of Jehovah, that we all may be restored more and more in a living relationship with God until He truly becomes "all in all" – as the Amplified Bible so beautifully renders it, "that God may be... everything to everyone, supreme, the indwelling factor of life." (1 Cor. 15:28)

Men must not be forced to obey God, for that will never bring God's glory into man. Force breeds contempt and rebellion, not life and peace. Men need to have their minds changed, their hearts transformed and their spirits quickened. This is why Jesus at the beginning of His ministry exhorted men to "repent." (Mat. 4:17) Repent means "take a new mind." When the sons of God arise in the earth their message will also be "Repent! for the Kingdom of God is at hand."

Soon, thank God, the nations shall repent! "And He [Christ, head and body] shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore." (Isa. 2:4) The nations of this earth shall indeed "take a new mind" to walk in the light of the Lord. Thus God's name shall be sanctified in men, His will shall be done in men, and thereby His glory shall be manifested through men.

The nature of the work of the Kingdom is spiritual. The weapons of the overcoming sons of God shall not be the carnal weapons of political power or police action but spirit weapons which are mighty through God. They shall reign in the Spirit of Might, the omnipotent, invincible power of His might. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." (Eph. 6:10)

## **The Pleroma of God**

Isa. 9:6; Ps. 82:1; 110:1; Jn. 15:1-14;  
Eph. 1:19-23; 3:14, 16-21; Col. 1:19; 2:9-10

The Spirit of Might which belongs to the sons of God is the Spirit of Jesus, for He upon whom the sevenfold Spirit first rested is also called the Mighty God. (Isa. 9:6) It is only “in Him” that one can become mighty. There is a glorious company of people who, along with Jesus the Mighty God, are termed “the mighty.” Asaph, a leader of worship in Israel, wrote of this company in Psalm 82:1, “God stands in the congregation of the mighty; He judges among the rulers.” This company of “the mighty” in whose midst God stands, is none else but those who are “in Christ” who is “the Mighty God” and are thus “strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.” (Eph. 6:10)

We want to take a closer look at this term “in Christ.” We meet this phrase often in Paul’s epistles. If “Christ in you” is the hope of glory, as the Scripture says (Col. 1:27), then you in Christ must surely be the glory for which you have hoped. Three times Jesus insisted, “Abide in Me, and I in you,” “He who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit,” “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish and it shall be done for you.” (Jn. 15:4-7)

In Christ! Think of the glory of such a thing! “God was in Christ...” (2 Cor. 5:19) And now – mystery of mysteries – He is saying that we, His people, are also in Christ.

“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation.” (2 Cor. 5:17) Certainly he must be a new creation, for he has entered that realm where God dwells. No longer is he of the earth, earthy, but one Spirit with God in heaven. Jesus’ greatest recorded prayer was,

“that they may all be one, even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us... I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity.” (Jn. 17:23) This oneness is not unity of creed, doctrine, organization, or denomination as the man-made church systems would have us think, but rather it is individual members baptized into one body, the body of Christ.

In context with “in Christ,” the apostle Paul sometimes adds the word “fullness.” “And gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. ... to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God. ... til we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. For it was the Father’s good pleasure that all fullness should dwell in Him [Christ]... for in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And you are complete [full] in Him.” (Eph. 1:22-23; 3:19; 4:13; Col. 1:19; 2:9-10)

In the above verses the word “fullness” is translated from the Greek word *pleroma*. *Pleroma* is a term used by philosophy, and borrowed by Paul from philosophic authors. They claimed to know the secret of something that filled up all human deficiency – a reservoir of knowledge and power. *Pleroma* is from the root *pleroo* which means “to fill, make complete or perfect; cram; level up; finish.” Philosophic teachers thought of the *pleroma* fullness as the sum total of all the divine powers and attributes. These were parceled out through the gods, angels, prophets, teachers, and so on, all of whom were instruments in the revelation of God’s

will and power, individual manifestations of the pleroma (fullness). These mediatorial beings were considered to contain some of the influence of the pleroma, a measure of the fullness, but none could contain it all, for the pleroma was the sum total of all divine power and attributes. When the pleroma was distributed through the various lesser beings it was diluted, changed, and darkened by foreign (earthly) admixture. These lesser beings were only partial and blurred images, merely deceptive caricatures of the original – feeble flickers of the great central light, God.

Paul claims that the true pleroma is found in Christ! As the Son of God, He has the Godhead in Him in full measure and running over! “For it has pleased the Father that all the divine fullness – the sum total of the divine perfection, powers, and attributes – should dwell in Him [Jesus] permanently. For in Him the whole fullness of Deity continues to dwell in bodily form, giving complete expression to the divine nature.” (Col. 1:19; 2:9, AMP)

This leads to another most wonderful and enlightening declaration. Hear it! “And He has appointed Him [Jesus] the universal and supreme head of the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all – for in that body lives the full measure of Him who makes everything complete... and you are in Him, made full...” (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 2:10, AMP) In Christ, you too are filled with the Godhead! The true pleroma, all the fullness of God, dwells permanently in Christ Jesus, so if we are in Him, all that divine pleroma becomes ours. All perfection found in God – His power, wisdom, love, knowledge, holiness, and so on – fills us too, to the full measure of our capacity.

The King James version says, “For in Him dwells all the fullness of the godhead bodily... and you are complete in Him.” The word “complete” in the Greek is *pleroo* which is the root form of pleroma. Thus, Paul is saying that Christ Jesus is full of the Godhead, and in Him we are made full to the very same measure. The Greek text does not say “You are made full in Him,” but “You are in Him, made full.” In Him dwells the fullness, and the same fullness dwells in us as we dwell in Him! This is beyond finite perception. To the natural mind such truth sounds silly, yet the Holy Spirit will reveal its depths to those who ask Him.

There simply are no words that can adequately translate such a conception into the human language or convey it to human minds. It is fathomless in its depths and lofty beyond the highest eminence, far beyond the scope of the natural mind. The fullness of God in us as we dwell in Christ is the same essential idea as that which seeks expression in the greatest parable spoken by our Lord: the vine and the branches. (Jn. 15:1-14)

In that passage, seven words form the salient points of thought: vine, branch, fruit, abide, ask, love, and joy. The key word of the seven is abide, the key lesson is absolute and perpetual dependence on the one hand, and perfect, perpetual fullness on the other, and the key result is fruit. Remember that in the vine dwells all vegetable fullness – all the fullness of soil and sap of life and strength – and that the branch abides in the vine that it may be filled with all the fullness of the vine! Branch life, like limb life in the physical body, does not, cannot, exist independently. The child may outgrow the mother’s care, and turn around and support and nourish

the parent; but the branch can never out-grow its dependence, nor can the limb ever become independent of the body. The same in nature and nurture, in root and soil and sap, in life and growth, the very leaves, blooms, and fruit of the branch are all just leaves, blooms, and fruit of the vine. It is the full life of the vine, pushing its way through the branch's channels, that exhibits itself in every new twig, bud, flower, and grape; and, as the grapes round into luscious fullness, it is the vine which imparts its own fullness in the juice, color, and perfection of the cluster.

Thus, the sons abide in the Son, as branches of the vine. Their asking becomes Christ's asking; their love and joy are in fact Christ's love and joy; their holiness is Christ's holiness; their strength and might are His strength and might, as the "company of the mighty" find their fullness in Him who is the Mighty God.

What the parable of the vine and branches hides in symbolism, Paul's epistles unfold by the Spirit of Revelation. In Christ dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and we in Him are filled to the fullest of the same pleroma of God. The very thought is inexpressible – "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." (Eph. 3:30) Only the mind of Christ within can search it out.

Paul certainly had the realization of such an incomprehensible fullness in mind when he wrote to the Ephesians, "May He grant you out of the rich treasury of His glory... that you may be filled through all your being unto all the fullness of God – that is, may have the richest measure of the divine Presence, and become a body wholly filled and flooded with God Himself." (Eph. 3:16, 19, AMP)

The King James version reads, "That you might be filled with all the fullness of God." A better translation from the original (as you see above in the Amplified Bible) is, "That you may be filled unto all the fullness of God." This speaks of eternal increase into the unfathomable and inexhaustible!

It has been my privilege over the past few years to stand at various times on the Pacific Coast and look out over the broad expanse of the largest ocean on this planet. The glorious stretches of shore, sky, and sea are wonderful. Imagination thrills as I face the immensity of the seemingly infinite vista, making me feel very small. Now, suppose I were to take a pint jar to the edge of the water, lean down, and allow the ocean to run into the jar? It will take just one gesture to fill that jar with Pacific Ocean. But how could I fill that jar unto all the fullness of the Pacific Ocean? If I carry my bottle back to Texas, to someone who has never looked on the ocean, and tell him that he can now understand the ocean because I have it in my little bottle, he will not see what the ocean really is. All he will see is a pint of seawater. There will be none of the mighty sweep of distance, none of the power of the swelling waves, and none of the wonders of its depths. I cannot hold in one bottle the frothy breakers or the vast reaches of the sea!

Such a sampling, seawater in a jar, might be the comprehension of the verse, "filled with all the fullness of God" if it were rendered, merely, that God purposes to fill us with His fullness. But that is not pleroma, "the sum total of all the divine powers and attributes." God does not want to make us tiny samples of Deity, so that we each hold impotent "pints" of His great power.

To understand the meaning of pleroma, we must put the entire ocean into the bottle! Then, and only then, could we understand what God purposes to reveal in, upon, and through that glorious company of sons who come into His very own image, likeness, and dominion. Yes, like the pint jar, our capacity is small. But He purposes to continue to enlarge our capacities forever and ever. We are to be filled unto all the fullness of God!

And lest there be some fearful saints who still think the measure of our heritage must be confined within certain limits, God tells us exactly what those limitations are, "... what is the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come." (Eph. 1:19-21)

This is the measure of the power that is available to the saints. Not merely the power that Moses exercised in Egypt or at the Red Sea; not the power that Joshua had when he commanded the sun and moon to stand still; not the power Elijah exercised when he locked up the heavens for three and a half years; not the power that Elisha wielded when he caused the iron to swim, the waters to be healed, the hungry to be fed, or the dead to be raised; not the power that Daniel had in the lion's den, or Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had in the fiery furnace; and not even the power that Jesus held at His command in His earthly ministry, when He healed the sick, cast out devils, walked on the sea, and raised the dead from corruption.

No. The power available to the saints is the "working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places..." And still we could go on, for Paul continues to enlarge upon the immensity of this power which Christ exercises through us, His church: power and authority over all principalities and powers, both in this age and in the next, even power to put all things under His feet, for He is the head, and we are His body.

Oh the immensity of these words! And what is more, Christ (the head) will remain at God's right hand until His overcomers (His body) shall arise to conquer all of God's enemies. "The Lord [God] said unto my Lord [Christ], 'Sit at My right hand, until I make all Your enemies Your footstool.'" (Ps. 110:1) "But He, having offered one offering for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet." (Heb. 10:12-13) The vast majority of Christians are still looking for a rapture any moment, when Jesus is supposed to come to snatch away a miserable, divided, defeated, disease-ridden, lukewarm Laodicean church. But God says Christ is going to remain at His right hand until He (by His seven-fold Spirit in His saints) brings all enemies into subjection under His feet. "And the God of peace shall crush Satan under your feet shortly." (Rom. 16:20) His enemies include even that "last enemy," death. (1 Cor. 15:25-26) A group of overcomers will arise who shall conquer and become absolutely victorious over all the opposing forces of the world, the flesh, and the devil – before this age of sin draws to a close. (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 27)

## **The Condition for Power**

Ps. 62:11; Mat. 6:13; Lk. 2:52; Acts 5:32;  
Rom. 8:14; Eph. 1:17; 3:16;

Within God's inexhaustible fullness is His Spirit of Might. One of the burning concerns within my own heart is that God's people understand that fullness is not found in the gift-realm of the New Testament church. A "gift" is merely a fragment, a measure, given by the Spirit. In the "in-part" realm of the gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12-14), the power and wisdom of God is diluted – the body members are only partial and blurred images of the original pattern Son, dim lights of Him who is the true light.

This, dear friend, is not the ultimate, even for this present age. The cry in the hearts of God's apprehended ones in this hour is not just for another revival, another miracle, or another gift of the Spirit, but for the fullness of God! The fullness of which we speak is the seven Spirits of God.

I am sure that among the fifty-thousand believers in Ephesus, many had received the "gift" of the "word of wisdom." And yet Paul asked for the Ephesians that the Father would give them "the Spirit of Wisdom." (Eph. 1:17) The "gift" of a "word of wisdom" was given "by" the Spirit, but these believers needed to transcend the gift and receive the fullness of the Spirit of Wisdom who had given them the gift.

In like manner, we cannot be wrong in praying specifically for the "Spirit of Might" and any other of the seven Spirits of God. Better yet, let us use another prayer of Paul (Eph. 3:16) and plead that He would "grant unto us to be mightily strengthened by His Spirit." Let all who aspire to be sons of God take this prayer to dwell deep within them.

It is in bowing our knees and waiting on God, that from Himself will come what we ask, be it the Spirit of Might or the might of His Spirit. The Spirit is never anything separate from God; in all His working, He is still God Himself who is the mighty One working in us, growing us, and manifesting Himself through us. Our incapacity and weakness does not diminish His fullness.

Make no mistake about the condition necessary for receiving the Spirit of Might. He who would command nature must first, most absolutely, obey her. He who drives a car must first subject himself to the laws and principles by which it functions. It is such an easy thing to ask for power, even the power of the Spirit. Who would not be glad to have power? Many pray earnestly for power in and upon their work, their witnessing, their programs, their plans, their methods, efforts, and so on. But they receive it not, simply because they do not accept the only posture in which the Spirit of Power can work. We want to get possession of the power and use it! But God's order is always backwards to natural wisdom. God intends for the power to get possession of us and use us! If we give up ourselves to the power to rule in us, the power will then give itself to us, to rule through us. Unconditional submission and obedience to the power in our inner life is the one condition of being clothed with it.

"Power belongs unto God" (Ps. 62:11), says the Lord, and remains His forever. "Thine is the power," Jesus taught us to pray in the sonship prayer. (Mat. 6:13) The Scripture is plain that God gives the Spirit "to them that obey Him." (Acts 5:32) This means that the Holy Spirit is given only to the measure that we learn to obey the Spirit.

If our measure of the Spirit is little, then it follows that the working of obedience in our lives is correspondingly little. To me there is no more important principle than this for a son of God to learn! Jesus possessed the Spirit “without measure,” but not until after thirty years of walking with the Father as He grew up, during that time daily increasing “in wisdom and stature, and in favor [approval] with God and man.” (Lk. 2:52)

If you would know the fullness of the Spirit of Might, if you would have His mighty power at work in and through you, then bow very low in reverence before the holy Presence that dwells within you, that asks for your surrender to His guidance and will, in even the least of things. Walk very humbly, oh son of God, lest in anything you should miss the mark of knowing and doing His holy will. Live as one given up to a power that has entire mastery over you, that has complete possession of your inmost being, of your will, mind, emotions, and desires. Seek not, dear one, to gain personal possession of the Spirit of Might. Set your own will to find and do His will. Let the Spirit of Might have possession of you, and you shall surely stand among that glorious company of sons upon whom shall rest the sevenfold Spirit of God which is given to them that obey Him! “For as many as are led by [in strict obedience to] the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” (Rom. 8:14)

In the Belgian Congo, the weather was hot and dank. No breath of air stirred; leaves hung from the trees as though they were weighted. In the garden not far from the missionary home, a small boy played under a shade tree. Suddenly, his father called, “Philip, drop to your stomach!”

The boy obeyed at once, as he had been taught to obey, and his father continued, “Now crawl toward me fast.”

The boy again obeyed. After he had come about half way, the father said, “Now stand up and run to me.”

The boy reached his father and turned to look back – hanging from the branch under which he had been playing was a fifteen-foot serpent!

Even so, dear Reader, obedience to the Father is the route to victory over that ancient serpent, which is the devil and Satan. Obedience! They err who want the fullness of the Spirit before they obey. It is in a tender listening to the voice of the Spirit and faithfulness to submit to His word that the hearts of the sons of God are prepared for the fullness of God.

When God commanded Israel to build Him a holy place that He might dwell among them and be their God, He said to Moses, “According to all I show you, the pattern of the dwelling, even so shall you make it.” Moses obeyed, and we find in the last two chapters of Exodus, eighteen times the expression that all had been done “as the Lord commanded.” It was in a house built precisely to His specifications, the perfect expression of His will, that God came to dwell.

“Lo, I come to do Your will, O God.” (Heb. 10:9) God comes down to dwell in fullness in sons of obedience. He exercises His Spirit of Might in His meek and humble servants who are committed to doing His will.

# Chapter 10 – The Spirit of Knowledge

## Introduction

“These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God.” (Rev. 3:1)

“And the Spirit of the Lord [Jehovah] shall come upon Him, the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge and of the Fear of the Lord [Jehovah].” (Isa. 11:2)

The sixth Spirit of Sonship is the Spirit of the Knowledge of the Lord. We are living in a day when God has a controversy with mankind, especially with those who name His name and profess to be His people, because there is no truth, or mercy, or knowledge of God, but lying and swearing, killing, stealing, and committing adultery. More than twenty-seven centuries ago, God had the same controversy with those who were His. Through the prophet Hosea, God declared to Israel, “Hear the word of the Lord, you children of Israel; for the Lord has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. ... My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I will also reject you from being My priest...” (Hos. 4:1, 6)

Ever since Adam’s first sin in Eden, God has worked to bring forth in the earth a royal priesthood to be His instrument in bringing mankind into reconciliation with Himself. In the days of Moses, God offered this priesthood ministry to the nation of

Israel. “Now if you will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.” (Ex. 19:5-6) Seven centuries later, Hosea pronounced to the posterity of this same people, “... because you have rejected knowledge, I will also reject you from being My priest...” (Hos. 4:6)

It is evident to all who have eyes to see that the end of the age is now upon us. The world is filled with knowledge leading them to destruction, and the people of God are chained with shackles of death and tradition. But I declare unto you by the Word of God that in this climactic hour, God is separating a people from the knowledge of this present evil world that He might impart unto them the Spirit of Knowledge, for the Kingdom age is even now at hand when that glorious prophecy of Isaiah shall finally be fulfilled, “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea!” (Isa. 11:9)

The earth can only become filled with the knowledge of the Lord after the Spirit of Knowledge has fully rested upon the Christ of God (both head and body). The Spirit of Knowledge is one of the seven Spirits that comes to rest upon this Anointed One, this many-membered son of God. It is through His ministry that the whole earth becomes saturated with the knowledge of the Lord.

This corporate Christ, this anointed many-membered son (head and body) is the royal priesthood destined to bring forth God's glorious Kingdom in the whole earth. "You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." (1 Pet. 2:9) "And they sang a new song, saying, You are worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and have made us kings and priests unto our God; and we shall reign on the earth." (Rev. 5:9-10)

### **Every Tree of the Garden**

Gen. 2:8-9, 16-17, 25; 3:7, 22; Isa. 1:18;  
Ezk. 18:4; Jn. 1:12; 6:53-54; 20:22;  
1 Cor. 15:45-47; Eph. 2:1-7; 1 Tim. 5:6

God's plan of the ages is the subject of the entirety of Scripture. At the beginning of the Record, God is seen creating man in His own image, as the means of expressing Himself to the entire universe of created things. And from the very first, we see Adam in a relationship with three kinds of trees. To understand God's plan, we must understand these trees and what they represent.

"And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'Of every tree of the garden

you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it; for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die.'" (Gen. 2:8-9, 16-17) These verses introduce us to the three classes of trees which could be experienced by Adam: (1) every tree of the garden, (2) the tree of life, and (3) the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

A clear distinction is made between a grove composed of "every tree that is good for food" on the one hand, and on the other hand the two trees which were "in the midst of the garden," the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. "Every tree of the garden" may be spoken of as a grove, but these taken collectively are not the "tree of life," nor the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil." The passage clearly shows that the latter two trees are special, unlike any of the other trees in the garden.

The Hebrew word "ets" (pronounced "ates") is "tree" in English. "Etsim" is the plural form. "Every tree" is in the plural form and denotes a grove of trees, containing many varieties. On the other hand, in every reference of "the tree of life" and "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" the singular form is used. We must conclude that "the tree of life" and "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" are each one single, unique tree, separate and distinct from all the other trees. These two unique trees are not included in the reference "every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food" nor in the reference "of every tree in the garden you may freely eat" Both the tree of life and the tree of knowledge were of a different nature from "every tree" of the garden.

After creating man, God put him in the Garden of Eden and showed him these three kinds of trees, and man's whole life could be pictured as a feast upon one tree or another. God told Adam to be careful about eating of these trees. If he ate of them in obedience to God's command, he would have life; if not, he would have death. This was a matter of life and death! The future of Adam (and all his descendents) depended entirely upon his relationship with these three kinds of trees!

"The Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat.'" (Gen. 2:16) Note that this was a command, not just permission. What was the first command God gave Adam after putting him in the garden? To eat! Eating is receiving. It is the most basic function of life. It is striking that here at the creation of man this was the first command given him – eat! Receive! Take something into you!

This is still the first command to man. "Receive the Holy Spirit." (Jn. 20:22) "Truly, truly I say unto you, Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh, and drinks My blood, has eternal life." (Jn. 6:53-54) "But as many as received Him [into themselves], to them gave He power to become the sons of God." (Jn. 1:12)

But the command to eat also contained a prohibition. "Don't eat of the wrong tree!" Since the tree of knowledge was the only one prohibited, it is clear that the tree of life was available to Adam, as was also every other tree of the garden. However, Genesis 3:22 implies that man had not yet partaken of the tree of life. Until the day he first ate of the tree of knowledge, man had derived his life entirely from the fruit of "every tree of

the garden." We must understand that as the tree of life represents a realm of life, the tree of knowledge also represents a realm of life (or death), and "every tree of the garden" likewise represent yet a third realm of life.

I do not see, as some teach, that Adam, in the beginning, was a bright and glorious spirit being, filled with Shekina light-glory, and only in the Fall was he changed in the atomic structure of his being to become a natural flesh-being, made of earth, earthy. This is contrary to the Word of God. The Scriptures clearly reveal that "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (Gen. 2:7) Note the order: (1) God formed man of the dust of the ground. (2) God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. (3) Man became a living soul. The result of uniting the body, made of dust, with the breath of life is that man "became a living soul." It says nothing of him becoming some kind of bright, light-filled, spirit being. The breath of life breathed into Adam's nostrils was, therefore, the breath of soul life for it produced a living soul, not a spirit, light-being.

This is precisely the point Paul makes in 1 Corinthians 15:45-47, "... it is written, 'The first man, Adam, was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a life-giving Spirit.' However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven." If the first man, Adam, was originally a bright light-spirit being and became a natural man of the earth when he fell, then we would be compelled to reverse the order to say, "However, the natural is not first, but the spiritual; then the natural."

But in God's book, the natural is first. Adam in the flesh was first. Adam in the Spirit is last. Jesus is the last Adam, the last man. Jesus was spiritual, made a life-giving Spirit. But the first man was made a living soul.

We also know that Adam and Eve were not originally, before the Fall, clothed with some kind of "bright Shekina light." The Record states plainly, "And they were both naked, and were not ashamed." (Gen. 2:25) They were both naked, not "clothed" at all. When? After they sinned? No. Before the serpent ever beguiled Eve, from the very beginning, the man and his wife were both naked and had no shame in that nakedness. Nowhere does the Scripture state that Adam and Eve were originally "clothed" with light and glory. What it does say is that they were naked... but without shame in the presence of one another and in the presence of God.

The only difference after they sinned was that, "The eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons." (Gen. 3:7) In relation to their nakedness, sin brought a knowledge. They "knew that they were naked." Of course they "knew" it – they had just eaten of the tree of the knowledge!

The important point here is that Adam at first did not walk in that transcendent life and glory typified by the tree of life. The tree of life speaks of the realm of Spirit life, God life, the life of Christ the "life-giving Spirit." (1 Cor. 15:45) If Adam had been a glorious spirit-being then he too could have been called a life-giving Spirit. But he was not. He was just a living soul. He had not yet eaten from the tree of life. He derived all his life from "every tree of the garden."

Let us look more closely at this man, the living soul, who lived in the realm of life typified by "every tree of the garden." It is true that Adam was created in the image of God. But Paul tells us that that first man was "of the earth, earthy." (1 Cor. 15:47) He was an earthly image of a heavenly being, a natural, physical image of a spiritual being, even as a marble statue is a stone image of a physical man. The likeness is apparent, but the one is only "in" the image of the other. Being created in the image of God, Adam possessed similar qualities – similar powers of reason, memory, judgment, and will, and with moral qualities of justice, benevolence, compassion, and so on – though differing widely in degree, range, and scope. His "image" was as in an ancient mirror, dimly reflecting the true. It was incomplete and immature, yet to be tested and proven; but it was still the very image of the Almighty. To such an extent is man an image of God that God can say even to fallen man, "Come, let us reason together." (Isa. 1:18)

There is a wonderful contrast between man as we now see him, degraded by sin, and the "perfect" (though immature) man whom God originally made in His image. Sin has gradually changed his features as well as his character. Ignorance, licentiousness, and devotion to depravity have so blurred and marred humanity that in most, any likeness of God is nearly obliterated. The moral and intellectual qualities are dwarfed, and the animal instincts, unduly developed, are no longer balanced by the higher. Even with all the aid of medical science, man's average length of life worldwide is now about forty years, whereas at first he survived more than nine hundred even under a penalty of death!

It is important that we understand that Adam, though a perfect human being, was neither a spiritual man nor an immortal man. He was a soulish man, “a living soul.” Only by feasting on the tree of life could he have become spiritual and immortal. But as long as he only ate of “every tree of the garden,” Adam would remain a soulish man, a living soul, in the image of God but without the life of God within, rather like that marble statue. Now, there is nothing wrong with being soulish, except perhaps for that deplorable propensity of falling into sin! (See Ezk. 18:4 ff)

We generally think of a tree as a purely physical thing: a hard, cold reality. But I believe that physical things are also pictures of even more “real” things in the spiritual realm. Those trees in Eden may have seemed quite normal, but it is quite clear that they had eternal significance. Let’s look at them from a spiritual perspective, and may the Spirit of God graciously open the eyes of our understanding that we may see the significance of each of the three classes of trees in the garden of God.

What is the significance of the first kind of tree, called “every tree of the garden”? These trees represent that realm of life in which the first man lived before he fell. The realm of unfallen human life, the living soul, was a plane of life which far transcended the realm of corruption and death which passed upon man through the tree of knowledge. But it was also a plane of life which was inferior to the realm of life available to Adam in the tree of life. Thus, “every tree of the garden” signifies the natural realm of the earth, the physical realm, the realm of the perfect, sinless, living soul – human life.

As a living soul, Adam feasted upon the fruits of “every tree of the garden.” These trees had no power to impart into him the divine nature or the incorruptible life of God. Those were contained only in the tree of life. But neither did the other trees of the garden impart into man death, corruption, darkness, or any of the powers of Satan, as those were contained only in the tree of knowledge. Thus, “every tree of the garden” signifies the natural realm of the living soul in which Adam first had his being.

Has anyone else since Adam and Eve ever dwelt in this realm of perfect natural human life? Only one, the One who, because of a supernatural birth, did not inherit Adam’s sin nature, but rather was conceived of the Holy Spirit. And Jesus did not dwell there for long, as we shall see.

## **The Tree of Life**

Jn. 1:1-4; 2 Cor. 4:18; 1 Jn. 1:1-2; Rev. 2:7

What does the second tree, the tree of life, signify? Most assuredly it represents a realm of life beyond what Adam already possessed, beyond that perfect natural realm. Adam already possessed soul life, so it was not necessary for him to eat of the tree of life to gain that kind of life. Therefore, the life offered to man in the tree of life is a higher kind of life than the life Adam possessed, even God-life. It imparts more than some “never-ending” version of the human life which Adam could have retained simply by refusing to eat of the tree of knowledge. This tree of life lifts man up from the realm of humanity, from a living soul, from even the realm of perfect natural human life as Adam had at the beginning, and infuses him with divine life, even the life of God in Christ.

According to the revelation of the Scriptures, Jesus is not only our life today, but from the very beginning, He has always been the life of God Himself made available to man. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning... in Him was life; and the life was the light of men." (Jn. 1:1-4) "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life [Christ], for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father." (I Jn. 1:1-2) The tree of life in Eden was nothing else but the life of God in Christ, freely available to Adam and Eve.

Has anyone ever eaten of the tree of life? Most assuredly One has! The man Jesus, the second Adam, was born into that same perfect human life that the first Adam had, the natural human life of "every tree in the garden." But He was not content to dwell there for long! From early childhood He wholeheartedly pursued His true Father, God the Spirit, spending long hours in prayer, learning the wisdom and knowledge of God, and committing Himself to the will and works of the Father. "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." (Lk. 2:40) He was not "born" a life-giving Spirit, He "became a life-giving Spirit." (1 Cor. 15:45) Yes, He was eating of the tree of life. He continued to eat until His baptism when the Holy Spirit came upon Him. Then He was filled with life eternal, the fullness of the seven Spirits of God. Thus He literally, physically became the tree of life, the source of life for all.

## **The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil**

Gen. 1:31; Rom. 7:18; 8:5-13; Gal. 6:8;  
Eph. 2:2; 1 Jn. 3:8, 10

What is the significance of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the third kind of tree in Eden? The first kind of tree represents the natural realm, the realm of perfect human soul life. The second kind of tree represents the realm of incorruptible, divine life. The third kind of tree is pictured as the source of corruption, sin, and death. This tree represents the realm of the carnal mind under the dominion of Satan, for the tree is unmistakably under the jurisdiction of the wicked one. "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace; because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be... For if you live after the flesh, you shall die." (Rom. 8:5-13) "He who sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he who sows to the Spirit [tree of life] shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." (Gal. 6:8)

It is not our purpose in this book to describe the nature of the death produced by the tree of knowledge, but rather to consider the properties generating that death. These properties are called "the knowledge of good and evil." When man was first created under the hands of God, he was declared by the Creator to be "very good." (Gen. 1:31) Thus, good was indisputably inherent in man from the beginning. When God pronounced man to be "very good," man at that point did not possess the divine life of God; he was still just a living soul. The eternal life of God in Christ was available in the tree of life, but Adam had not yet received it into himself.

Yes, good was inherent in man's nature from the moment of his creation, but life was not inherent – life had to be partaken of. This demonstrates a fundamental difference between “good” and “life.” These two items are distinct – they are not the same thing. Man was declared “good” long millennia before any man was ever made a partaker of divine life in Christ. Man as a “living soul” was “good.” This means that the goodness of man was contained in the soul of man. The human life of man was originally good and upright, nothing to be ashamed of, as can be seen in the fact that the man and his wife were naked but were not ashamed. The natural life of Adam was without sin, yes, but also without any knowledge of sin or consciousness of shame. As created, Adam and Eve were perfect in innocence.

When man sinned, he not only offended God in his actions, which resulted in a sinful situation, but, worse still, he was poisoned by Satan in his life, which caused his life to become defiled and corrupted. For example, suppose I instruct my children not to play with my tools in the tool chest. Due to their childish impulses, after I leave home they open up the chest and play with the tools. This is simply a violation of my orders; they have done wrong, but they are basically unchanged – they are still the same children, in pretty much the same condition (barring some accident with the tools). However, suppose instead I leave a jar of poison. I tell the children, “Don't touch this! It's poison!” After I leave, due to their childish curiosity, they open the jar, examine its contents, and then taste it. At this point, they have not only disobeyed my orders, but, far worse, they have taken the poison into themselves.

This is what happened that tragic day in Eden when Adam ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Not only did he disobey God's explicit command, but he also received the very mind, will, spirit, and nature of Satan into himself. Henceforth, man became inwardly complicated – a true paradox; he now contained not only the original good of the soul of man, but also the evil and corrupted life of Satan in his carnal mind. He still bore the image of the almighty, eternal God, yet that image was perverted, distorted, subtly changed, due to the death now working within him.

One other fact should be noted. When Adam took the spirit of Satan into himself, his sin made him the same nature as Satan qualitatively, though not quantitatively.

“He who commits sin is of the devil; for the devil sins from the beginning.” (1 Jn. 3:8) The devil sins from the beginning; Satan's sin was total. From the beginning, he rebelled, to chose in himself to be a god of another quality. Thus he set himself up as a rival and alternative to God. His sin was absolute. He became a god in reverse.

Adam's fall was of the same quality as Satan's, but it was not total. Adam fell through the temptation of another, through deceit, lies, misrepresentation, and through immaturity and his lack of wisdom and understanding. He was responsible and therefore guilty, for he chose to disobey instead of seeking the way of escape right there available to him, and therefore his fall had the same quality of disobedience and rebellion, but it was not absolute in the sense of an open-faced willful rejection of God. His interests were the attractions of the flesh realm rather than revolt against God.

If Adam could have kept both God and sin, he would have done so. He hid from God in his shame, but did not fight against God as a rebel. His outlook was not totally reversed as was Satan's. Adam had not irrevocably chosen evil to be his good – he had merely added evil to his good! He was more a kidnapped slave than a willing son of the devil. Scripture speaks of us as children, not sons, of the evil one. A child is defined as “differing nothing from a servant.” (Gal. 4:1) Adam knew good and evil, whereas Satan knows only evil as his good. Adam had a moral sense, a conscience, an impress of the image of God still in him, whereas Satan doesn't. God could and did meet and commune with man immediately after his fall. Adam was easily redeemable. Thus God provided, from the foundation of the world, the Lamb of God for his redemption.

This dual knowledge of good and evil is the inner condition of the people in the world today. Due to the fact that man has the life both of Adam and the devil, one good in nature and the other evil, he has the innate desire on one hand to be good and upright, and on the other hand he has an inclination toward sin and evil. Therefore, philosophers and psychologists engaged in the study of human nature have projected two opposing points of view: one, that man is inherently good in nature, and the other, that the nature of man is inherently evil. Actually, we possess both of these natures because we have within us both the “living soul” aspect of Adam as he was created “very good” and the sinful “death” aspect of “the prince of the power of the air, the demon spirit that still constantly works in the children of disobedience.” (Eph. 2:2, AMP)

Ever since this devilish life entered into man, he manifests the devilish nature some of the time according to the devilish life, though he is also still able to manifest much natural goodness according to his human life. Man is truly schizophrenic! At times he can be very good, agreeable and helpful; he can act like a truly compassionate man. But other times, as when he loses his temper and flies into a rage, threatening and cursing, or when he indulges himself in drunkenness, lying, cheating, stealing, lust, swindling, adultery, murder, and a multitude of other sins, he bears a devilish appearance and is full of the devilish characteristics. It is not of his own will that man manifests the devilish life; rather it is the life of the devil within that usurps him and thus causes him to become a devilish man and lead a life of mixture: man and the devil, good and evil.

The good that is in man manifests itself in areas such as the activities of this world's philanthropic institutions, church programs, civic organizations, doctors, orphanages, social action, government welfare agencies, hospitals, relief societies, and a million other things by which men seek to be generous, kind, compassionate, moral, and to improve the condition of their fellow man. Men do not have to be saved to have good in them! I'm quite sure that you yourself have friends whom you consider very good, though they have no relationship to God through Jesus Christ. Before we were saved, there was often in our minds a natural desire to do good, to honor our parents, to be helpful to those around us, to be an upstanding citizen. These ideas spring from the inherent good in man. They prove that, even before we were converted, this principle of good was in us.

But the devil is there, too! In the very people who often express so many good qualities, at other times, one can see greed, selfishness, strife, hypocrisy, immorality, rage, and a multitude of other evils. Hence, we know that within the natural man there are two different lives – the good life of man as created, the living soul, and the devilish life of Satan. Though man has both kinds of life in him, he obtained them at two different junctures due to two different occurrences. First, man obtained the good life of natural humanity at creation. Second, man obtained the evil life of Satan in the Fall.

Though man was created “very good” he did not “know” he was good until he ate of the tree of knowledge. The reason for this is simple: for someone to understand “good,” he needs to have something bad or evil to compare it with. Before the Fall, Adam’s only comparison was with God, who is so much higher that at best Adam would have to consider himself as having fallen short of God’s glory. He did not think of himself as bad or evil; he only knew he needed to mature into all God had planned for him. But then when he fell, he knew what evil is. Now everything changed, for he was surely better than that! Why, now he could be as God Himself in comparison to the evil that he saw in the satanic nature he had ingested.

Some would say that the good in man, having been corrupted by Satan through the Fall, has lost its element of goodness. This is inaccurate. Allow me to demonstrate this with an analogy. In one area where we lived in Florida for a number of years we had “iron water” in our house. This was water which contained a solution of iron and other minerals from underground. The water was

yellowish in color and tended to turn yellow everything with which it came into contact. The laundry would turn yellow. I still have yellow stains on my teeth from that water, which the dentists are unable to remove. There was nothing wrong with the water. It was pure water. But foreign elements were added to it, iron and various other minerals, which ruined its taste and usefulness. The pure water was still there, though masked. All you had to do was run it through a water a filter, and there was the good pure water as God had made it. In the same way, though mankind has been corrupted by the element of the satanic within, his goodness still remains, though perverted or distorted.

The truth of this can be seen in the very ingredients in the Fall. When Adam sinned, he took into himself fruit from the tree of the “knowledge of good and evil.” Hear this! Adam was “good.” Satan and his lies, as well as Adam’s disobedience, were “evil.” But Adam didn’t “know” any of that until he had eaten from the tree of knowledge. So his sin accomplished two different things: first, by his disobedience he accepted the evil nature of Satan into himself; second, by his eating the fruit, his eyes were opened to a new realm, the realm of angels and demons. God conceded that “man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil.” (Gen. 3:22)

This ministered to man a knowledge of good as truly as it ministered to him a knowledge of evil. Thus, the fall of man introduced him to a realm of duality. Fallen man “knows” both good and evil. How prone we are to declare the unregenerate man to be only evil! The evil may well predominate in the natural man, but we cannot say that all good has been lost.

It is for this reason that philosophers and psychologists have discovered that within man are some “illustrious virtues” and “innate goodness,” and have reached the mistaken conclusion that the nature of man is good. They have merely discovered that within fallen man is still the principle of good, the divine imprint which naturally causes us to appreciate and want to do good.

The problem is that when man came into the knowledge of good and evil, he did not come into a better condition. Man came to know “good and evil,” but he didn’t come to know God. Knowing good and evil did not make man holy. Man merely added evil to his good, producing a mixture of the two, but in so doing he forfeited the life and glory available to him in the tree of life. He chose to know good and evil – but missed life. In choosing good and evil he missed God.

### **Good Is Not Life!**

Gen. 2:9; Rom. 3:20-22; 8:1-2; Gal. 3:21 ff; Heb. 7:16

The knowledge of good and evil is only concerned with external behavior. It judges everything upon the basis of whether it looks “good” or “evil.” As long as he walks in this realm of the Fall, man can only understand and judge within this framework: *Does it appear to be evil? Well, if it doesn’t look evil, then it must be good, and whatever is “good” must be of God.* Nothing could be farther from the truth. If “good” was acceptable with God, then man could surely be justified by “the works of the law.” The “good” of man is the natural good of the creature – not the good of the Creator. All of man’s “good” even if it were not mixed with the perversion of the sin nature, could still never result in the indestructible life of God in Christ.

Let’s talk about man’s “goodness” for a bit. Before the Fall, man had a God-given goodness that even God Himself called “very good.” But he had no knowledge of that goodness (since he had not yet partaken of the tree of the knowledge), and was therefore never tempted to assert himself in pride or self-confidence or rebellion against God. Rather than living for himself, his whole life was wrapped up in his relationship and fellowship with God – being and doing whatever God asked of him. He did not, in fact he could not, question God’s authority, for he had no knowledge of good or bad with which to question. His only goal, his only direction in life, his only “ambition” was to fulfill the Father’s will. How then, could he have ever fallen to temptation?

It was God’s design that man, as good as he was in the natural, should grow and mature in the knowledge of God the Spirit until he was filled up to the utter fullness of God, thus literally becoming the life of God to the physical realm. Adam had within himself a deep hunger for knowledge. God put it there so that he would hunger for His Spirit of Knowledge. God put the tree of life into the garden to feed Adam things of Spirit until he became the life of God in Christ.

Adam was hungry for knowledge, but in God’s perfect plan of the ages, Satan was permitted to get to him first with his offer of a shortcut, a “get-rich-quick” scheme. As with Abraham and Ishmael, Satan offers his best first. In his subtle way, he twisted the truth within their own God-given goals. In essence he said, “You want knowledge? Well here is an easy shortcut! Just think, all the knowledge of God, to know both good and evil, in only one easy bite!”

It reminds me of the way Satan tempted Jesus; “Here are all the kingdoms of the world. They are all under my power and authority. I know that God wants You to rule them, so I’ve got an easy shortcut for You. Just one simple bow before me, and I’ll give it all to you.” The difference was that Adam took the shortcut, but Jesus did not.

In taking that shortcut, Adam did receive knowledge. But it was not the Spirit of Knowledge that is the life of God in Christ. Instead, it was the “wisdom and knowledge of this world,” which Satan wanted very much for man to have, so man could make his own choices between good and evil. And therein lies the problem. Once Adam’s eyes were opened to the knowledge of the world, to discern between good and evil with his mind, he lost his dependence upon God and his total desire to know and do nothing but the will and work of God. Now he is “independent”; he can recognize what is right or wrong, and make the choice for himself. And a very good person will make very good choices, never realizing that even in making those very good choices he is participating in Satan’s rebellion against God and setting himself up as his own god.

Everyone born of Adam has inherited this same problem: the eyes of his mind are open to the knowledge of good and evil. The educational systems of this world, indeed even the religious systems of this world, try very hard to fine-tune this knowledge, so that we all will become experts at choosing good over evil. Thus we are deceived into thinking that we have life within ourselves. And Satan chuckles with glee, knowing that he has won the victory, as long as we go on making our own independent choices.

But the tree of life is a different tree! It is not based on either good or evil; it is life! No matter how good you get at “judging” (choosing the good over the evil by your knowledge of good and evil), you will still have no life within you until you begin by the Spirit of God to partake of the tree of life, which is found in Christ Jesus our Lord. This is what the “Lordship of Jesus Christ” is all about. He is the Lord; He makes our choices for us, by His Holy Spirit life within us. (And since God is righteous, His choices are also right, even if to our logical mind – by our knowledge of good and evil – they don’t seem good.) This is walking by faith, not sight; it is being led by the Spirit of God; it is the only way of life for the sons of God.

Don’t get me wrong here. I am not saying that it is wrong to choose to do good. Much of Scripture commands us to do good. “Trust in the Lord, and do good... Depart from evil, and do good; so you will abide forever.” (Ps. 37:3, 27) “He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.” (Mic. 6:8) “Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” (Mat. 5:16) In fact, much of the book of Proverbs is instruction on how to do good! Don’t deny the good! Good is a part of your created nature, for God is good (Ps. 34:8), and He made you in His image. God called His creation “very good” after the sixth day. (Gen. 1:31) Good is still just as good as it always was – just do not depend on it to further your relationship with God! All the good in the world will not get you even one step closer to God. Good is good.

In fact, good is great. But good is not life and never can bring life. And trusting in your choices of good instead of evil to bring you into a living relationship with God the Spirit is choosing death instead of life. Hear me! Knowing and choosing to do what is good, and knowing and choosing to avoid doing what is evil, is very good. It is the best we humans can do independently from God.

And that is the point. It is independence from God; therefore it is apart from the life of God. It is in its very essence rebellion from God – it is death. We now know good and evil, and we can never un-know it and step back into innocence. All we can do is recognize that there is no life there and step forward into a life of submitting our “carnal knowledge” to the true Spirit of Knowledge. How? By giving up the “right” to make our independent choices based on judging by our own knowledge of good and evil, and choosing instead to let His Spirit be our life.

In the Garden of Eden, therefore, we have three revelations from the three kinds of trees. First, life is the nature of God, whereas good is the nature of man. Second, though God is good, good is not necessarily life – that depends upon whether the good is the good of the creature or the good of the Creator. God’s good is life, but man’s good is in a different realm – that of the natural creation. Third, life and good and evil are three different, independent things. Satan’s evil mingled with man’s good produced (and continues to produce) death. Even before he fell, all of man’s good, of itself, could not give him true life – only the tree of life could give man eternal, divine, incorruptible life. Thus we see that “good” and “life” pertain to two different realms.

We understand that evil is not life, but do we really understand that good is also not life? Evil and good, though different in nature, are of the same realm; neither one contains life or is life. Thus in the Bible, good and evil are not two trees, but one tree. Good was in “every tree of the garden” but good co-existed with evil in the third tree. Life is a different tree, belonging to another realm, another kingdom. (Gen. 2:9)

Thus a man, by his own determination and effort, can improve considerably in his character and actions and yet still be entirely void of the life of God. This is because his improvement is completely apart from life; it is of his own good human effort and not a product of indwelling life. How we who have been born of the Spirit of God thank God that for us there is no longer merely the two realities of good and evil, of man and Satan; there is now within our beings the very Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus!

It is interesting to note that Scripture never uses the term “the life of God.” “The life of Jesus” is used only twice (2 Cor. 4:10-11). The Scriptures mainly reveal to us that God is life. Thus we read, “And this is the record, that God has given unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life.” (1 Jn. 5:12) You don’t receive merely “the life of the Son.” You receive, rather, “The Son – your life!” Jesus said, “I am... the life!” (Jn. 14:6) It is not merely “the life of Christ” that we want, rather, we want “Christ as our life.” The “life of Christ” does not necessarily imply the whole of Christ, whereas “Christ our life” or “Christ as life” denotes the fullness of God. “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory.” (Col. 3:4)

Then what is life? Life is God Himself in Christ. What does it mean to have life? It means to have God Himself. What does it mean to manifest life? To manifest life is to manifest God Himself. Life is not something apart from God. If it were, it would not be life. Let this truth sink deeply into your spirit. It is not enough to simply know that we have received life; we must understand that this life which we have received is God Himself. It is God who is living in us. He is living His life in and through us. What do we display when we manifest God's life, just God's virtue and character, or God Himself?

Does this mean that we "live right," "do good," "go to church," "pay tithes," "keep the commandments," and try to be loving, kind, and generous? Not necessarily. None of these things is life. Only God Himself is life. Thus to do good, even for God, is not to manifest life. A good person can do all those things without even knowing God. (As with the rich Pharisee in Matthew 19:16.) If the good works we do are not flowing out of God within us, then they are not of life but merely the good of man – manifestations of the Fall, eating the wrong tree, human choices based on our knowledge of good and evil. Any goodness or virtue we display, unless it is the manifestation of the new-creation life of God within us, is not life. We can no longer judge on the basis of whether a thing is good or evil – we must know that it flows from an expression of God Himself.

The objective of God in creation and redemption is not for us to be either "good" men or "evil" men, but to be God-men – sons of God. Therefore, the way we live is not the way of self-improvement but the way of life. God is not interested in transforming

or patching up the old flesh nature. He is interested in crucifying it and giving us a whole new nature – the nature of God in Christ. The elements that transform our lives are not elements to improve our behavior but the development of the life of God within. Those who would be sons of God must understand the fundamental difference between life and good works. Works are merely human actions, which may change the physical realm. But life is growth – it transforms our very being, our essence.

For example, consider an automobile and a tree. The wheels, body, and engine of the automobile are put there by human actions, but the branches, leaves, and fruit of a tree arrive there by growth within the tree. The automobile demonstrates good works, but the tree expresses life. And the difference between these two is unmistakable.

With us as sons of God, the difference between works and life is just like this. That which is produced by our own human efforts is works – the "good" part of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. Only that which is produced from the development of the life of God within us is life. Only that which is of life pertains to the realm of sonship.

Watch out for this! It is so easy, by human effort, to bring out the good human virtues of Adam and mistake them for the life of Christ. It is easy to expertly develop our own virtues and delude ourselves into believing we are "overcomers." But our only real deliverance out of the kingdom of death comes when we are "swallowed up of life."

We all (I trust) know how to be saved "... by grace through faith... not by works lest anyone should boast." (Eph. 2:8-9) But do we understand the practical application of it?

Do we focus on that initial salvation event and forget the “salvation to the uttermost” mentioned in Hebrews 7:25? Do we think that Jesus died to save us from the guilt and the penalty of our sin, only to leave us powerless, to walk the rest of our earthly lives under the bondage of sin? Are we, like those foolish, bewitched Galatians, trying to complete in the flesh that which God began in the spirit? (Gal. 3:1-11) Do we “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” while forgetting that “it is God who is at work in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:12-13) and “He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus”? (Phil. 1:6)

“By the [good] works of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, because through the law comes [only] the knowledge of sin. But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been manifested... through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe...” (Rom. 3:20-22) “... not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life... for the law made nothing perfect... Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant... hence He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him... a Son made perfect forever.” (See Heb. 7:16-28)

“If a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law ... Therefore the law has been our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” (Gal. 3:21-27)

Dear brothers and sisters, hear it! Good works did not earn you salvation, and good works won’t get you to heaven, because, apart from Christ, there is no life there! You can spend a lifetime working for God; you can give all your possessions to feed the poor and give your body to be burned, but if you have no love (the life of God, who is love), it profits you nothing. (See 1 Cor. 13:3)

Am I saying God’s law is no longer any good for the Christian? Should we forget the Ten Commandments and just do whatever we feel like? If you asked that question, you missed the point. God’s law is very good; in fact, it is essential for those still in the realm of the knowledge of good and evil because it shows them their bondage to the flesh nature and their need of a Savior. By condemning them for every evil deed, thought, attitude, or motivation of their heart, the law is just doing its job. But there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk by the Spirit rather than by the flesh nature, “for the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.” (See Rom. 8:1-2) “Walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.” For, “If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.” (Gal. 5:16, 18) Why? Because a life led by the Spirit always bears the fruits of the Spirit, and “against such there is no law.” (Gal. 5:23) Thus we neither keep the law nor deny it; we neither do good works nor deny them –we just live our lives in a different realm: the realm of life, the realm of the “Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus.”

A Christian trying to live by law is like walking into an apple orchard and pinning dime-store plastic apples onto the branches of a non-bearing apple tree. Sure, you can

make it outwardly appear just the same as another fruit-bearing tree next to it. But that other tree is bearing its fruit out of its life, while the plastic “fruit” on your tree has no relationship to life. The fruits on both trees have the same form and color; there is no difference in their outward appearance. But if we smell or taste the fruit, we can instantly tell the difference. The real fruit is delicious, vitalizing, and sustaining, but the artificial fruit is tasteless and inedible; it’s good to look at, but not good to eat. This contrasts what we apprehended ones manifest in our daily lives. All that springs from life has the taste and vitalizing qualities of life, even the life-giving, incorruptible life of God. But all that springs from good works has only the taste and inedible nothingness of man.

He who is in union with the tree of life has the power to offer to others that which they can eat and live. To all who surround him, he becomes a tree of life, of which they can taste and be refreshed. He, in his circle, is a center of life and of blessing, simply because he abides in Christ and receives from Him the Spirit and the life, which “become in him a well of living water springing up unto eternal life.” (Jn. 4:14)

Learn this, if you would be a royal priesthood after the order of Melchizedek, after the power of an endless life. Learn, if you would rule and reign over nations, or if you would bless all the families of the earth in that glorious age to come. Learn, I say, to abide in Christ, to know Him as your life, and you shall surely reign and bless. As surely as the branch abiding in a fruitful vine bears fruit, so surely, yes, much more surely, will a son abiding in Christ be made life and blessing unto the ends of the earth.

The tree of life in Eden corresponds precisely with the revelation disclosed by Jesus when He said, “I am the vine, you are the branches.” (Jn. 15:5) The connection between the vine and the branch is a living one. No plastic, imitation fruit or leaves will do; no work of man can affect it. The branch is such only by the Creator’s own work, in virtue of which the life (the sap) and the fruitfulness of the vine communicate themselves to the branch, producing its fruit. Just so it is with the sons of God – their union with their Lord is not by human wisdom or human will, nor a product of organization, program, ceremony, ordinance, seminary training, ritual, or religious exercises, nor a doctrine, creed, or confession, nor any other carnal work of mankind’s vacuous religious systems or traditions, but an act of God the Father, who through the eternal Spirit, effects the closest and most complete life-union between the Son of God and His body. “God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts.” (Gal. 4:6) The same Spirit which dwelt and still dwells in the Son, becomes the life of the sons. In the unity of that Spirit and the fellowship of the same life of God which is in Christ, they are one with Him. As between the vine and the branch, it is a life-union that makes them one.

The sons of God are not called unto a “knowledge of good and evil.” The sons are of that company who have discovered a new realm of life. It is a reality and a glory that transcends all the rituals and time-honored traditions of the elders, all the laws of Moses, all the petty rules and regulations imposed by man-made church systems which are nothing more or less than fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Religion is different from life. Life is a bonding relationship with Him who is life. Religion is man's puny efforts, out of his own soulish concept of what is "good," to impose holiness and spirituality, to adjust those plastic apples properly on the fruitless old apple tree and try to make it look good. "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yes, doubtless! I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness [good] which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ [life], the righteousness which is of God by faith; that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection..." (Phil. 3:7-10)

"That I may know Him!" "For the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord!" This is where the difference lies between the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil can only impart to man a knowledge of good and evil. Nothing more. The tree of life, however, imparts to men a higher knowledge, literally the Spirit of Knowledge – knowing Christ who is life! As with Paul above, let us exchange our knowledge of good and evil for the surpassingly excellent knowledge of Christ!

As long as we try to enforce rules, laws, doctrines, dress codes, "do's and "don'ts" on our brethren, we are merely feeding them from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In the fellowships I've been associated with, a number of people have been led to a "saving knowledge" of Jesus Christ. Some

of these dear ones were cigarette smokers. Knowing that such addictions hinder the lives of those who would be "overcomers" in the Lord, we could have insisted that, "You must stop smoking. Smokers can't function in this fellowship. You've gotta overcome your addictions so you can walk with God. Smoking is a sin which will destroy your spiritual life."

We could have counseled these dear ones thus, but we would have only been offering them some fruit off the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. So instead, we offered them fruit from the tree of life. Rather than condemning them for their smoking, we encouraged them in the Lord. We received them. Loved them. Got them into the Word. Ministered the baptism in the Holy Spirit to them. Shared sonship and the high calling of God with them. Unveiled the mysteries of the Kingdom to them. Can you guess what happened? To my knowledge, every one of them was delivered from their smoking addiction within a very short time. Their deliverance was a product of life, a working of divine life growing within them. Death was "swallowed up" by life. Praise God! The Son of God came that men might have life, and have it abundantly. (Jn. 10:10) The sons of God shall arise for the same purpose in the same ministry: abundant life!

Jesus did not come to condemn the world; it is condemned already. (Jn. 3:17-18) All creation is groaning in pain, travailing for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the entire world was subjected to futility in hope that they might be delivered from their bondage to corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. (Rom. 8:19-22)

## Chapter 11 – The Spirit of Knowledge (Part 2)

### Summary of Chapter 10

“These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God.” (Rev. 3)

“And the Spirit of the Lord [Jehovah] shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge and of the Fear of the Lord [Jehovah].” (Isa. 11:2)

The sixth Spirit of Sonship is the Spirit of Knowledge. A quick summary of chapter 10 is in order. After Adam was created in the image of God, he was declared by the Creator to be “very good.” (Gen. 1:31) But man did not, at that time, possess the divine life of God. He was merely a “living soul” to whom God had made available, in the tree of life, the eternal life of God in Christ, though he had not yet partaken of this life. Thus, although good was inherent in man from the beginning, life was not inherent, for life was in the tree of life. That needed to be appropriated by man, “eaten,” received into himself. Thus there is a basic, fundamental difference between “man’s good” and “life.” Man’s good is incomplete. It has no life in it. True good, God’s good (only God is truly good – Lk. 18:19), is full of life, because He is life.

The serpent, when beguiling Adam and Eve, offered them entrance into a realm of knowledge. “For God knows that in the day you eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” (Gen. 3:5) Thus man’s fall was into this realm of “the knowledge of good and evil.”

When Adam ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he not only disobeyed God’s command, but he also took something into himself; he added evil to his good, becoming inwardly imbued with the mind, will, spirit, and nature of Satan. Man thus became inwardly complicated; he now contained not only the original good of the soul of man, but also the evil and corrupted life of Satan in his carnal mind.

This duality of good and evil is the inner condition, the state of being, of people in the world today. Due to the fact that man has the nature both of Adam and the devil, one good and the other evil, he has the innate desire on one hand to be good and upright, and on the other hand he has an inclination toward sin and evil. The tree of which Adam ate, ministered a knowledge of good just as truly as it ministered to him a knowledge of evil. Thus, the Fall introduced man into a realm of duality, of admixture: good and evil. Ever since that first sin, fallen mankind has had both these characteristics inherently working within.

The problem is that when man came into the knowledge of good and evil, he did not come into a better condition. Man came to know “good and evil,” but he didn’t come to know God! Man chose knowledge – but missed life! In fact, by his wrong choice, man severed himself from God to become his own god, making his own choices based on his new knowledge, independently from God. This is sin even if he chooses the good.

In the Garden of Eden, we have some startling revelations from the different kinds of trees. Since the experiencing of life was contained in one tree and the knowledge of good was contained in another tree, it can be seen that life and good are different. Just as evil is not life, so also good is not life. How we who have been born of the Spirit of God thank God that, for us, there is no longer merely the two realities of good and evil. Now within our beings resides the very Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus! This is the tree of life, eternal life, Christ as our life.

### **Choosing between Good and Life**

Ps. 87:7; Jn. 15:4-5; Col. 1:27

We understand now that God had just one intention for Adam and his posterity. God wanted to be the source of Adam's life, and I do want you to grasp all that means. With God as the center and source of life, Adam could announce with the psalmist, "All my springs [of life] are in You, O Lord" (Ps. 87:7) and, "All my works are in You." The regenerated, born-again new-creation man is a tripartite being, corresponding to the three kinds of trees in Eden. The spirit of the new-creation man, born of God, being of the very substance and nature of God, corresponds to the "tree of life." The soul of man, originally good and upright, and still containing that inherent goodness (though perverted in the Fall to serve another master), corresponds to "every tree of the garden" which were "pleasant to the sight, and good for food." The body of man, also originally created "very good" but perverted in the Fall, now constitutes the "body of death" and represents the tree of "the knowledge of good and evil," speaking of the flesh-nature.

God's original design for man was for his spirit to grow and mature, to rule over his soul, and through it to rule over his body. With his spirit in constant communion and harmony with the Spirit of God, the very life of God would then be ruling every aspect of man's life. But that first sin turned man upside down and inside out. In fallen man, the flesh nature rules through man's physical mind and soul, while his spirit sadly withers and dies. As long as the flesh nature is permitted to rule and control our actions, nothing but more fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil can result.

In the new-creation man, both the body and the soul are being cleansed, healed, and restored by life from the Spirit, so they can fulfill God's original design. You can see why we repeat so emphatically that it was God's original intention to live in man and become his very life. Our soul and body, with our mind, emotions, will, and faculties, will always go astray if severed from the life that is in the spirit, for they are designed by the Creator to allow God to express Himself through them to the rest of His creation.

It is in meekness, yieldedness, humility, teachableness, and glad-heart cooperation that the new-creation man allows God to express Himself through the functions of our soul and body. God placed the tree of life in the garden from the beginning to declare that His purpose was for man to take God into himself as his life, so that man might be the revelation of God to His creation. How wrong it was to assume that Christ needed to indwell man only to save us from sin! No, this indwelling has from the foundation of the universe been in God's eternal purpose and was never changed by sin or the Fall.

Perhaps it will help us to use this simple diagram in explaining how God intends to live within our being and express Himself through our personality and faculties. In the outer circle, we have man's physical body. Man contacts the world around him by certain senses built into the body. He can see, hear, smell, feel and taste. The body is motivated by certain biological drives such as hunger, thirst, sex, breathing, and so on. When a man becomes mastered by these biological drives, he is not a spiritual individual, nor is he able to love, enjoy, or serve God as he was created to do.

Fallen man often becomes so dominated by his physical drives that the pleasures and desires of his body, the "lusts of the flesh," overwhelm the good in him.

In the middle circle is the soul of man: the mind, will, emotions, and motivations that make up his personality. It is in this realm that we meet something more than just a physical man, for we contact him in his mind, his feelings, or the strength of his will. Here lies human wisdom and understanding. This is the realm of good and evil, and it is a powerful realm indeed, for by this soul-power, man gains control over men and nations. But just like with the biological drives, if any of these aspects of the soul becomes the final authority ruling a person, he is not a spiritual person and cannot have a right relationship with God the Spirit.



But fallen man is not our standard! God created both body and soul, and both were called "very good." As we have stated, it is God's original design in both the area of the human soul and the human body to express divine life, His own thoughts, character, nature, love, will, and power, through man to all His creation.

Finally, in the innermost circle we have the spirit of the regenerated man – the person who has eaten of the tree of life, the spiritual life of God in Christ. Here we find God's thoughts: love, joy, peace, faith, grace, mercy, kindness, wisdom and knowledge, holy wrath against evil,

and spiritual understanding, all transcending our human understanding. Man, who was designed to be the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, is really quite empty until God, by His Spirit, comes in. It is from this innermost area, the spirit, that God intends to fill and direct our whole being – thus expressing Himself from our inside out, revealing Himself to all creation through us.

Since that first hour in the garden, there have been two ways open to man: the way of soul development and the way of Spirit development. Will man become a powerful soul-being on his own, enabling him to operate apart from God and thus in rebellion to God's design and in league with Satan? Or will he become subject in all things to God, thus sharing moment by moment with Him as the Source of his life?

We know, of course, the choice which Adam made. He determined to partake of the tree of knowledge, for by the fruit of that tree, he could decide for himself what was right and what was wrong; he could live in the realm of knowledge independent of God.

At this point, we must be very clear. There is much confusion, even among those who are “Spirit-filled.” The way that God purposed for man’s spirit-development was by partaking of His Spirit, the tree of life. But this also requires that he deny himself the right to choose anything for himself – either good or evil. To live in the tree of life means to renounce and completely forsake the tree of knowledge – not only the evil of that tree, but also the good of that tree. It is strange that we have so long considered the tree of knowledge as something only evil. On the contrary, this tree more often appears as something necessary and important to our natural and spiritual development.

Through the centuries, blinded religious men have been eating of the “good” of that tree – even good religious things: traditions, ceremonies, rituals, organization, programs, creeds, laws, regulations, professionalism, promotions, personality, and so on. Men have always sought to fill their lives with the good things of popular religion so that they might be able to do better and live better (and above all, look good), yet independent of personal submission to the life-giving Spirit of God.

So we see the crux of the matter. Was Adam going to receive something “good” that he might be independent and live by self-effort, or would he refuse even the good that he might be wholly dependent upon the Spirit of God for all things?

Never forget for one moment, dear friend, that the ancient serpent is still in the land today. He ever tries to frustrate us from walking by the life of God in our spirit. You can almost count on it. Whenever we meet the Lord in any new and fresh way, you can bet the serpent will be right there, ready with an appropriate “response.” Rarely will he try to get us to deny the reality of our meeting with God. No, for then we would recognize him as the source of the suggestion. Instead, he will encourage us to respond to God by making a decision to “do good.”

No one is exempt from this subtle suggestion! Even today, many of God’s precious children are praying, “Lord, I want to do Your will; I want to please You; I’ll try my best to do what I know You want me to do!” This sounds like a good prayer, but it is not from the Lord. It is from the serpent. When we feel such good intentions, when we feel determined by our self-effort to please God, we need to tell Satan to depart from us! The evil that we can overcome through self-effort is not the triumph of the life of Christ within us, but merely the suppression of evil by our good. The good works we do through self-effort is merely the good of our soul. It is not pleasing to God, for it is self-righteousness.

In my sonship dictionary there is no such word as “evil,” neither is there such a word as “good”! From the beginning to the end of my sonship dictionary, there is only one word – Christ! I understand neither good nor evil. I do not judge on the basis of whether a thing is good or evil. I neither desire help to do good nor to avoid evil. I only want Christ. My whole desire is unto Him that He might live out His life in me. Then I will not be good. I will be righteous.

Now you can understand the Lord's words, "Abide in Me, and I in you; he who abides in Me, and I in him, the same bears much fruit." (Jn. 15:4-5) This requires not one bit of self-effort, only abiding in the Spirit of Christ and allowing Him to abide in us. Then all the riches and the glory of Christ Himself will be manifested in and through our lives. The whole Kingdom of God, all love, joy, peace, and righteousness, is simply the outworking of the indwelling Christ.

We should say, "I do not know this or that. I do not know how to do this or that. I only know one thing: I am a branch, and He is the vine; I abide in Him, and He abides in me." From this life-union, we spontaneously bear the fruit of His nature, life, and power, showing forth His glory in the earth. This is the missing key! Trying to do good, even religious good, is a real temptation but a deadly distraction from experiencing that which is of life – Christ living within. "Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Col. 1:27)

### **The Oldness of the Letter and the Newness of the Spirit**

Rom. 6:22; 7:6; Acts 22:3;  
1 Cor. 8:1; 13:2; Eph. 3:19

How vital that we constantly acknowledge Christ – our life! Within the soul of man is every good and evil but absolutely nothing of life. All the good of human zeal, knowledge, works, morality, compassion, and even religion is contained in the soul of man. How many precious people are trying to serve God out of their soul, bringing all the good of their soul over into the way they serve the Lord, rather than simply subjecting the soul unto the Spirit that the Spirit may manifest life through the soul.

Serving God is the natural state of man. Even fallen man retains this inclination, as evidenced by the vast scope and power of religious institutions. The question remains: how will we serve God? This question may seem straightforward, but it is not.

Serving God through the soul by acts of the flesh nature is the way of Cain. Cain typifies the unregenerate man trying to please God by his own good deeds. He brought the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, out of his own earthiness. His desire was not to serve God, it was to appease God in order to preserve himself. The real master he served was sin: Satan masquerading as his "independent self."

But what about the children of God? Do their acts of service always please Him? "But now, having become freed from sin and servants to God, you have your fruit unto holiness..." (Rom. 6:22) Does the saint automatically know how to serve God?

"But now we have been released from the law, having died to that by which we were bound so that we serve in newness of Spirit, and not in oldness of the letter." (Rom. 7:6) This verse reveals that there are two ways of serving God. It is not enough to become freed from our old master, sin, and yield ourselves as servants unto God alone. We must further see that in serving God as our only Master, there are also two ways of serving Him. Paul says "that we should serve [God] in newness of Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter." Until a son of God truly understands the difference between these two ways of serving God, he can never serve Him acceptably and receive the sealing witness of the Father, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Serving God in the oldness of the letter means to serve Him as under law. Those who serve under law, serve from self-effort. All that proceeds from self-effort pertains to the good inherent in the soul of man, for it is what man himself produces. Therefore, to serve in the oldness of the letter means to serve God with good things, self-discipline, offerings, good works, and so on. It is all good in nature, but it is not life in the Spirit, and it is not acceptable unto God. Until a soul understands the deceptive deadliness of serving God “in the oldness of the letter,” and until he confesses the worthlessness of all the efforts, schemes, means, and methods of his carnal mind and utterly forsakes it all, he cannot know the gladness and liberty of serving God “in newness of Spirit.”

It is so easy to miss this point! We see in the Bible that before the apostle Paul was converted, he served God with zeal. “I am verily a man which am a Jew, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as you all are this day.” (Acts 22:3) At that time, though within him he had not received the life of God, he served God outwardly in a very zealous, wholehearted manner. This shows us that zealously serving God may be wholly unrelated to life. It does not indicate one iota the condition of a person’s spiritual growth and development into maturity.

How much excited and zealous serving do we see among preachers today as they concoct their grandiose schemes to convert the world to Christ. They must build a bigger church, enlarge their Sunday school, get on more television stations, and promote their ministries. Of course, all that is needed to get the job done is more money!

I can tell you by the word of the Lord that those who spend so many long hours behind pulpits, on radio or television, and mailing out millions of computerized letters begging for more and more of your money to do bigger and better things for God, are, one and all, servants of the unrighteous mammon and not the servants of God. Even their good has become evil. In the dazzling glory of their self-made ministries and their religious empires, they have their reward.

The soul of mankind hatches a million “good” plans, methods, and schemes to serve God. How we need to forsake and repudiate every good thing that we might have life! If all the goodness, righteousness, and works we perform are not flowing out of the life of God within, then they are not of life at all, but of the tree of knowledge. Even though a believer’s spiritual knowledge may be increasing through hearing messages, reading articles, listening to tapes, learning more truths, studying and understanding more of the Bible, and comprehending more spiritual terms, which is a kind of growth, yet it is not the growth of life within, but rather an increase of the knowledge of good and evil.

We must experience an increase of the element of God within us. The increase of the element of God means that more and more of God Himself is permeating our being, swallowing up the soulish parts of our human nature, and becoming the very core of our life. We have said that real life is God Himself; to experience life is to know God. Therefore, spiritual growth is an increase of God in us, until all that is of the Godhead is completely formed in us, and we are filled unto all the fullness of God. (Eph. 3:19)

The increase of knowledge about God, apart from experiencing God Himself, only causes our mind to become improved and more thoroughly versed, with more human understanding and ability to comprehend. It is not that the Holy Spirit has given greater revelation within or that the life of the Son has gained more ground within so that we grow in real knowledge by the Spirit and experience of Christ as life. The increase of head knowledge, apart from knowing Him by the inworking of the Spirit, simply causes men to be puffed up. (1 Cor. 8:1) It is nothing before God (1 Cor. 13:2) and has no value as life. To serve God out of head knowledge, even good “end-time” or “sonship” head knowledge, is still to serve in oldness of the letter and not in newness of Spirit. As long as it is only head knowledge, it is still just good fruit from the tree of knowledge. Only when it is revealed by the Spirit of God as a heart experience, is it life from the tree of life.

### **The Flesh and the Spirit**

Jn. 16:7-15; Acts 2:3-4; 1 Cor. 2:1-5;  
Gal. 3:3; 5:17; Eph. 4:14; Phil. 3:3-10

The whole Babylonish system called “religion” serves God in the oldness of the letter. The entire religious world is today walking in human wisdom. This all seems so logical to the carnal mind. This fleshly wisdom always seems to “make more sense” than does the wisdom of God. In fact, Satan loves for carnal wisdom to prosper because it is a denial of the life of the Spirit. Many Christians and churches operate contrary to the Spirit, with the argument, “it works!” Their methods of evangelism, for example, are contrary to the ways of the Spirit, but since “it works” they continue in it.

These “programs” of the church are contrary to true spirituality. They are built generally around the flesh-appeal activities of pop concerts, social events, special music, ball teams, Sunday school contests, movies, special speakers, sensationalism, and other carnal tactics and techniques. But “it works” to cause the “church” to prosper in numbers and in finances, so they continue. And all the while their spirits remain dwarfed and hideously shrivelled and stunted, if indeed they were ever quickened at all! Is it any wonder that so many pastors are subject to “burn out”? If anyone or anything prospers on principles other than on the life of the Son of God, that person or thing is being prospered by the devil, not by God!

“Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh?” (Gal. 3:2-3) “We are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh... If anyone has a mind to put confidence in the flesh I far more... a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless. But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but dung in order that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the law, but... though faith in Christ... that I may know Him...” (Phil. 3:3-10)

God created the soul as the interface between the spiritual realm and the physical realm. He intended that both soul and body might, in due time, be raised up into that perfect union in the Spirit which would result in man attaining his destiny, a unified spiritual body, with His Spirit filling man's soul and governing his body. But when the soul fell to the temptation of the physical senses, it came under the power of the body – it became “flesh.” The flesh is the name by which the Word designates our fallen nature – soul and body. And now the flesh is not only without the life of the Spirit, but even hostile to it. “For the flesh lusts against the Spirit...” (Gal. 5:17) “... because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God...” (Rom. 8:7)

In this antagonism of the flesh to the Spirit, the flesh has two distinct strategies. On the one hand, the flesh lusts against the Spirit in its committing sin and transgressing God's commands. This is the evil of the flesh. On the other hand, its hostility to the Spirit is no less manifested in its seeking to serve God and do His work. This is the good of the flesh. It seeks to “be as God” by doing all sorts of wonderful works. In yielding to the flesh, the soul seeks to glorify itself, instead of the God into whose life the Spirit desires to raise it. Thus, self-effort and self-development prevails over God's life.

And now, so subtle and mighty is this “spirit of self,” that the flesh, not only in sinning against God but even when the soul learns to serve God, still asserts its power. It refuses to let the Spirit lead. In its effort to be good and religious, it wants to serve God independent of the Spirit. Therefore this fleshly “good” soul is still the deadly enemy that ever hinders and quenches the Spirit.

We often see this cunning deceitfulness of the flesh. As Paul chided the Galatians, “Having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh?” (Gal. 3:3) Until the soul is brought into submission to the Spirit, with complete surrender to the Spirit and continued waiting on Him in willing dependence and humility, what was begun in the Spirit very early and speedily passes over into confidence in the flesh.

Wherever the flesh seeks to serve God, it becomes the power of sin. Remember how the Pharisees, with their self-righteousness and carnal religion, fell into selfishness and pride and became the servants of sin and the children of the devil? Satan has no more crafty device for keeping men out of life than inciting them to religion, even serving God, in the flesh. He knows that the power of the flesh can never conquer sin nor please God, and that in the flesh and the serving of the flesh, no one will ever become a son of God.

Those who are sons not only defeat the devil in the wilderness of temptation, but also deny their own souls, wills, abilities, desires, ambitions, hopes, and dreams. They declare, “I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father has taught Me, I speak these things. And He who sent Me is with Me; for I do always those things that please Him. ... I can do nothing on my own initiative, because I do not seek my own will, but the will of Him who sent me. The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do, for whatever the Father does, the Son also does in like manner. ... The words I speak unto you I do not speak on my own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.” (Jn. 8:28-29; 5:19; 14:10) This attitude of the Son of God is shared by the sons of God.

If there is one lesson a prospective son of God needs to learn, it is this. If I am to deny self in my relationships with men, to conquer selfishness and temper and lack of love, I must first learn to deny self in my relationship with God. There the soul, the seat of self, must learn to bow to the Spirit, where God dwells. Confidence in the flesh is the one thing above all others that renders all our glorying in Christ Jesus of no effect and leaves us weak and defenseless before the enemy. (Phil. 3:3) Christ is the wisdom and power of God. The root of all false trust is trust in our own wisdom and knowledge, the same sin of Adam in eating of the tree of knowledge. The idea that we know how to serve God, that we know how to overcome, how to be a son, how to do anything, is the greatest danger of God's people, because it is the most subtle form in which we are led to attempt to perfect in our own flesh that which God began in the Spirit. (Gal. 3:3)

This confidence in the flesh, of course right along with much glorying in Christ Jesus, is to be seen and heard in so much of the activities of most church systems today. You can identify them easily, for human efforts and human organization take a much larger place than seeking the will of God or waiting upon Him for the power that comes from on high. Whether larger ecclesiastical organizations, local churches, home prayer meetings and Bible studies, or even the inner life of the heart – alas – how much tradition, programming, ritualism, personality rule, self-effort, and fleshly works enter in! There is no lack of acknowledging Christ, no want of giving Him the glory in lip service, and yet there is so much confidence in the flesh, rendering it all of no effect.

Listen, my brother and my sister, to the voice of the Spirit of God. It is confidence in the flesh that spoils your glorying in Christ Jesus. And it is confidence in the flesh that motivates men to busily and craftily work for God rather than seeking the Lord until He works. It is self doing what the Spirit alone can do. It is the soul taking the lead in the hope that the Spirit will second its efforts, instead of trusting the Holy Spirit and waiting on Him to lead and to do all – even through you. Yes, it is following Jesus without the denial of self; that is the trouble.

There are two elements of spirituality: the Spirit exalts Jesus and abases the flesh. Accept this as the secret of the life of Christ within you: the Holy Spirit is dwelling in the hidden recesses of your life, exalting Christ in you, and abasing in you the old flesh nature. Meditate on it until your soul bows with holy fear and awe before God under the glory of this truth: the Holy Spirit of God is dwelling in you, and He would be the source and the center of your life, that God would be glorified as King in you, and all His wondrous plan of the ages would come forth and bear fruit through you. Pray God for the Spirit of Revelation that you may see how the Spirit of Jesus is all and does all, and how by the Holy Spirit a divine life takes the place of your life. Thus Jesus is enthroned as the King and life of your soul.

The fleshly religious systems of our day are ever seeking after some “good” tactic or method to promote the Kingdom of God. Their methods are “good” all right. The only problem is that they are not of life! They are, one and all, fruit from the tree of knowledge. They are the “good” of the soul of man pawned off as the life of the Spirit of God.

Many years ago I too walked that path. I remember how each year at Christmas time we put on a Christmas program. The Spirit had already dealt with some of us, and we knew that Christmas was not a Christian holiday – that it originated as an abominable pagan custom, condemned by God. And yet, in spite of all we knew in our spirits, how insidiously and persistently the carnal mind rationalized our observance of it.

We know that Christmas is not Christ's birthday; we understand that it was a pagan celebration; we acknowledge that it was "Christianized" by the apostate church; and we consent that the "Christmas Spirit" is but a thin veneer over the commercializing spirit of the god of this world. But, the fleshly mind argues, the entire Christian world observes Christmas as the birthday of Jesus, and it is a good opportunity to witness to people about the Lord, and some people only go to church on Christmas and Easter, and a Christmas program is a "good" way to get the unsaved to come hear the gospel. Thus went the reasonings of fleshly wisdom.

So we did it. Year after year, we faithfully presented our Christmas program, each time with special effort to make it "Christ centered." We even gave an "invitation" at the close of each one. I can truthfully bear witness to you today that after years of these good programs, not a single unsaved person ever responded to the invitation; not one soul was saved or one life transformed; not one believer was filled with the Holy Spirit; not one saint was brought closer to the Lord; not one gift of the Spirit ever manifested; not one son was helped on toward maturity; not one single thing of eternal value was ever accomplished!

Why? Because our good program was produced out of the carnal scheming of the "good" of the soul, the flesh nature, which ever wants to assert itself in the service of God by soulish means and methods apart from the life of the Spirit. It was good, but it wasn't God. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." (Jn. 3:6)

Oh, brethren! How we need to watch this! All that is not of life, of the Spirit, is merely the good of man – soulish. How much of our religious exercises have been soulish! I can tell you of a truth that most of the "power" in a modern "revival meeting" is nothing at all but soul power. Have you not noticed yourself that in many revival meetings and church services, a kind of atmosphere is first created to make people feel warm and excited? A chorus is repeated again and again to warm up the audience. The people are feverishly urged to "get into the spirit" of the meeting. A few sentimental and stirring stories are told. Special music is sung. When the atmosphere is thoroughly heated up, the preacher will then stand up and preach. He has various strategies ready to stimulate and maneuver the people. If he does his job skillfully, he can anticipate a large "altar call."

These are certainly good methods and tactics, but they are not the power of the Holy Spirit. Many preachers think they have spiritual power; but they are merely using psychological soul power to influence their listeners. Some preachers are self-made experts on manipulating people by the use of psychology. The Bible schools of Babylon's religions offer a course called homiletics for ministerial students. Homiletics is the "art" of writing and preaching good sermons.

The sad truth is that the vast majority of religious exercises are just that – an “art.” You can go to school and learn how to do it! How to prepare sermons. How to stand behind the pulpit and speak persuasively. How to use gestures. How to tell jokes. How to build the sermon. How to work toward the climax. How to stir the people’s souls by relating sentimental stories of heaven, hell, death, repentance, and so on. And how to skillfully bring your hearers to the point of making a decision. This all seems so good, so desirable! But I say to you that you can learn these same psychological techniques, apply them in the business world, and you can sell vacuum cleaners.

The fact is, most salesmen use these same proven procedures of presentation, sentimentalism, and psychological pressure to sell insurance, automobiles, appliances, real estate, and thousands of other items daily. They don’t need the Holy Spirit to do that. All they need is a persuasive human personality mixed with some good proven techniques, and they can entice people to buy nearly anything. These are good means and methods, but they are not the power nor work of the Holy Spirit. They are flesh, a part of the world, and to the Kingdom of God they are virtually worthless.

I can hear some precious soul saying “But if souls are saved by these methods, and people are blessed and helped, aren’t these methods then good?” That’s the whole point! They are good. They’re just not of God. Not of the Spirit. It is still the flesh serving God.

I must quickly admit that God, in His incomprehensible mercy and infinite power, can (and does) make use even of the flesh.

He also used a donkey and the jaw-bone of an ass. But who wants to become a donkey or the jaw-bone of an ass? God wants sons! Why settle for less than God desires? Why settle for the best that this world has to offer, all the “good” of the tree of knowledge, and forfeit the right to the tree of life?

There was a man two thousand years ago called Saul from the city of Tarsus. Saul was born of the purest Jewish blood, the son of a Pharisee, cradled in orthodox Judaism. He probably attended the famous university in Tarsus and was later sent to Jerusalem where he completed his studies under the famous and powerful Gamaliel, a member of the Sanhedrin. Being a superior, zealous student, he absorbed not only the teaching of the Old Testament but also the rabbinical learning of the scholars. Saul was clearly a man of unusual talent, dynamic personality, and great ability. The carnal mind, beholding a man of such stature, would reason, “What talent, what good qualities this man possesses! Why, if God could just get hold of him and use all this ability in the service of the Lord, what mighty things he could accomplish for the Kingdom of God!” But, listen to what Paul said after he had seen the whole thing in the blazing light of God’s revelation of Jesus Christ, “What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ; yes, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness... but that which is through the faithfulness of Christ... that I may know Him...!” (Phil. 3:7-10)

Paul refused to carry over his good, natural, soulful abilities and tactics into the ministry of the Spirit. He renounced them one and all, that the regenerating power might be completely of God. Paul loved to remind the saints of that unfathomable gulf that lies between the soulful works of the flesh and the life and power of the Holy Spirit. He wrote to the church at Corinth, "When I came to you, brethren, I did not come with excellency of speech or wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. I was with you in weakness and fear, and in much trembling. My speech and preaching were not with the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." (1 Cor. 2:1-5)

When a man truly discovers Christ as the all-sufficient life, he will find to his amazement that he can no longer operate in the ages-old systems and methods of the church, which, though held in high honor by the multitude, are serving only one purpose. It is Satan's purpose, and that is to make the life and power of God of no effect.

Many years ago as a young boy, I joined an evangelical denomination, attended their Bible school, and graduated as one of their ministers. In those days, I diligently studied the arts of sermonizing and evangelizing, and when you learn those arts you are much like the hypnotists who know what results they will get by doing certain things. You know how to bring people to laugh, to weep, to be moved, and even to repent. In those early years, I knew that by a little clever maneuvering, I could easily anticipate the psychological responses of the audience.

When I would build my sermon to a climax and tell certain well-rehearsed stories, I could predict precisely at what point a certain class of people would shiver, and another class of people (principally the women) would get out their handkerchiefs to wipe away the tears. I tell you honestly that I knew how to bring my listeners to tears, to repentance, to confession, to decision, to re-dedication and to re-consecration, and it made for some very impressive "altar calls."

However, I also observed that such "revivals" need to be renewed every few months, because the effect of the medicine tends to wear off and the old conditions return. Sometimes the effect of a revival will fade away after only a few days. This is why you generally see the very same people in revival after revival campaign, healing meeting after meeting, going up to the front for a blessing, a healing, a double portion, a fresh word of prophecy, re-consecration, and so on. Everyone gets stirred and blessed for the moment, but after a while, as the enthusiasm dissipates, everything is over and done with. This is due to one reason: a lack of life.

Yes, they ate fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; and the good of that tree, the soulful serving and working for God, stirs their emotions for the moment. But in that soulful realm, the stimulant used ever must increase in order to be effective. The methods employed must get more and more emotional, psychological, and stirring. These kind of emotional "blessings" can best be described as a "spiritual fix." The people are on a "high" while the emotions are being stirred, but when things settle back to the nitty-gritty of daily living, the pressures and problems soon drag them down again.

Thus, working through soul power – even if people go to the altar, get blessed, weep, consecrate, and become zealous – is, spiritually speaking, worth little. It is not of life, therefore not eternal, and the dose needs to be injected over and over. This may keep baby Christians entertained or teach them how to become “good” baby Christians, but it will never produce sons of God.

We must remember that all works done through psychology, methods, and emotion are questionable and transient. In the work done through the Holy Spirit, man does not need to exert his own strength or do anything other than yield himself to the Master. If a work is done by soul power, one has to exert a lot of energy and employ numerous methods and tactics, and the result depends primarily upon the skill and “magnetism” of the personality behind the pulpit. We all know some people who seem to have that magnetic attraction about them. Tell me, who gets the glory when they are up front? All magnetism of personality must be nailed to the cross before the Holy Spirit can move in the purity and fruitfulness of His life.

Today, after years of experiencing the deep and vital dealings of the Spirit of God and hearing the Holy Spirit’s call to sonship, I’ve had to totally repudiate all such soulish wisdom of the carnal mind, all such fleshly tactics of Babylon’s kingdom, to bend low before the disciplines of the Father of sons. I’ve had to travail mightily that God would bend me, break me, bind my soul power, bridle my self nature, and block all that would proceed from my carnal mind.

If I have learned anything of the ways of the Father, I have learned this one thing: he who would be a son of God must be able

to discern what is done from his soul power and what is done by the Spirit of God. He must then confess and utterly forsake all that emanates from his own soul power, nailing it to the cross of Christ, that ultimately his own faith, as well as that of his hearers, may be found to stand solely in the power of God and not in the wisdom of the flesh. This is the only route, my dear brother and sister, into the glorious reality of sonship to God.

All the good works of the soulish realm can never in a billion years, deliver creation from its bondage to tyranny and corruption. Only the mighty working of the life of the Son of God can accomplish this. It is evident that the soul can only live by itself; it has no power to give life to others. It is the Spirit that quickens; the flesh profits nothing.

Recently I was in a meeting where the saints have an “open pulpit” with liberty for each member of the body to move in the ministry of the word, worship, singing, gifts, exhortation, and so on, as they are moved upon by the Spirit. A young pentecostal evangelist was present. Taking advantage of the open pulpit, he got up and ministered his highly emotional message. At its conclusion, he urged the people to come forward for him to minister to their needs. One dear sister with a physical condition responded to the young evangelist. He motioned for one of the brothers to stand behind this sister. Then he prayed for her, shaking his finger sharply in her face three times, shouting fervently each time, “In Jesus’ name!” At the third time he slapped her forehead, jerking her body backward, whereupon she promptly “fell out” under the “power.” She was expertly caught and laid on the floor, where she remained for a few minutes, then got up.

I saw at once what was happening. This was not the Spirit nor the power of God in operation! It was pure mesmerism, a psychologically induced experience. It came from human exercise, not an endowment of power from God. As soon as the next fellow went forward to be ministered to, I stood and quietly walked to the front to help minister. When the evangelist shook his finger in this brother's face and jolted him backward with a slap on the forehead, I had already placed my hand on his back, gently exerting just enough pressure to stabilize him.

I continued this procedure through the rest of the personal ministry, and, needless to say, no one else fell. If the Holy Spirit had been knocking those people down, I can assure you that there would not have been enough strength in my whole body to keep them from falling! I have witnessed this fleshly technique time and time again in pentecostal and charismatic meetings. The method used is, frankly, one of the oldest tricks out of Satan's bag of "dirty tricks."

Many if not most Spirit-filled Christians desire supernatural experiences. It is normal for one born of Spirit to want to experience more of the Spirit, and this is not necessarily to be condemned (as long as we are careful to seek only for the "Holy" Spirit and don't open ourselves up to demons). However, when you know people are actually wanting and looking to experience the sensational, in this case "falling under the power," the first step in making them fall through the use of hypnotic suggestions is to call someone up to stand behind them when you pray for them. This gives the people the feeling that in case they do fall, someone is there to catch them and break the fall. Furthermore,

by calling someone to stand behind them, you have psychologically suggested to their mind that they will fall, so that now they are actually, consciously or subconsciously, expecting to fall. All that is needed at this point is to give them an incentive to fall. The evangelist did this with the sister when he shook his finger in her face, repeatedly shouting "In Jesus' name!" Through the motions of this exercise, she was being psychologically prepared for what was coming, so that when he hit her on the forehead, shoving her backward, she reacted exactly as she had been conditioned to react – she fell.

Though I myself knew better, I am fairly certain that this precious sister was thoroughly convinced that the Holy Spirit knocked her down. Do I not believe that there is a genuine experience in which saints "fall as dead men" under the anointing power of the Holy Spirit? Not at all. I have seen it with my own eyes, and it is in fact quite scriptural. It happened to Daniel when he first saw the gleaming angel. (Dan. 10:4-10) It happened to Saul of Tarsus on his way to Damascus to persecute believers. (Acts 9:3-4) It happened to Abram when God initiated the covenant of promise. (Gen. 15:12) And it happened to John when he saw the glorified Christ. (Rev. 1:10-17) It has happened to many others, then and now. Certainly it is real. But we must be no longer children, tossed to and fro by every cunning preacher, nor by every zealous charismatic babe in Christ, nor by the sleight of hand or artful craftiness whereby soulish men lie in wait to deceive. (Eph. 4:14) Those whom God has called unto maturity as sons must be able to discern between soul and Spirit, between that which is of man and that which comes from above.

The unvarnished truth is that anything you can be trained how to do is not of the Spirit but of the flesh. If, through a teacher or some seminary class, you are able to learn how it can be done, then you merely have a formula, a technique. But there is no life in formulas! People run about from meeting to seminar to conference, just to learn how to witness, how to win souls, how to prophesy, how to exercise the gifts of the Spirit, how to get people baptized in the Spirit, how to cast out devils, how to heal, and a host of other things which are all rightly and exclusively the work of the Holy Spirit. I once attended a meeting in which the minister explained how to share the gospel with unbelievers. The thing that impressed me was the infinite variety of ways the Holy Spirit works. How can learning one technique ever prepare me for what the Holy Spirit might do next?

How much better it would be if we would spend our time, like Mary of old, just sitting at Jesus' feet, learning to know Him and to know His ways. How much better if that time were spent on our knees, very low and humble before God, that He might place within us a deep distrust of the flesh. How I pray that God would truly reveal to all His sons that the one great hindrance to the walk of sonship is the power of the flesh and the "good" efforts of the self-life.

Open our eyes, we pray O Lord, to this snare of Satan. May we all see how hidden and how subtle is this temptation to put our confidence in the flesh, feeling that we know how to do it, that we be not deceived to try to perfect in the flesh what was begun in the Spirit. May we learn to trust You, O Lord, to work in us by Your Holy Spirit, both to will and to do only what You are doing.

## **The Knowledge of the Lord**

Isa. 11:2; Jn. 17:3; Col. 1:27;

Phil. 3:7-8; Rev. 1:4, 17-18

I trust by now you have caught a glimpse of the difference between "good" and "life." My heart cries out that the God of all wisdom and understanding will open the hearts of those who read these lines that they may see that the only thing of any importance in the whole universe is that we might know God! Like Adam, we stand squarely between two trees of knowledge, one giving the knowledge of good and evil, the other the knowledge of God.

This knowledge is not an accumulation of dead facts, but a living relationship that, like resurrection from the dead, springs from the Spirit of Knowledge, which is in truth a manifestation of the Holy Spirit of God. "That I may know Him!" was the cry of the apostle's heart. "Yes," Paul wrote, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord!" (Phil. 3:7-8) Eating of the tree of life is naught but this living "knowing" relationship by the Spirit of Knowledge with the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our life. (Jn. 14:6; Col. 3:4) Jesus declared, "And this is life eternal, that they might know You the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." (Jn. 17:3) Jesus surely should know what constitutes eternal life for He is Himself the Source of all life, and upon Him rests the fullness of the seven Spirits of God, including the Spirit of the knowledge of the Lord. (Isa. 11:2)

What is eternal life? To know Him! It is receiving the resurrection life of the Lord within. Why do the Scriptures say that we are regenerated through the resurrection of the Lord instead of the birth of the Lord?

Because the new life received is not the life of the babe in Bethlehem. That which was born in Bethlehem was yet to die, but the life of the resurrection is alive forevermore! (Rev. 1:17-18) The life that is born from Adam in the flesh can die. The resurrection life never dies but abides forever. "Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die.'" (Jn. 11:25-26) What we receive in regeneration is the life which never dies.

Watchman Nee related the following illustration to explain what resurrection life is. There was once a man who did not believe in resurrection. He was an important person among a circle of atheists. After he died, the epitaph on his tombstone read, "Unbreakable Tomb." That tomb had been built of solid marble! Most surprisingly, that huge marble sarcophagus one day split wide open. It so happened that a tiny acorn had fallen into the hole during the burial process. It gradually grew into an oak tree, bursting the tomb wide open. A tree has life, hence it can shatter a place of death. Life alone can conquer death, the resurrection life of Jesus.

God has planned and purposed to reign within His sons in life! The acorn contains within its tiny self all the elements of the giant oak that centuries from now will tower over the spot where it fell into the ground. The infinitesimal single cell of human life conceived in a woman's womb contains all the elements of the mighty man who will one day walk abroad and govern the earth. Thus our heavenly Father plants the seed of His incorruptible life into the hearts of feeble but yielded, willing men, for "Christ in you" is the hope of glory. (Col. 1:27)

Our Father has planted the seed of the Kingdom of God in human hearts (the earth which we are). We seek to know the fullness of that life as we in patience wait for its growth within. Thus we pray in blessed hope: "Your Kingdom come and Your will be done in this earth, this lump of clay, which I am. Establish Your throne, O God, in me and reign by Your life supreme in the kingdom of my heart. Rule my flesh. Rule my soul. Rule my mind. Conquer me and the enemies within me, the world, the flesh, the devil, my carnal mind, ambitions, and desires, and the corruption of death on me. Rule here within me and grant me the mind that is in Christ Jesus. Let His mind be my mind that I may be a son of God. Let His attitudes be my attitudes, His life my life, His grace my grace, His power my power, His Kingdom my kingdom, until I no longer do anything of myself, but only that which I see my Father do. Grant me the patience and obedience to renounce and forsake all fleshly zeal, all carnal wisdom, all worldly religious and Babylonish ways of serving You, holy Father, that Your Kingdom come and Your will be done in and through me upon this earth as it is done in the heavens!"

This is the attitude of all true sons of God, my beloved. Nothing less than this will suffice. May the Spirit of the knowledge of the Lord rest upon all God's sons! "But grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. 3:18) "That you might walk worthy of the Lord, always pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God." (Col. 1:10) "... put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him who created him." (Col. 3:10)

## Chapter 12 – The Spirit of Knowledge (Part 3)

“These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God.” (Rev. 3:1)

“And the Spirit of the Lord [Jehovah] shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge and of the Fear of the Lord [Jehovah].” (Isa. 11:2)

### Two Kinds of Knowledge

Gen. 3:5; Prov. 4:18; Eccl. 2:13; Isa. 11:9; 60:2; Dan. 12:4; 1 Cor. 15:34; 2 Cor. 10:4-6; Eph. 4:18

In our meditations concerning the sixth Spirit of Sonship, the Spirit of the knowledge of the Lord, we find there are two realms of knowledge available to man. The ancient serpent, when beguiling Eve, offered her entrance into one realm of knowledge. “For God knows that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” (Gen. 3:5) When man fell, his fall was into this realm of human knowledge, from the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” This knowledge contains both a knowledge of man’s good, his self-righteousness and self-sufficiency, and a knowledge of man’s evil, sinful nature, perverted in the Fall from the image of God in which he was created.

The other realm of knowledge available to man is the knowledge of God in Christ. This knowledge contains the intimate love relationship with God and all that God is in His being; His almighty power, His holy nature, and the infinite wisdom, goodness, compassion, and glory of His character.

Thus, Paul wrote, “Awake to righteousness, and sin not, for some have not the knowledge of God.” (1 Cor. 15:34) The apostle later shows that those who are in Christ are engaged in a battle against that realm of knowledge which opposes the knowledge of God. “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” (2 Cor. 10:4-5) It is clear that these two realms of knowledge stand in direct opposition one to another.

In the previous chapter we saw that when man received the knowledge of good and evil, he did not gain a better condition. Man came to know “good and evil,” but he did not, through that knowledge, come to know God. In the Garden of Eden, we have some important revelations in the different kinds of trees. Since the knowing of life was contained in one tree and the knowledge of good was contained in another tree, we saw that life and good (man’s good) are different things. Just as evil is not life, so also good is not life. How we who have been born of the Spirit of God need to thank God that, for us, there is no longer merely the two realities of good and evil! There dwells now within our beings the very Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus! This is truly the tree of life, eternal life, Jesus Christ as our life. Adam had simply chosen to eat of the wrong tree.

May the Spirit of God impress deeply upon the hearts of all those who seek after life the absolute necessity of renouncing the knowledge of good and evil, to seek wholeheartedly the knowledge of the Lord. Paul writes of those who have “the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts.” (Eph. 4:18) In contrast to this, he then reminds us that, “God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (2 Cor. 4:6) The comparison is clear: darkness and ignorance versus light and knowledge. The preacher declared, “wisdom excels folly as far as light excels darkness.” (Eccl. 2:13) The knowledge of God is light to the soul. Ignorance of God is blindness and darkness.

One of the seven Spirits resting upon the first-born Son is the Spirit of Knowledge. A wonderful and yet fearful thing is being wrought in the earth in this hour, something which has never before been seen but which is now beginning to be recognized by mature Christians, and that is how the darkness is becoming darker, yet the light is becoming brighter. The prophet declared, “For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people.” (Isa. 60:2) Yet it is also spoken of another people, that “the path of the just is as the shining light, that shines brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.” (Prov. 4:18) And so it is today, two intensified conditions in contra-distinction to each other. Light and darkness. Knowledge and ignorance. The knowledge of God versus the knowledge of good and evil which is in ignorance and independence of God.

We live in the “age of science.” The English word “science” comes from the Latin “scientia” meaning “knowledge.” Science is defined as “knowledge of facts and laws based upon careful observations and logic, verified by means of experiment and additional observation.” Thus, science is simply a broad field of human knowledge.

The cry everywhere is for education and knowledge. The angel of God declared to the prophet, “But you, O Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, even to the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.” (Dan. 12:4) This is certainly being fulfilled in this hour. Man’s natural human knowledge of the world and the universe around him has increased until it staggers the imagination to consider the scope of what research is uncovering – the marvels of this computer age and space age into which man has been so speedily propelled. Yet, in the midst of this fantastic increase of human knowledge, there is a terrifying and incomprehensible darkness that is covering the people. They do not understand what is actually taking place; they are unaware of the forces at work behind the scenes and do not discern that this entire complex system of scientific endeavor is soon destined to pass away amidst the fearful distress and perplexity of men upon the face of the whole earth.

With certainty do I declare to you that the world today is filled with a knowledge that is leading it to destruction. Multitudes of the people of God are following right along, chained with the shackles of tradition. But, praise God, He is separating a people from reliance upon the knowledge of this world, that He might impart to them the

Spirit of Knowledge, because the Kingdom age is now at hand when the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. (Isa. 11:9) The Spirit of the knowledge of the Lord that rests upon Jesus Christ shall now, in these last days, come to rest heavily upon those glorious pure devoted sons of Zion, God's masterpiece and the hope of all creation.

### **The Knowledge of God**

Hos. 6:3, 6; Jn. 17:3; Rom. 11:33-36; Col. 1:10; 2:3; 3:9-10; Heb. 8:10-11; 2 Pet. 3:18; 1 Jn. 1:2; 2:6;

Again and again the precious Holy Spirit exhorts us to seek after the knowledge of the Lord. "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. 3:18) Paul's desire was that the Colossians might "walk worthy of the Lord, increasing in the knowledge of God." (Col. 1:10) Something of the magnitude of this knowledge of God is expressed in Romans, "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord? or who has been His counselor? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things, to whom be glory forever!" (Rom. 11:33-36)

As the mighty oak lies hidden in the tiny acorn, so the knowledge of God lies concealed in the seed of Christ planted in the womb of our hearts. As the great oak inches heavenward year after year, so the knowledge of God bursts forth from glory to glory from the life of Christ in our spirits. "... put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him who created him." (Col. 3:10)

How grateful we are that in the midst of all the darkness of man's knowledge, our God is bringing forth a light, even the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, and that He is shining that light into our hearts. He is progressively increasing it and working it more deeply into the lives of His firstfruits company. Those apprehended by God for these end-time sons are discovering that the light is indeed "shining brighter and brighter unto the perfect day." (Prov. 4:18) Their all-consuming desire is that they might know Him, "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Col. 2:3)

Jesus prayed to the Father, "And this is life eternal, that they might know You the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent." (Jn. 17:3) The Amplified Bible renders it, "And this is eternal life: it means to know, to perceive, recognize, become acquainted with, and understand You, the only true and real God, and to know Him, Jesus Christ... whom You have sent."

This is most striking, that eternal life consists in knowledge, or rather, the pursuit of knowledge. The present tense of the verb "ginosko" (to know) marks a continuance, a progressive recognition and perception of God in Christ. Consider closely this thought of an eternal life which only comes to us by progressively expanding inward knowledge, the deeper and deeper knowing of God. I can state confidently that the degree to which we know God determines how much of God we have within and how much we experience Him as our life. The knowing of God and the development and growth of His divine life within each of us are therefore tied together (if not equivalent). The joy of all this is – it is what He really wants for us!

An understanding of this important truth will show us why the life that comes by “knowing” God is called “eternal” life. “Eternal” is one of the words of Scripture which everyone thinks he understands, but few realize the deep and glorious meaning it conveys. We suppose that “eternal” is something that always “is,” always continues, something that has no beginning or end, infinitely far into the past and the future. That is like defining the ocean as “a lot of water”; it is basically true, but it teaches us little about its nature. Everything that exists in time had a beginning and is subject to the law of increase and decrease, of becoming and ceasing to exist, of growth or change and death or decay. But what is eternal can have no change, deterioration, or weakening because it has in itself a life independent of time. In eternity there is no past which has already disappeared and is lost, and there is no future not yet possessed. It is always a perfectly glorious and endless present.

So when Scripture speaks of eternal life, it means much more than to say it will have no end. Eternal life is almighty God’s life. He who has eternal life possesses something of the power of God’s indestructible life, in which there can be no change, nor can it suffer any diminution, and which therefore we may always enjoy in its absolute fullness.

The object of Scripture in using that term is to teach us that if our faith lays hold on what is eternal, it will manifest itself in us as a power superior to all the changeableness of our mind or feelings or circumstances, with a vitality that never grows old and with a freshness and fullness that cannot fade. Eternal life is much more than an endless duration of life – it is a higher quality of life.

Not only will this life never end, but, more than that, it is, at all times and under all circumstances, unchangeably what He is. This life can never be altered, diminished, frustrated, or overcome. God’s eternal name is “I Am.” (Ex. 3:14) When we begin to live in this life, we also become a people who are. We are what His life is! As this life develops and matures within, we become constant in His nature, without fluctuation, unvarying, regardless of external circumstances. The maturity and fullness of this life means that we are like Him, unchangeable and forever! Oh, son of God, is there not within your soul the insatiable thirst to know the fullness of such a life, to receive not only of the unendingness of His life but also to abide in His unchanging nature? This is the purpose of the Father in granting us eternal life!

How can we experience such blessedness? “The one who says he abides in Him, ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.” (1 Jn. 2:6) This verse teaches us of two things: abiding in Christ and walking like Christ. These are the two realities of the “eternal” life which are here set before us. The fruit of life in Christ is life like Christ.

The first of these expressions, abiding in Christ, is familiar to us. The wondrous parable of the vine and the branches, with its command, “Abide in Me, and I in you...” (Jn. 15:4) has been our source of instruction and edification. Though at times we feel as if we have only imperfectly learned the lesson of abiding in Him, yet we have tasted something of the glory that comes of abiding in Christ. So we pray, “Lord, You know all things. You know that I do abide in You. Yet how often my fervent prayer still arises: Father, grant me complete and full abiding!”

The second expression, walking like Christ, is no less significant than the first. It is the promise of the wonderful power which abiding in Him will exert. As the fruit of our surrender to live wholly in Him, His life works so mightily within us, that our walk, the outward expression of the inner life, also becomes like His. The two are inseparably connected. "Abiding in" always precedes "walking like" Him. We all know that it is a matter of course that a branch bears fruit of the same sort as the vine to which it belongs. The life of the vine and the branch is so completely identical, that the manifestation of that life must be identical too.

When the Father chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, when He predestined us to be His sons, when He accepted us in the beloved through the redemption of Jesus' blood, when He set His hand to transform us that we should be holy and without blame before Him, He did not leave us trapped in our old nature to try and serve God as best we could. No; in Him is the eternal life, that holy divine life of the heavenlies, and everyone who is in Him receives abundantly from Him the same eternal life in all its holy, heavenly power. Hence it is clear that the man who abides in Christ continually receives life from Him, and therefore also walks even as He walked.

We know who Jesus is. He is the Son of the almighty God, the full manifestation of the Father's nature, glory, and perfection. After His time on earth, it was said of Him, "... life was manifested [made flesh], and we have seen it, and bear witness, and proclaim to you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." (1 Jn. 1:2) In Christ Jesus we see God the Father.

In Him we see how God would act were He here in our place on earth. Yes, in Him we see how God is. In Him all that is beautiful and lovely, holy and perfect in the being of God Himself is revealed to us in the form of an earthly life. If we want to see what is really counted as worthy and glorious in the heavenly realm, if we would see what is really divine, we have only to look at Jesus; in all He does and is, the glory of God is shown forth. And now it is His own eternal life that has been given to us!

This mighty life of God working within does not, however, work as a blind force, compelling us ignorantly or involuntarily to act like Christ. On the contrary, the walking like Him must come as the direct result of a deliberate choice, sought in strong desire, and accepted of a living will. With this view, the Father in heaven showed us in Jesus' earthly life what the life of heaven would be when it came down into the conditions and circumstances of our human life. And with the same object, the Lord Jesus offers to us His life of sonship and calls us to abide in Him, the firstborn, that we may receive that life more abundantly. In our growing desire for heaven and eternal life, He points us to His own life on earth and assures us that eternal life has been granted in order to walk as He walked – bringing heaven to earth. Yet it is always our choice just how much of this heavenly life on earth we will accept, for He is a loving Father and will not force us.

One can only become a partaker of this heavenly life of Christ by virtue of coming to know Him. This is why Jesus said, "And this is life eternal, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent." (Jn. 17:3)

Even though Paul had been converted through his supernatural encounter with Jesus on the Damascus road; though he was forgiven, cleansed, justified, Spirit-filled, and called to be an apostle, mighty in word and deed, yet, with travail of soul he cried out, "That I may know Him!" (Phil. 3:10) He desired to yet know Christ in the fullness of the power of His resurrection and in the fellowship of His sufferings because he knew that it was the only way he would receive the power to truly "walk as He walked."

The eternal purpose of God for man has been that man would know Him. God delights in man knowing Him. He declares, "For I desired mercy rather than sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. ... Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord; His going forth is as certain as the dawning; and He shall come unto us as the rain." (Hos. 6:6, 3) All that God has done and shall yet do in His redemptive purposes is in order that we may know Him. "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord; I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people; and they shall not teach every man his neighbor and every man his brother saying, 'Know the Lord!' for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest of them... and I will remember their sins no more." (Heb. 8:10-12)

When we are regenerated, the Spirit of God, containing God's eternal and divine life, enters into us that we may have the capability of knowing Him from within. Therefore, the knowing of God constantly increases with the inward growth of His life.

It is only because God has given us His life that we can know Him. This can be understood by the fact that every creature in the universe can only fully relate to another being with the same kind of life. What bird can understand or relate to the ways of man? What man can understand the twitters of a bird? Animal behaviorists demonstrate that most animals can "talk" in their own way, communicating with one another in unique but definite patterns of "speech." This ability is instinctive and inherent in their nature.

Man likes to think of himself as the only "social" being on earth. However, every created life-form has some aspect of what we call "social." "Social" means that there is definite relationship, understanding and communication between creatures of the same kind. This social aspect is based on being able to "know" one another, thus sharing with each other a common inherent understanding, relationship, and ability to communicate, all of which is due to the oneness of their life and nature. The social aspect is only realized within a species – between beings of the same kind or similar kinds. A cat can befriend another cat, and a bird can befriend other birds, but it is rare for a cat to befriend a robin or a duck or a dog.

One exception to this demonstrates the authority of man to "rule over" the animals. Within the same family, all the family pets may get along just fine; similarly with sheep and their sheep-dog, with horses and their goats, and with various barnyard animals.

The simplest aspect of social behavior among animals is seen in the "herding" of cattle, the "schooling" of fish, and the "flocking" of birds. However, social animals do much more than just stay together, they

do things together. A family of ducklings in the park goes through a common rhythm. Part of the day they will feed, keeping close together wherever they go. Later they may bathe together, and after a bath, they swim to the shore together and spend half an hour or so preening, standing next to each other. Then they fall asleep, side by side. But notice! They're all ducks, sharing a common life and nature. There are no cats with them following the same routine, snuggling close. Why? Because one can only relate to, understand, communicate with, and have close fellowship with another being with the same life and nature. Therefore, one can only truly know another being of the same kind.

To carry the illustration further: in the animal kingdom, there is often a division of labor between members of a group. This is seen in its most rigid form in the "castes" of social insects. In a beehive, there is a queen, there are thousands of workers, and there are males or drones. Each of these castes has its own role in the hive. Even the jobs of the workers are divided up; depending on their age they will feed the brood or go outside foraging or stand guard and repel strangers while others take care of the ventilation of the hive. One of the uncanny abilities of bees is in communicating to the other bees when they find a new source of nectar. They come back to the hive and go through an elaborate dance that shows what and how much they found, and its direction and distance from the hive, even though they may have come from that source by a circuitous route. They are able to calculate the true angle as they fly by an indirect course, and then relay that complex information to the other bees. Most humans probably could not accomplish this.

Some animals express themselves to others of their kind through their posture, or change of color, or by giving off a particular scent. Others, such as porpoises, are highly intelligent and lead extremely complex social lives. But what bee can understand the language of a porpoise, or what duck would comprehend the intentions of a cichlid fish when it sets up its fins and changes its color pattern to say it is protecting its territory?

What beast of the field can comprehend the actions or aspirations of men? And what natural man can perceive things pertaining to the angelic realm? And what angel can comprehend the glorious things revealed to the sons of God born of His Spirit and called to share His throne and inherit all things?

I have cited all these illustrations to point out unmistakably the truth that every creature can only "know" other creatures who share their common life and nature.

This explains why God had to give us His life before we could know Him. As I have stated, when we are born of God, His Spirit, containing His life, enters into us that we may be able to know Him from within. This knowing of God gradually increases as His life develops and matures within us. The more His life grows within, the better we know Him. The better we know Him, the more we experience Him as our life, enjoy Him, understand His ways, act in His nature and allow Him to live Himself out through our whole being. Thus we may say that all the growth of our spiritual life depends upon our knowledge of God, and our knowledge of God depends upon the growth of His life within. "And this is life eternal, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." (Jn. 17:3)

## **The Three Steps in Knowing God**

Ps. 103:7; Heb. 8:10-11

“He made known His ways unto Moses; His acts unto the children of Israel.” (Ps. 103:7) The children of Israel knew only God’s acts, what they saw with their eyes, but Moses received a deeper knowledge; he knew and understood God’s ways.

“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord; I will put My laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts... and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord!’ for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest.” (Heb. 8:10-11) By this we see that God has prepared a new covenant in Jesus Christ which imparts the very Spirit and life of God into man in order that man may now know God Himself.

Let us meditate deeply upon this, that we may clearly see the progression here. The children of Israel knew only God’s acts; Moses knew God in a deeper sense in that he understood God’s ways, God’s love, His righteous wrath, His plans for man; but now through the New Covenant, the regenerated new-creation man can know God Himself!

These two passages of Scripture show us that man’s knowledge of God is obtained in three steps: firstly, knowing the acts of God; secondly, knowing the ways of God; and thirdly, knowing God Himself. This shows the vast difference between men who only know about God and men who know God. One cannot be saved without knowing something of God’s acts. One cannot be filled with the Spirit without knowing something of God’s ways. And one cannot become a son of God without knowing God.

## **The Acts of God**

Deut. 29:2-4; Ps. 103:7; Jn. 6:26-27; Mat. 13:11-15

There have been vast multitudes of people who have seen the acts of God. The children of Israel in Egypt saw the ten plagues God sent to smite the Egyptians. By the Red Sea, they saw that God divided the waters so they could pass through. In the wilderness, they saw that God brought water from the rock to satisfy their thirst. Daily, God sent manna from heaven to feed them. They beheld, at Sinai, as God descended on the mountain in mighty blasts of angelic trumpets and fierce displays of heavenly fire. It caused the mount to reel like a drunken man trying to flee from God’s presence, for “Our God is a consuming fire.” (Heb. 12:29) So terrible was the sight that even Moses declared in awe, “I am terrified, aghast, and trembling with fear!” (Heb. 12:21) Their eyes beheld the pillar of fire by night and the cloud which went before them by day. When the children of Israel witnessed such powerful miracles, they knew God’s acts.

When the multitudes of Jesus’ day saw the miracles the Lord performed, such as turning water into wine, healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, raising the dead, casting out devils, feeding five thousand people with five loaves and two fish, calming the storm and the raging sea, they came to know His acts. And today, when we are healed by God, when we get ourselves into trouble and are delivered by God, when we have needs that are supplied by God, when we pray and are answered by God, when we face some life-threatening danger and are preserved by God, when the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit are manifested mightily in our midst, we also come to know the acts of God.

When we thus experience the acts of God, this is our first step in coming to know God. Many of the Lord's people choose to live exclusively in this realm of God's acts. The people living in this first realm of the knowledge of God are often those following "healing campaigns" or "miracle meetings." They focus on God's mighty deeds or on sensational manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit. This is part of coming to know God, but I do not hesitate to declare to you that such knowledge is shallow and outward.

The children of Israel knew God's acts, yet for all this they knew none of His ways. They grumbled and complained and rebelled until God finally left their bones to bleach in the desert sands. Moses, recounting their experiences, charged them thus, "You have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; the great temptations which your eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles. Yet the Lord has not given you a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day!" (Deut. 29:2-4)

Fifteen hundred years later, multitudes followed Jesus to see and hear the mighty works which He did, and yet He made this almost incredible statement to the multitude that sought Him after He had fed the five thousand, "You seek Me not because you saw the miracles, but because you did eat the loaves, and were filled!" (Jn. 6:26) Seeing Jesus' acts did not turn their hearts toward knowing God, only toward the free food. Their focus was not on Him, only on self.

At about the same time, the disciples asked Jesus why He spoke to the multitudes only in perplexing parables. He answered,

"Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given. ... Therefore I speak to them in parables; because seeing they see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which says, 'By hearing you shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing you shall see, and shall not perceive; for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.'" (Mat. 13:11, 13-15) The majority of the multitudes that swarmed around the Lord, though possibly convinced that He was the Son of God, still knew Him not!

Things have not changed much in the two thousand years since then, nor in the thirty-five hundred years since Moses. In this century, millions have seen the mighty acts of God. Across the world's television screens, under the largest tents in history, in the world's grandest auditoriums, stadiums, and lavish sanctuaries, untold multitudes have witnessed a miracle, a wonder, a sign, a healing, a gift of the Spirit, a word of knowledge, or the casting out of demons. Some in their zeal to behold the acts of God, attend every revival meeting or evangelistic campaign, hoping to feast their eager eyes upon yet another sign or wonder. Yet, for all this, they still do not know God. They have seen His acts, as did Israel, but they have not known His ways, much less come to know God in the transformation into His nature that comes through intimacy of fellowship and vital union with Christ in the Spirit.

We live in the sister cities of El Paso, Texas, and Juarez, Mexico, with a combined population of almost a million people. I dare say there are no more than a few hundred people in this entire metropolis who have the foggiest idea of what God's eternal purposes might be. The churches are packed every Sunday with thousands of Christians. They keep their time-honored traditions, listening to sermons about God or zealously working for God. Yet few know the transcendent power of Christ within to conform them into the image of the Son of God, that they might know God even as they are known of God.

How we thank God for His mighty acts and rejoice in every one of them! It is where all Christians begin their walk with God. Yet God's people need to understand that this is but the first step in knowing God. Such knowledge is not the ultimate, but is merely a shallow, superficial beginning.

### **The Ways of God**

Gen. 1:23-32; Num. 16:46; 2 Sam. 24:24;  
1 Chron. 21; Ps. 9:17; 103:7, 13; Prov. 14:13;  
Isa. 55:10-11; Gal. 6:8; Eph. 1:9-10; Col. 1:19-20

The children of Israel knew God's acts but Moses knew God's ways.

To know God's ways refers to knowing the principles by which He does things. It means to understand what is in the mind of the Lord as He deals and works out His plan and purpose in our lives and in the universe. When Abraham pleaded for Sodom, he knew that God is righteous and that He would never act contrary to His righteousness. Therefore, Abraham appealed to God's righteousness. (Gen. 18:23-32) This means that he understood the principles by which God does things, the way God thinks and judges.

When the children of Israel continued to murmur, even after Korah and his band rebelled and were consumed, Moses, having seen the glory of Jehovah, said to Aaron, "Take your censer, and put fire in it from the altar, and lay incense on it, and carry it quickly unto the congregation, and make atonement for them; for there is wrath gone out from Jehovah; the plague is begun." (Num. 16:46) This shows that Moses knew the ways of God. He knew that when man acts in a certain way, God will react accordingly.

Samuel told Saul, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." (1 Sam. 15:22) And David said, "Neither will I offer burnt-offerings unto Jehovah my God which cost me nothing." (2 Sam. 24:24) This shows that they knew the ways of God, the principles on which God acts or judges, and how God reacts to them.

Chronicles relates the story of David's sin in numbering the nation of Israel. Though David repented of his disobedience, the sin could not go unpunished, so God sent the prophet Gad to David saying, "Thus says Jehovah, I offer you three things; choose one of them, that I may do it unto you. Either three years famine; or three months to be destroyed before your foes while the sword of your enemies overtakes you; or else three days the sword of the Lord, even pestilence in the land, and the angel of the Lord destroying throughout all the coasts of Israel." (1 Chron. 21:10, 12) In choosing one of these three punishments, David revealed that he knew the ways of the Lord, for he said, "I am in a great dilemma; let me fall now into the hand of the Lord; for very great are His mercies; but let me not fall into the hand of man." (vs. 13)

The one sublime thing David knew about God was that while He is just, He is also great in compassion and mercy toward His people. David likens the judgments of God to the disciplines of a father, saying, "Like a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him." (Ps. 103:13) David was altogether correct in his estimation of the ways of God. He did send the pestilence as David chose, but He shortened the time. "And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it; and as he was destroying, the Lord beheld, and He repented of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed, 'It is enough, stay now your hand.' And the Lord commanded the angel; and he put up his sword again into the sheath." (vs. 14-15, 27)

When we know the principles by which God acts, we have the second step in knowing God. This knowledge of God's ways brings us one step beyond merely knowing His acts. Before God acts, we know what He will do, and why, and how. This knowledge of the ways of the Lord can greatly increase our faith in prayer and enable us to prevail with God in many areas. When we minister God's Word with the absolute confidence that it shall not return void, but shall always accomplish all the Lord desires (Isa. 55:10-11), we move based on a knowledge of the ways of God. When we step out in faith to do the will of God in our lives when all the external circumstances declare that it is foolish, or that it cannot be done, this shows that we have come to know something of the ways of God. Hear it, children of God! Has He not demonstrated to all the mighty in faith since time began that He always moves His mighty hand on behalf of those who dare to obey Him in simple, childlike trust?

As our lives become oriented toward the things of the Spirit, we understand that "He who sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he who sows to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Our lives are then more and more lived out in accordance with our knowledge of the ways of God. So how do we learn His ways? "Sow to the Spirit, and reap life everlasting." Jesus put it this way, "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life... It is the Spirit who gives life..." (Jn. 6:54, 63) Jesus is the Word of God. (Jn. 1:1, 14) We take His words and eat them, devour them, saturate our lives with them, until they become part of us as much as the physical food we eat.

This is a process. As we learn to know His ways, we come to see things from God's viewpoint. Many in this hour are warning of impending judgment upon this great land of ours because they understand the principles upon which God acts and reacts. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." (Ps. 9:17) And, "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." (Prov. 14:34) Even a casual look at the testimony of history should convince any man that the same pallbearers who carried out the corpses of all the great empires from ancient Assyria to Rome are even now at the door of our nations to carry them out, also. I doubt that any of the mighty empires of the past, whether in the days of Noah or even Sodom itself, could hold a candle to the rampaging iniquity that is sweeping every nation on the face of the earth in our day. Were it not for the mercy of God in sending great tribulation on the earth in the very near future, the whole earth would doom itself to complete destruction.

And yet, by the eye of the Spirit, my vision penetrates beyond the ominous storm clouds of impending judgment that shall strike the nations with terror in these closing days of a passing age. I can see the glories that lie beyond, in that age to come when the sons of God shall arise to govern the world in righteousness through the seven Spirits of God which are always before His throne. I see the wisdom, power, and glory, and the righteous nature of His everlasting government and dominion. I can see a better day coming, and it is coming very soon – “For God has allowed us to know the secret of His plan of the ages, and it is this: He purposed long ago in His sovereign will that all human history should be consummated in Christ, that everything that exists in heaven or earth should find its perfection and fulfillment in Him... For it has pleased the Father that all the divine fullness – the sum total of the divine perfection, powers, and attributes – should dwell in Him [Christ] permanently. And God purposed that through Him all things should be completely reconciled back to Himself, whether on earth or in heaven, as through Him the Father made peace by means of the blood of His cross.” (Eph. 1:9-10, Phillips; Col. 1:19-20, AMP)

Yes, beloved, God is teaching us His ways. Finally we begin to comprehend the joy expressed by David, “Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all it contains; let the field exult, and all that is in it; then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy before Jehovah, for He is coming; for He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness, and the peoples in His faithfulness!” (Ps. 96:11-13)

And yet, though such knowledge is good and wonderful beyond the ability of my limited vocabulary to express, those who have truly received the call to sonship are aware that even this knowledge is not enough, it still falls short and leaves within our spirits an empty, unfulfilled void, a deep that calls unto deep. Even the knowledge of the ways of God – like Moses, the friend of God who communed with God face to face – is not sufficiently deep and inward. After we have known His mighty acts, after we have been taught by “eating” His Word and disciplined by Him to know His ways, still the heart cries out, “That I may know Him!”

We have known God’s acts as did the children of Israel, but the children of Israel were a house of servants. We have known His ways as did Moses, but Moses was yet a servant ruling over the house of servants. Christ is a Son over the house of sons, which house we are. Of the Son it is written, “No one fully knows and accurately understands the Son except the Father; and no one fully knows and accurately understands the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son deliberately wills to make Him known.” (Mat. 11:27, AMP)

As members of the house of sons, we are not satisfied to merely know His acts, as did the house of servants. And as members of the house of sons we cannot be satisfied with just knowing His ways, as was Moses, the great prophet ruling over the house of servants. Moses was one of the greatest men who ever lived, yet, as was said of John the Baptist, “He who is least in the Kingdom of God is greater than he.” (Mat. 11:11; Lk. 7:28)

We would know Him as does the Son. We would know God Himself!

## Chapter 13 – The Spirit of Knowledge (Part 4)

### Introduction

“These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God.” (Rev. 3:1)

“And the Spirit of the Lord [Jehovah] shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge and of the Fear of the Lord [Jehovah].” (Isa. 11:2)

The hour is at hand when all who will be sons of God must come to know Him. In the last chapter we saw the vast difference between men who only know something about God and men who know God Himself. The sixth of the seven Spirits of God which rest upon our glorious head, Jesus Christ, is the Spirit of the knowledge of the Lord. This same Spirit of Knowledge must also come to rest upon the body of Christ, for the anointing which we have received has come from Him, that through it we may be “taught all things.” (1 Jn. 2:27)

The eternal purpose of God for man has been that man would know Him, in an intimate love relationship which is typified by marriage. (Eph. 5:22-32) All that God has done and has yet to do in His redemptive purposes is in order that we may know Him. God delights in man knowing Him! He therefore declares, “And I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people; and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord!’ for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest.” (Heb. 8:10-11)

“He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel.” (Ps. 103:7) This reveals that the Israelites only saw what God had done, but Moses saw beyond that, to understand God’s ways, His purposes behind His deeds. However, when Jesus came into the world, He declared, “And this is life eternal, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” (Jn. 17:3) Thus we see that God has planned and provided for man to know God Himself, but this knowing of God Himself is experienced only through the incarnate God, Jesus Christ.

So the children of Israel knew God’s acts; Moses knew God’s ways; but now, through Jesus Christ, the regenerated new-creation man can know God Himself! “No man knows the Son, but the Father; neither knows any man the Father, except the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him.” (Mat. 11:27) The above Scriptures show us that man’s knowledge of God is obtained in three steps: firstly, knowing the acts of God; secondly, knowing the ways of God; and thirdly, knowing God Himself.

Anyone can know God’s acts. All those who have witnessed the great miracles of God from the days when God smote the Egyptians to set His people free, down to the latest healing or answer to prayer in our day, have been witnesses of the mighty acts of God. Knowing the acts of God is our first step in coming to know God, but such knowledge is only shallow and outward.

To know God's ways is knowing how He looks at things and the principles behind what He does. It means to understand what is in His mind as He works out His plan in our lives and in the universe, to comprehend the way God thinks and judges, how God will act or react to our actions toward Him. It is seeing everything from His perspective. This knowledge of God's ways is the second step in coming to know God. Yet, though such knowledge is marvelous beyond words, even this knowledge is not sufficiently deep and inward. After we have known His mighty acts, after we have been taught by His Word and disciplined by Him to know His ways, there still remains the cry from deep within us, "That I may know Him!"

### **Knowing God Himself**

Hab. 2:20; Jn. 6:57; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:19-22;  
2 Thes. 1:10

Each person is unique. One can only know another person through his (or her) personality. Personality is the individual quality that makes a person who he is. It is different from any other person. We can come to know someone's personality in four areas: we make contact with his life, we come into his presence, we fellowship with him, and finally, we discern his inner nature.

Though much higher than His creation, God is also a person, with His own unique personality, different and distinct from every other being. We can come to know God by touching Him in these same four areas. Thus to know God Himself is to become related to His unique personality through intimate personal contact with His life, coming into His presence, having fellowship with Him, and discerning and developing His nature.

As soon as we are regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit, we receive into our lives the person of God as the indwelling Spirit, the substance of our new creation life. This means that we receive into us God's personality, and from that time, we come to know God in His personality. Through the life of God within, we can now touch God through His presence, fellowship, and nature. When we touch God in these areas, we touch God Himself; in other words, we know God Himself. This knowledge is very different from the first two steps of knowing God's acts and His ways from without. This is knowing God from within.

Many people think that because they have seen and experienced God's acts and through observation of His dealings have come to understand something of His ways, they therefore know God Himself. This is not the case. Allow me to give an example.

Here in the United States, we have two classes of politicians: liberal or conservative. "Liberal" means, by definition, "plentiful; abundant; broad-minded; favoring progress or reform." "Conservative" means "inclined to keep things as they are; opposing change in the Constitution and our national customs and institutions; cautious; moderate."

A political liberal will, on most any issue, favor government expansion, change, and reform, and will generally advocate the rights of the people to have the government provide many things such as free education, health, housing, and so on. The liberal will contend that as a citizen, you have a right to an education, to have access to medical care, and to live in decent housing. Therefore the government has a responsibility to see that all these things are provided for all citizens.

The political conservative, on the other hand, will advocate a strict interpretation of the US Constitution and the importance of keeping government small and simple and within the bounds intended by the founding fathers. The conservative will promote each individual citizen's responsibility to be industrious and act in his own behalf. He will contend that our Constitution limits our government to specific enumerated powers which do not include the responsibility to provide education, health care, or housing for citizens. They must take responsibility to labor and provide for themselves.

At this time, we have two men in the United States who especially represent and articulate these two political positions – Edward Kennedy and Ronald Reagan. Now, if we take an issue like “national health insurance,” I can predict correctly what stand these two men will take on that issue even if I have not heard them speak about it. Edward Kennedy, a liberal, will support legislation to create a national health program and Ronald Reagan will oppose such legislation.

How can I know this? Because I understand these men's political philosophies, their ways of thinking, and the principles upon which they act. In other words, I know their ways. But because I know their ways, does this mean that I personally know these men? Certainly not! The fact is, I have never seen or met either one of them. I have never been in their presence, have never had any personal contact or fellowship with them, and have never observed their personal lives or inward natures. You see, dear Reader, how it is possible to know both their acts and their ways, yet not truly know them.

And this is how it is in our relationship with God. We may know God's acts and His ways from without, through observation and dealings, yet not know God Himself. In Old Testament times, God manifested only His acts and His ways to men. Therefore at that time, man could only reach the first two steps of knowing God. Now that the New Testament time has come, now that the veil has been rent, now that God has consecrated for us a new and living way, now that we have boldness to enter into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus, now that God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying “Abba, Father,” we can know the acts and the ways of God and continue beyond to know God Himself.

The most important and glorious thing is that God Himself in the Spirit dwells within us to become our life. This enables us to touch God Himself and know Him from within. We can now touch God in His personality through the indwelling of His life, His presence, His fellowship, and His nature. This third step in knowing God, the intimate love relationship with God Himself, is a special provision for those who are born of the Spirit – called to be sons of God.

In the New Testament, the principal Greek word for “know” is “ginosko.” This means the intelligent comprehension of a matter, in both the objective and subjective senses. Objective “knowing” is gained by carefully acquiring all of the pertinent facts about a person or thing. It is the basis of “scientific inquiry.” Subjective “knowing” is gained through personal experience with the reality which lies behind the facts. Complete understanding is based upon full knowledge gained by both methods.

For example, I may know (objectively) that a red-hot stove can burn my hand. If I observe a pot of food cooking on the stove, I am well aware that it could cook my flesh in just the same manner. Through observation, reflection, and logical conclusions, I “know” this can happen. This is objective “knowing” based on human reasoning.

However, I cannot fully “know” these things in the biblical sense of “ginosko” until that unfortunate moment when I actually strike my hand against the stove. Then and only then, do I fully “know” that a red-hot stove can burn my flesh, as that is just what happens. This painful experience provides me with subjective knowledge of what before was only objective knowledge.

In like manner, only those who have lost a son in war truly “know” what a heart-breaking experience that is. Again, one must actually give birth to a child to “know” about childbirth in the fullest sense. This is also how it is in knowing God. One must have a personal encounter, a participation in His life, if he is to truly “know” the Lord.

Knowing God in His acts and His ways is the “objective” way of knowing God. It is gained by observation of His doings and by studying the Scriptures, attending meetings, submitting to His discipline, and so on. How we rejoice that there is also the “subjective” way of knowing God! We experience Him from within, growing to know Him more as we touch His personality and His nature.

Many testify of their “experiences” with God such as visions, healings, miracles, speaking in tongues, and so on. While we thank the Lord for all His benefits, it is not of these experiences that I speak. God grant us more than just experiences from God!

All of these are still found in the realm of God’s acts and God’s ways. It is only the experiencing of God Himself in the hidden depths of the Spirit, in His life and nature, that can cause us to truly know Him.

The deepest prayer within my heart is that God will move mightily as the Spirit of Revelation upon all who seek after Him in this hour, so they may see that no man can know God until He comes to him personally as an unfolding revelation to his heart. God must reveal Himself to each individual heart or all will fall short of truly knowing Him in the fullness of the seven Spirits of God.

We can know His acts and His ways by listening to sermons, studying the Scriptures, attending meetings, reading inspirational books, ministering to needs, fellowshiping with the saints, and joining in a multitude of other religious exercises that occupy the time and energy of most Christians. But, beloved, you will never, in a thousand years, come to know God Himself in any of these activities. We can only come to know God by being with Him where He is, by touching Him in His personality in the Spirit.

But there is a condition to this deeper knowing of God. He is only revealed in the person of Jesus Christ, and then only as the crucified, buried, and risen Christ. When at last your own life is laid down in crucifixion as was His upon the cross, when your flesh nature is reckoned buried with Him in the tomb, only then can you experience and fully know His resurrection life within. “I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.” (Gal. 2:20)

We come to know God in His presence and fellowship when there is fulfilled within us the words of the prophet, "The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him." (Hab. 2:20) It is not the earth of mountains and valleys, streams and forests, but this earth which we are that must learn to keep silence before God, for it is this earth of our body which is the temple of God, bought with His precious blood, consecrated to be a habitation of God through the Spirit. (2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:19-22) This earth, this lump of clay, with all of its carnal desires and ambitions, with all its fleshly wisdom and zeal, must be brought to holy silence and reverence before the King.

We must come to know Him, not in the abundance of our prayers entreating God for this thing or that blessing, but in waiting patiently before Him and listening until He speaks. Place yourself, dear one, in the full light of the Father's countenance to enter into the holy silence and adoration of faith. Wait upon God until He reveals Himself through the Spirit of Revelation, and gives you the loving assurance that He knows you and loves you more than any earthly father ever loved his children. "As a father has compassion on his children, so Jehovah has compassion on those who fear [abide in reverent awe of] Him." (Ps. 103:13) "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge," (Prov. 1:7) for without it we can never come to know God by His Spirit of Knowledge.

It is in holy quietness and reverent awe before God that the deepest witness of the Spirit comes, testifying to our spirits that we are sons of God. It is there that the Father draws nigh and delights in us, and we enter into the full enjoyment of the Father's love.

At the commencement of Jesus' public ministry, an event happened which attracted the attention of His disciples. After a whole day full of working wonders at Capernaum, the crowd grows even greater toward night. The whole town is at the door; the sick are healed and the devils cast out. It is very late before they get to sleep, and in the throng there has been little time for quiet or for secret prayer and communion. Then as they rise early in the morning, they find Jesus gone! "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a deserted place, and there prayed." (Mk. 1:35) In the silence of the night, He has gone out to seek a place of solitude in the wilderness. When they find Him there, Jesus is still communing with the Father.

Oh, my brother! If you and I would be sons of God, we must especially contemplate Jesus praying alone in the wilderness. There is the secret of His marvelous life. What He did and spoke to man, was first spoken and lived through with the Father. Jesus left the Father's throne and laid aside His glory to become a man, just so we could see by His example how to walk with God in the secret place of His presence. He who would be like Him in His walk with the Father may simply begin here – to follow Jesus into solitude.

Even though it cost the sacrifice of a night's rest, of business, of fellowship with friends, of ministry to desperate needs, the time must be found to go off alone with the Father. Besides ordinary times of prayer and fellowship, he who would know the Father will be at times irresistibly drawn to turn aside from all that is so good and needful, and not return until God reveals Himself anew as, "my refuge, my portion." (Ps. 142:5)

The Sermon on the Mount was not a message to babes teaching them how to be good little children of God. It is the very essence of the principles of the Kingdom of God. It instructs us how to be the sons of our Father and how to live and reign in the Kingdom of God. "When you pray, go into your inner room, and when you have shut the door, pray to your Father in secret." (Mat. 6:6) In this wonderful Kingdom lesson, the first-born Son reveals the essential truth that it is in the closet, in the secret chamber, with closed door – or in the solitude of the wilderness – that the regular fellowship and communion with our Father is maintained. If Jesus, the first-born among many brothers, needed it, how much more we!

Too much human, worldly fellowship is dissipating and dangerous to our spiritual life. It brings us under the influence of the visible and temporal, the carnal and fleshly. Nothing can atone for the loss of secret and direct fellowship with God. We greatly appreciate the blessed fellowship with other saints of like mind and spirit, yet allow the Spirit quicken to our hearts that it is from heaven alone that the power to walk in a heavenly life on earth can come.

You come to know God in His nature when your own mind, will, desires, ideas, plans, ambitions, and self-seeking are utterly abandoned for the excellency of His divine mind and will. Jesus said, "As the living Father has sent Me, and I live by the Father; so is he who eats Me; he also shall live by Me." (Jn. 6:57) What a precious word we have here, to assure us that His life on earth as a Son and ours are really like each other, "Just as I live by the Father, so he who eats Me shall live by Me."

If you desire to understand your life in Christ, what He will be for you and how He will work in you, you have only to consider what the Father was for Him, and how He worked in Him. Christ's life in and through the Father is the image and the measure of what your life in and through the Son may be. Jesus said, "Not My will, but Yours be done" and "It is not I who does the works, but My Father who dwells in Me."

The nature of Christ can become our own nature only if "self" is denied. You have prayed that the mind of Christ would dwell in you? Seek then to have no mind or will of your own, for that which hinders the mind of Christ from working in you is, above all else, the dominating presence of your own mind, your own will, your own ideas, thoughts, desires, and ambitions.

With all its blindness, the world knows that self and selfishness are the curse of sin. It helps but little that God's people say that they are born again, that they are happy, that they are baptized in the Spirit, speak in tongues, and do wonders in Jesus' name. I declare to you that when and only when the world sees a company of sons from whom self and selfishness are banished, then it will acknowledge that Christ has "come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all that believe in that day." (2 Thes. 1:10)

"His glory is filling His temple,  
There's light in the face of Christ,  
In sons there is coming expression,  
Of the indwelling Prince of life,  
We're beholding the King in His glory,  
In the light that the Spirit brings,  
All heavens and earth shall worship Him,  
For He is the King of kings."

## Knowing God by the Spirit

Ps. 103:7; Lk. 11:2; Jn. 1:18; 11:40;  
14:16-18; 16:7, 13-14; 1 Cor. 1:21; 2:12;

One can come to know God only through Jesus Christ and by the revealing power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of Truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees Him not, neither knows Him. But you know Him; for He dwells with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you. ... Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is better for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. ... However when He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak... He shall glorify Me; for He shall receive of Mine, and shall disclose it unto you." (Jn. 14:16-18; 16:7, 13-14)

Because the world is carnal and lives in the realm of the flesh, it can accept only those things that can be analyzed by the five physical senses. Thus worldly men cannot receive the Holy Spirit because they cannot see Him. But he who believes God, sees and knows in a realm unfamiliar to the natural man. Once you accept even the simplest things of truth, then the Holy Spirit is able to begin to open to your heart the vast storehouses of God's unsearchable riches. While the natural man is affirming that seeing is believing, the Son of God is saying, "Said I not unto you, that if you would believe, you would see the glory of God?" (Jn. 11:40) The truth is, that believing is seeing.

Some may wonder, "If God revealed Himself and His eternal purpose in Jesus Christ, why then is another light, another teacher, another revealer after Him needed? Why did the Holy Spirit have to be sent to reveal Christ?" The necessity for this will become obvious from history. The heathen "by wisdom knew not God." (1 Cor. 1:21) Israel knew God only by His acts (Ps. 103:7) and not in His person and life. But why? They had the writings of Moses and the prophets, who certainly taught them about God! Holy men inspired by God, wrote the Scriptures, which painted the perfect portrait of Him who was to come. An illustration of how the Scriptures contain a perfect picture of Christ is found in a most remarkable story which comes from Russia:

"There is a Russian palace, a famous 'Saloon of Beauty,' in which are hung over eight hundred and fifty portraits of young maidens. These pictures were painted by Count Rotari for Catherine the Second, the Russian Empress. The artist made a journey through the fifty provinces of that vast empire of the north to find the models for his paintings. In these wonderful portraits that cover the walls of this saloon, there is said to be a curiously expressed compliment to the artist's royal patron, the Empress, a compliment half concealed yet half revealed. In each separate picture, it is said, may be detected by the close observer, some hidden, delicate reference to the Empress for whom they were painted. In one picture will be included some special feature of Catherine; in another some attitude of Catherine is reproduced, or some act, or some favorite adornment, or some cherished place, jewel, fashion, flower, style of dress, or way of life

– something peculiar to, or characteristic of, the Empress. Thus the saloon’s walls are lined with over eight hundred silent tributes to her beauty or compliments to her taste.” So inventive and ingenious is the spirit of human flattery when it seeks to glorify a fellow human, breaking its flask of lavish praise on the feet of an earthly monarch.

The Scriptures also contain a picture gallery, adorned with tributes to the blessed Christ of God. In one portion may be seen a prophetic portrait of the coming One as the great Prophet, in another He is portrayed as the High Priest, yet again a typical sacrifice portrays the bleeding lamb, here a prophecy of the royal King who shall rule the nations, there a person or event that foreshadowed His love, wisdom, mercy, judgment, power, or some other characteristic of His being and nature. But, in whatever form or fashion, whatever guise of fact or fancy, prophecy or history, parable or miracle, type or antitype, allegory or narrative, everywhere, from Genesis to Revelation, the discerning eye may find Him – the all-glorious Son of God!

It was Israel, out of all the nations of earth, that possessed the Scriptures and was, therefore, in possession of the God-inspired portrait of the coming Christ of God. Israel was led by ruling priests, who knew the Scriptures backward and forward, inside and out, and zealously dissected them for the people. And yet, being so highly favored and fully instructed, they did not have the eyes to see. They were unable to recognize the divine features of His glorious countenance when He appeared in person in their midst. They did not know that this Jesus was the man in the picture, the man of the portrait esteemed so highly by them all.

So, He came unto His own and His own received Him not. He, of whom Moses and the prophets spoke, of whom all their institutions, ceremonies, and rituals testified, finally revealed Himself plainly, and they crucified Him! What greater proof can we have that Christ Himself remains unseen light, *unless the Holy Spirit reveals Him?* “And when He [the Comforter] is come... He shall glorify Me; for He shall receive of Mine, and shall disclose it unto you.” (Jn. 16:13-14)

Look also at the disciples of our Lord. They were drawn to Jesus by the Father. Their acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God, came not by human nature, by flesh and blood, but it was from above. They loved and followed Jesus with all their hearts. And yet, while He was here in the flesh, they understood not the Scriptures. They could not comprehend His mission, His death, resurrection, ascension, or even the nature of His coming Kingdom. Even the personal teaching and instructions of the Lord, received with intense admiration and affection, were not sufficient to open their understanding to the glorious realities set before them. Only their subsequent infilling with the mighty life and power of the Holy Spirit finally brought them to comprehend this one eternal fact: the Holy Spirit alone can lead us into truth! God is in Christ, Christ is the truth, but the Holy Spirit alone can reveal Him who is God manifest.

But let us go higher than the proof of actual history and experience. In His great love, God reveals Himself. It is His gracious will that we should know Him. In Christ Jesus, He manifests Himself perfectly. Jesus is light, full of brightness and glory. And yet we require another light to see the true light.

How is this? How can it be? It is simply because God, who is eternally one, has also revealed Himself as trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Father speaks of God in heaven. "When you pray say, 'Our Father who is in heaven, holy is Your name.'" (Lk. 11:2) The Son speaks of God manifested on the earth, "No man has ever seen God at any time; the only unique Son, the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him – He has revealed Him, brought Him out where He can be seen." (Jn. 1:18, AMP) Holy Spirit speaks of the energizing and life-giving power of God moving and working in our hearts and lives and throughout the universe, revealing the invisible God who has been manifest in Jesus Christ, "For what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." (1 Cor. 2:12) God knows Himself in His Spirit for He is Spirit. It is in His Spirit that God is light in Himself, and therefore by His Spirit, He sends forth light into the world in the person of Christ. (Jn. 1:1-9; 9:5)

God reveals Himself. But who is God revealed? Who else but the Son? It is the glory of Christ that He manifests the Father, and the glory of the Spirit that He glorifies and reveals to our hearts God as manifest in the Son. Still we do not have three Gods, but One – the eternal, invisible Father God in heaven, manifested as the Son, who is the fullest possible expression of the Eternal in our realm of time and space, and who is revealed to our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

"No man has seen God at any time..." (Jn. 1:18) The almighty Eternal is invisible and unapproachable. Mortal man, bound in time, can never reach out and touch eternity. Yet God found a way to express Himself and His transcendent glory to mortal man. Jesus is the way, the only way, the fullest possible expression of the almighty Eternal into our limited realm of time and space.

There is no bridge from this world unto the realm of the eternal. Humanly speaking, there was no possible way we could reach up to know God unless from heaven above God Himself chose to reveal Himself to us. "Amor descendit," the ancients used to say. Love descends from heaven. Yes, God Himself is that bridge in the person of the Holy Spirit. He reaches down from the highest heaven all the way into our hearts, carrying into us all that God is in Christ Jesus. All that God in His infinite love, wisdom, and power has treasured up in Jesus Christ, His Holy Spirit reveals and imparts unto us.

The Spirit brings a living knowledge, a knowing and experiencing of God within. It is not information, not ideas, not insights into doctrines or creeds or an appreciation of their beauty and grandeur. Men may have vast knowledge and yet be destitute of the grace of God and uninhabited by the Spirit of God. To know God is eternal life. This knowledge of God, the knowing of Him, is the spiritual, never-ending life which the Spirit creates within us. This knowledge is therefore also an experience of God. Having been born of the Spirit, we know the Father, and He is our Father; we know Christ, and He is our life, and we possess Christ. We do not have merely a picture or an image, but the very substance of the almighty Eternal.

## Knowing Christ As His Bride

Gen. 2:18, 21-22; 4:1; Ps. 139:15; SoS. 1:2, 4;  
Hos. 6:3; Jn. 14:6; Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 2:9; 6:16;  
Gal. 2:20; Eph. 1:4, 9-11; 5:28-30; Rev. 19:7; 22:13

Any man can come to know something of the acts and ways of God, but only those born from above who also “follow on to know the Lord,” (Hos. 6:3) can ever come to know Him in the most wonderfully personal and intimate manner. The depth of this “knowing” Him is like the intimate relationship of a man with his beloved wife, in which love he seeks to reproduce after his own kind. In fact, this is precisely the way in which the Scriptures often make use of the word “know” – to declare the giving and receiving of human seed in the act of love.

For example, “And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain.” (Gen. 4:1) This statement does not mean that Adam was able to recognize his wife as she walked about the house. “Knowing” in the sense of recognition does not beget children. When Adam “knew” his wife he explored and joined with her emotional and physical being, and she “knew” him in return in a personal and intimate way that words could never communicate. Only by the experience of the sexual relationship does man know woman in this sense, and she him.

This physical truth is a beautiful picture of spiritual truth. It is only in that exquisite relationship where the believer completely yields himself to the Spirit, the presence, the mind, and the will of God, and proves by his wholehearted response that he totally and truly loves the Lord, that he knows and is known of God. Thus the people of Israel are told, “Your husband is your Maker, whose name is Jehovah of Hosts; your Redeemer is

the Holy One of Israel, who is called the God of all the earth. For Jehovah has called you, like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, even like a wife of one’s youth when she is rejected, says your God.” (Isa. 54:5-6) “You will call me Ishi [my husband]... and I will betroth you to Me forever.” (Hos. 2:16-19) And in the New Testament, “I betrothed you to one husband, that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.” (2 Cor. 11:2) “For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church... Husbands love your wives just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her... For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and the two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” (Eph. 5:23-32) “The marriage of the Lamb has come, and His Bride has made herself ready... Come here, and I shall show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb...” (Rev. 19:7; 21:9)

As husband and wife, by means of the act of “knowing,” become one flesh, so Christ and the believer, by the spiritual act of “knowing,” join together to become one Spirit. (1 Cor. 6:16-20) The intimate relation and ecstasy here portrayed are not found in the lives of any except those who “count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ,” (Phil. 3:8) and “follow the Lamb wherever He goes.” (Rev. 14:4)

While we write much in these pages of the glorious truth of sonship, we want to contemplate in our meditations at this time what it means to be the Bride of Christ. In the new birth, we are born into the family of God, but we are born as babes and thus become God’s “dear children.” (Eph. 1:5; 5:1)

This is our relationship to God in spiritual infancy and immaturity. As we grow up in our spiritual being, we are then brought into definite relationships to God in maturity. Children are children. Children are not sons in the scriptural sense. A girl, as long as she is a child, is not prepared for or capable of fulfilling the role of a wife. In order to enter into a true marriage relationship, a girl must go through years of physical, mental, and spiritual development. On becoming mature in all these areas, she is fit for marriage and her role as a wife and mother.

And so it is in God's family. The term "child" describes the Christian in his walk of immaturity in God. But as we grow up into spiritual maturity, the mature feminine and masculine aspects of our relationship to God begin to solidify. There are various aspects of our relationship to God in maturity. Since God has revealed Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we must enter into relationships with God progressively in each of His three manifestations. As babes we first recognize God the Father as a Judge and disciplinarian, we relate to God the Son as our Savior from the guilt of our sins, and God the Holy Spirit as our Comforter. Then later, as spiritual children, we may relate to God the Father as our personal, benevolent "Daddy" to whom we cry to meet our needs, God the Son as our Savior from the power of sin in our lives, and God the Holy Spirit as our guide when we need help and our wisdom when we get into trouble. Finally, in spiritual maturity we relate to the Holy Spirit as our continual source of life, we love and submit to Jesus Christ as our Husband and we His Bride, and we literally become sons of the heavenly Father.

The Bride is portrayed as a woman, therefore her characteristics, spiritually, are those of the female, and her relationship to Christ is one of love and submission, the two primary characteristics of a bride. The sons of God, on the other hand, are pictured as a manchild (Rev. 12:5) – as masculine in relationship to the Father. This masculinity implies initiative, strength, authority, power, and dominion. Let us never become so over-balanced in our zeal to become sons of God that we neglect or forget the marvelous truth of brideship! The simple truth is that the way to sonship is through brideship.

This is why the Spirit has given us the example of a glorious woman giving birth to a manchild. It is the realm of brideship that gives birth to the reality of sonship. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life; No man comes unto the Father but by Me." (Jn. 14:6) Your relationship to Jesus as a bride must come first, and your relationship to the Father as a son will surely follow. It is only through intimate fellowship and vital union with Jesus, with the feminine characteristics of love and submission as a bride to her husband, that we are enabled to move on into that higher glory of initiative, strength, authority, power, and dominion over all things as sons of God. This is a key principle in God that I hope none of you will miss!

If you have never really fallen in love with Jesus – and made Him your head and absolute Lord – don't expect to ever be a son. If you are not truly "virgin" in your desires toward the Lord and in your walk with Him, you will not become part of the sealed firstfruits company. "These have been purchased from among men as firstfruits to God and to the Lamb." (Rev. 7:2-8; 14:1-5)

Those who are double-minded, trying to love God while still holding on to some level of faith, trust, and friendship with the world, cannot receive the deeper things of God. (James 1:6-8) “You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God... purify your hearts, you double-minded.” (James 4:4, 8)

If you are not led by the Spirit, walking by the Spirit, by the Spirit putting to death the deeds of the flesh, keeping yourself pure and single-hearted in your affections unto Him and Him alone, then don’t expect to be born into that glorious company of sons who shall set all creation free from the bondage of corruption. (Rom. 8:13-21) If you have any other love before Him, any other master that rules in your life, any other Lord, any “reserved” areas of your life, then you have not yet learned how to be a bride to Christ. We must first bow in a feminine love and submission to Jesus – as His wife – before we can pass beyond to stand tall in majesty and splendor as a son of His Father. It is just that simple. There is no other way.

In the beautiful Song of Solomon we have the heaven-breathed song of holy love between a bride and her bridegroom. The very first cry of the book is that of the bride saying, “Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for your love is better than wine.” (SoS. 1:2) It is a significant fact that throughout the Song of Solomon, the bride never mentions the name of her bridegroom, but calls him only her “beloved” or the one whom her soul loves. She speaks of him as though there were no one else on earth but him. It is when she has drawn near enough

for him to be her whole thought and the only one on earth to her, that she speaks of him like this. He is the first, the last, the only one in her heart and thoughts; and she is unconscious that she has not mentioned His name. Those who love so intensely, simply assume that all others must also recognize the beauty and preeminence of the one who fills their own lives and thoughts, for such is the nature of love.

Historically, this song portrays Israel’s longing for their Messiah. For centuries, the faithful remnant of God’s ancient people looked and longed for the coming of their Messiah; they searched the Scriptures and their cries went up to God. But though most of Israel knew the prophecies concerning their Messiah, when He came to His own, they knew Him not, they received Him not. In the Psalms and in other portions of the Old Testament, the longing for the advent of the Messiah and for the deliverance He would bring His people, is like a heart-cry. That cry has never ceased, but has come down through the ages, finding its response in the church. Now it is going forth again in this hour from the hearts of those who are looking and longing for the manifestation of the fullness of God.

Israel had the prophecies concerning His coming. They had the temple worship and its laws, the “oracles of God.” (Rom. 3:2) God had spoken to their fathers through the prophets in many portions and many ways, (Heb. 1:1) but this did not satisfy their hearts. Only God Himself could satisfy their hearts; only He, of whom the prophets spoke, could fill that void which God had left within man to be filled by Himself alone. So, why could they not accept Jesus in answer to their cry?

They were looking eagerly, yearning, for “the Sun of Righteousness to arise with healing in His wings;” they were waiting for Him to come who should redeem Israel. Why could they not receive Him when He came? Because, “God has provided something better for us, so that apart from us they should not be made perfect.” (Heb. 11:40) Jesus came then only as the suffering servant and not as the conquering king that all the prophecies affirmed He must be. They only saw Him with their physical eyes, and not the eyes of faith. So they could not receive Him as Messiah. That remained for an end-time company of overcomers who by faith would receive all the promises of God.

Our cry is, “Let me not only hear about Him, but let Him come near Himself! Let me behold Him! Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth!” This is now the heart-cry of all who would know Jesus the Christ, the altogether lovely One, the Savior, the Redeemer, the Bridegroom of the Bride. This longing is for the kiss of betrothal, which will bring us nigh unto Him in a deeper way, in a closer relation, separated from all others unto only Him and His love.

Do you know what separation means? There can be no flirting with the world and no dallying with the flesh; both the world and the flesh must be put away, including that worldly system of religion, the great harlot, Babylon the great, which flaunts itself before all the nations, masquerading as the church, the Bride of Christ. The hope of knowing Christ in the bridal union of pure love and submission should inspire us to come out of the confusion and bondage of the Babylon system, to walk in a new and glorious relationship with Jesus Christ.

As long as you remain in the man-made systems of Babylon’s religion, your spiritual life and conduct are controlled by the system. You cannot be led by the Spirit to walk in loving obedience to Christ alone. But after you see you are being spiritually robbed by the system, and “divorce” yourself from it, you begin to look to Christ for headship and leadership. Then, true to His word, the Lord begins to lead you by the Spirit in ways and wonders you knew not.

Please do not misunderstand me. I am not saying to stop “going to church” or stop having fellowship with other believers. Such fellowship is essential for them. To grow, they need the “salt and light” of the saints! But go only as the Spirit leads, speaking His word and doing His will as His ambassador, rather than as a dutiful “church member.”

The Bride of Christ is that holy city, the New Jerusalem, which has the glory of God. The nations shall walk in the light of this city, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it. Out of it shall flow the pure water of the river of life, and the leaves of its trees are for the healing of all nations. The Lamb dwells in the midst of it, and it is prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

These promises and privileges are great, but there are conditions. The conditions are that we “come out of Babylon” and so walk that we learn truly how to be a bride unto Christ. (Rev. 1:4; 21:2) It is not enough to just come out of the religious system known as Babylon, for he who comes out must come into that bridal relationship with Christ. The relation between Christ and His Bride is not reserved for some future day in a far-away land, for it begins right here on earth, and will reach perfection in the overcomers.

Let us, in closing, look at that most beautiful love song, the Song of Solomon. The bride announces, “Draw me, I will run after you; the king has brought me into his chambers.” (SoS 1:4) Here is a place in Christ. The King brings us in. The initiative is on His part. We cannot bring ourselves into the King’s chambers for we do not know the preparation needed or the testing required to perfect such preparation. Only the Lord knows when we are ready, for every outward step means greater inward processing.

The bride’s prayer is for the king to “Draw me.” But he has already “brought me into his chambers.” So why does she need further drawing? Because there are deeper chambers where she has not yet been drawn. The plural “chambers” holds out such vistas of the inexhaustible revelations of God that we hear the Spirit saying, “Eye has not seen nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him!” (1 Cor. 2:9)

The chamber of salvation is the first chamber which must be entered before proceeding any further on into those wonderful chambers of the King, prepared for those who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. The next chamber of the King is the baptism in (filling with) the Holy Spirit. No tongue can express the joy and wonder of these first two chambers, nor the praise and happiness with which our hearts overflow as we enter in. These holy experiences are not, as many think, just receiving by faith and going on. Neither are they, as others imagine, merely getting blessed or feeling the ecstasy of an emotional experience. They both are God in Christ Jesus coming as a Person by the Holy Spirit to indwell and live out His life in us.

When we have entered these first two chambers, so great is our joy and so wonderful is the presence and power of God within us, that we feel we must have come into all God could have for us. But He does not allow us to be satisfied and rest here. Those who do are like the man who settles a claim for a thousand dollars when if he had known he could have had a hundred million.

There are yet deeper chambers of God’s dealings, chambers of deeper sanctification and cleansing, revelations, and maturing. In it all, we delight in our King. Then one day He says to us, “Whom God foreknew, these He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brothers.” (Rom. 8:29) Ah! Now this one who has known the sweet love relationship of the Bride discovers that there is even a reality beyond this!

It will require the mighty Holy Spirit of Revelation to penetrate the glories of which I now write. When God created man in the beginning He did not immediately create a man and a woman. He made only a man. The word “man” and the word “Adam” are the very same word in the Hebrew. Adam is simply the Hebrew word for humanity or mankind. It is not the name of a particular person. The first man was one person all right (Rom. 5:17-19), but contained in Him was all mankind. Before Eve was brought forth by the power of God, Adam contained within himself all that mankind would ever become quantitatively. He was a creature complete, both male and female within himself. All reproductive organs were contained in that one person who was, in himself, in the beginning, the substance of all humanity. One man, in whom resided all mankind.

But then God said, “‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make a helper suitable for him.’ And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept. Then God took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh at that place; and of the rib... He made a woman, and brought her unto the man.” (Gen. 2:18, 21-22)

The word “rib” does not adequately describe what God took out of Adam. The Hebrew word here translated “rib” is “tsela” which is only translated as rib two times in the Old Testament. But it is also translated two times as “chamber,” nine times as “side chamber,” and nineteen times as “side.” When speaking of “chambers” in Solomon’s temple, the Scriptures use this same word. What, then, did God take from Adam to make Eve? A rib or a chamber? It is my firm conviction that God removed from Adam a “chamber,” a vital part of his being, the female aspect. God left the life-giving organs with Adam, and gave to Eve the womb, the life-nurturing organs. If God had used only a rib, a bone, then when He brought Eve to Adam he should have said, “This is now bone of my bones.” Period! But Adam said, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh!” (vs. 23) God separated Adam into two parts – making two incomplete people – who must join in marriage to be complete. “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” (vs. 24)

Keeping the foregoing facts in mind, let us consider the last Adam – and his Bride. Even as Eve was taken out of her husband, Adam, so we, as the Bride of Christ, were taken out of our husband, Christ. We too are incomplete until we are joined with Him.

“God... has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.” (Eph. 1:4) How could we be chosen in Christ before the world began unless we were in Him then? The truth is that we were! Eve was in Adam as a part of him, she existed in him in substance. In like manner, we were spiritually in Christ from eternity.

The new creation life within you – what is it? Where did it originate? The new Spirit being which is in you by virtue of the new birth is Christ! Paul spoke of this great truth when he declared, “I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me.” (Gal. 2:20) Christ is in us. Our “new man” is Christ. This means that even as God took of Adam’s flesh and made another person, so has He taken of Christ’s Spirit and formed another Spirit person – the Bride of Jesus Christ! Therefore it is written, “So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord the church; for we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.” (Eph. 5:28-30)

One of the greatest revelations to burst upon my spiritual consciousness is the truth that even as all things began in Christ, all shall also end in Christ. “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.” (Rev. 22:13) Only the glorious mind of Christ can reveal to our hearts what that means! We can accept that He was the first, “before all things.” (Col. 1:17) Can we also accept that He will be the last? If He is the beginning, dare we believe Him when He also says that He is the end?

“For in Him all things were created... through Him, and for Him... and in Him all things hold together... for it was the Father’s good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself...” (Col. 1:16-20) “For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever.” (Rom. 11:36)

Paul says that “God... chose us in Him [Christ] before the world began.” Then he reaches beyond the consummation of all the ages to declare that, “Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both things which are in heaven, and which are on earth...” (Eph. 1:4, 9-10) All that began in Christ, before the ages, shall end in Christ, for He is the first and the last, the beginning and the end. (Rev. 22:13) If you can conceive of God taking Eve and putting her back into Adam as one person, as in the beginning, then you may also understand this glorious purpose of God that transcends brideship, as God takes the Bride and again makes her one in Christ!

Surely all our yearnings to fully know Him shall find their complete and eternal fulfillment there where we are brought back into Christ. Wonderful beyond words is the reality of brideship, as we bow in reverence and holy love before Him, clinging to Him with all our affections. But more wonderful and glorious is that realm where all our panting after Him is fully satisfied as we are again swallowed up into Him, to live, and move, and have our being in Him, (Acts 17:28) the one body, (Eph. 4:4-5) the one man, the last Adam, (1 Cor. 15:45) the last, the end!

Hallelujah! Take the shoes from your feet, O saint, for we stand on holy ground. Put away all glibness and foolishness, so that with bowed heads and uplifted hearts the Holy Spirit of God may reveal how the head, eternal in the heavens, and the body, which God has been preparing since Adam, is but one Christ. Without that body which through the ages God has been forming in secret in the lowest parts of the earth (Ps. 139:15), God’s Christ would be incomplete.

“[God] has put all things under His feet, and gave Him [Christ] to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” Weymouth translates this, “God has put all things under His feet, and appointed Him universal and supreme head of the church, which is His body, the completeness of Him who everywhere fills the universe with Himself.” (Eph. 1:22-23) This says that the body of Christ is the completeness of God’s Christ. The head of this body is from eternity, but out of Him came the life from which, in time, a wife is being formed. But now, it is God’s purpose of the ages to take that wife and bring her back into Christ, that He might be the head of a body, not as Christ and the Bride, but as one body, the male, the man, the son, the last man, Christ!

Then the Father may say, “This is my Son in whom I am well pleased.” Now we can understand why no bride or bridegroom has ever been able to be as completely one as they desire. In those exquisite moments of intimate love, they desire to simply merge into the being of their lover. This desire, for the Bride of Christ, shall be finally fulfilled when she is brought back into Christ, part of Him, the son, the last man, the last!

# Chapter 14 – The Spirit of the Fear of the Lord

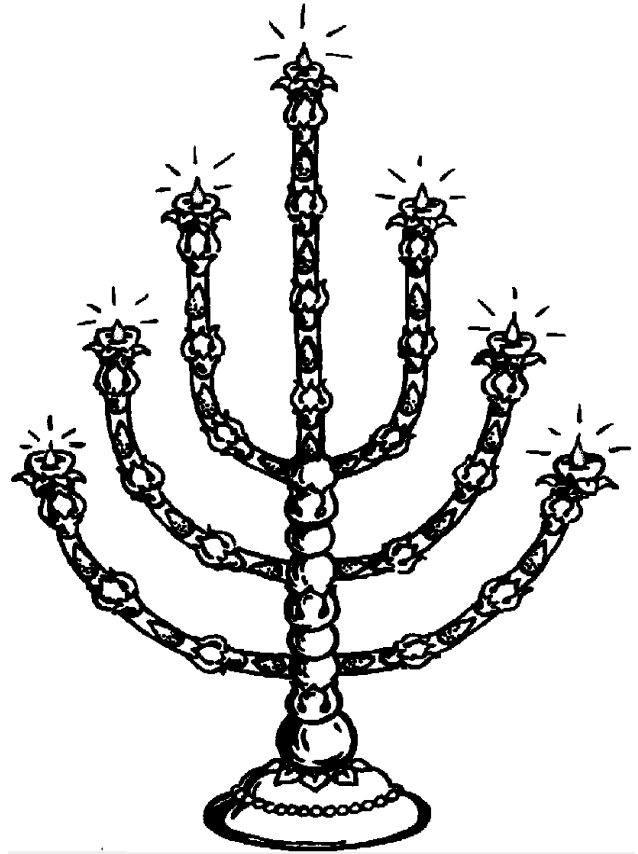
## Introduction

The seven Spirits of God is a most enlightening subject in these momentous days in which we are living. What are the seven Spirits of God? John tells us that Jesus has the seven Spirits of God. “These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God.” (Rev. 3:1) The seven Spirits of God are also likened to seven eyes, “And lo, in the midst of the throne... stood a Lamb as having been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.” (Rev. 5:6)

Note here that the seven Spirits of God are before the throne of God. “Grace unto you, and peace, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before His throne... and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.” (Rev. 1:4; 4:5)

Here we have the seven Spirits likened unto seven lamps. These seven lamps of fire burning before the throne correspond in type to the seven branched “candlestick” (lampstand) which burned in the holy place in the tabernacle in the wilderness and later in the temple in Jerusalem. (The King James Bible uses “candlestick,” but it is better translated “lampstand.” A candle consumes itself as it burns; an oil lamp consumes only the oil.)

In the Old Testament, the structure of the golden lampstand in the tabernacle was quite unique. It was all of one piece of gold.



It had a central shaft, out of which came six branches. These six branches formed three pairs proceeding out of the central shaft, as in the picture above. All together they made seven lamps. This structure is important.

It is Jesus who has the seven Spirits of God. The seven-fold Spirit which rests upon Him was prophesied by Isaiah, “The Spirit of the Lord [Jehovah] shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge and of the Fear of the Lord.”

Note the order of these seven Spirits of this seven-fold, intensified anointing of God. The tall central shaft portrays the Spirit of Jehovah. Out of this central shaft are the six branches in pairs, picturing (1) the Spirit of Wisdom and the Spirit of Understanding, (2) the Spirit of Counsel and the Spirit of Might, and (3) the Spirit of Knowledge and the Spirit of the Fear of the Lord. These are all a part of the same lampstand, all proceeding out from the Spirit of Jehovah, and yet they are seven distinct manifestations.

The seven lamps are for illumination, as the seven eyes of the Lamb are also for illumination or perception. "And lo, ... a Lamb... having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." (Rev. 5:6) Seven, as used in the Bible, implies completion or perfection. The seven horns typify His perfection of power (His omnipotence), and the seven eyes typify the perfection of His perception (His omniscience). Jesus said, "I am the light of the world; He who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life." (Jn. 8:12) This light of life brings illumination to us as revelation or spiritual perception, giving us wisdom, knowledge, understanding, and counsel. "And the city [the new Jerusalem] 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 [a revelation of Himself]." (Rev. 21:23)

The Spirit of the Lord, represented by the lampstand's central shaft, has a special significance. In most Bible versions, when the word "LORD" is spelled with all capital letters, it is a deliberate mis-translation of the Hebrew word YHWH or YaHoWaH, from which our word Jehovah is derived.

Jesus said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor..." (Lk. 4:18) Turning to the prophecy in Isaiah from which Jesus was reading, we read there in the Hebrew, "The Spirit of YHWH is on Me, because YHWH has anointed Me to proclaim good tidings to the humble." (Isa. 61:1) And similarly, "The Spirit of YHWH shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge and the Fear of YHWH." (Isa. 11:2-3) Thus you can see that the central aspect of this seven-fold Spirit of God is that it is the Spirit of YHWH. It is the "Spirit of YHWH" which is upon Jesus the head. It is the same "Spirit of YHWH" which is communicated from the head to elect members of His body.

As we elaborated in Chapter 5 above, "YHWH" is derived from the Hebrew verb "hayah" meaning "to be," or "being." This word is almost exactly like the Hebrew verb, "chayah," which means "to live," or "life." One can readily see the connection between being and life. Thus YHWH means "the self-existent One" and "the life eternal." He is the One (the only One) who in Himself possesses life derived from no source other than Himself, and thus is dependent upon no other person or thing. But YHWH means more than that. "Hayah" is not a passive verb, as in "I exist," but an active verb, in the present causative tense, as in, "I Am all that I Am to you, personally, right now." Thus the Spirit of Jehovah, the central lamp in the lampstand out from which proceed the other six Spirits, is the self-existent God who reveals Himself, the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation. (Eph. 1:17)

Does not this correspond with all of Jesus' statements concerning the Holy Spirit and His work of revelation, "... when He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak of Himself; but whatever He hears from the Father He shall speak, and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine and show it unto you. Everything the Father has is Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and show it unto you." (Jn. 16:13-15) Out from this central shaft of the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of Revelation, proceed the blessed Spirits of Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Might, Knowledge, and Fear of the Lord.

"And I beheld in the midst of the throne... stood a Lamb as having been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." (Rev. 5:6) We see that it is from the Lamb that the seven Spirits of God are "sent forth into all the earth." We are living in the day when the seven Spirits of God in the fullness of divine vision and revelation, power and authority, judgment and wisdom is being manifested. The seven eyes and the seven horns belong to the triumphant Lamb, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, who is "in the midst of the throne" (in the central place of authority and recognition in the throne), and from which goes forth the fullness of divine vision, revelation, power and authority. Eyes of vision and revelation! Horns of power and authority! The eyes of the Lamb. The horns of the Lamb. And this potent reality is sent forth into all the earth. This means that God wants His people to move in the fullness of the revelation and power of the triumphant Lamb of God!

We might think that calling our Lord "the Lamb" should refer only to His earthly humiliation and sacrificial death. However, in Scripture it is most used in reference to His glory in His ascension and exaltation in the throne. John saw Him stand, as a Lamb who had been slain, in the midst of the throne! The four living creatures, the twenty four elders, and the hosts of heaven praise Him as the Lamb who has purchased us unto God by His blood and has brought us into that intimate fellowship in Him as His kings and priests reigning over the earth. (Rev. 5:9-10) "Salvation to our God and to the Lamb." (Rev. 7:10) It is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (Jn. 1:29) by His precious blood. (1 Pet. 1:19) It is the Lamb as the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Rev. 5:5-6) who has conquered Satan and all his power. (Rev. 17:14) It is the Lamb who is worthy to open the scroll (Rev. 5:2, 5, 9) and who records all our names in His Book of Life. (Rev. 21:27) It is the Lamb who executes judgment in His wrath against sin (Rev. 6:17) and who reigns. (Rev. 5:12) The Lamb stands on Mount Zion (Rev. 14:1), the ancient location of David's royal fortress where Israel's king reigned, representing the highest pinnacle of power, glory, and authority in the Kingdom of God. The Lamb is the light of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, and its temple. (Rev. 21:22-23) From beneath the throne of God and of the Lamb, the river of the water of life flows. (Rev. 22:1) Throughout the ages, the Lamb remains our dwelling place, our Shepherd, Guardian, and Guide. (Rev. 7:15-17) Eternity fills with the song of His praise, "The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing." (Rev. 5:12-13)

It is the Lamb who has the seven Spirits of God. You will never in a million years find them outside of Him! If you would have the seven Spirits of God, your identity must be lost in the Lamb. He must be your hiding place. He must be your sphere of existence. It is from the Lamb upon the throne that the seven Spirits are sent forth into all the earth.

Notice especially that the seven Spirits are associated not only with the Lamb, but also with the throne. If you desire to pay the price and make the sacrifice to be a part of the greatest manifestation of the glory and power of God the world has ever witnessed, then you must bow before God's throne. This requires coming often and long into God's presence by the blood of the Lamb. It means opening your heart and life to the judgment of Him who sits upon the throne. It means yielding to the transforming power of the Lamb of God, repenting and denying the self nature, humbling, waiting, worship, prayer, and praise before the throne.

Let all men know that the Holy Spirit of God does not come from the Jesus of Bethlehem, nor from the Jesus of Nazareth, nor from the Jesus doing mighty wonders and miracles, nor yet from the Jesus on the cross of Golgotha. All these manifestations and works of Christ meant nothing until the sacrificed Lamb arose as the triumphant Lion, victorious over all enemies, to ascend far above all heavens, that He might fill all things. (Eph. 4:10) "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins." (1 Cor. 15:17) "For the Holy Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified." (Jn. 7:39) The Spirit comes from the throne, from the risen, ascended, glorified Christ, pouring forth the glory and triumph of God.

When you see people baptized with the Spirit, rejoicing in victory, they demonstrate that they are associated with the throne. There is glory! God's purpose in Christ is to bring "many sons" (Heb. 2:10) to this glory where they can express the ministry of Jesus Christ in every aspect by the fullness of the seven Spirits of God. When more and more of the body of Christ moves in the fullness of the seven Spirits of God, we fulfill the words of Jesus. He was only one man in one place; but when many thousands flood the earth, every member of the body functioning in the fullness of the seven Spirits, then the Lord's promise is fulfilled, "The works that I do, shall you do also, and greater than these shall you do, because I go to the Father [there to sit on the throne]." (Jn. 14:12)

As the first-born Son of God has the seven Spirits of God as seven eyes, to see and know all things, so the sons of God gain that Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, enlightening the eyes of their hearts to "know what is the hope of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward them that believe, according to the mighty working of His power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him [on the throne] at His own right hand." (Eph. 1:17-20) And as the first-born Son has the seven Spirits of God as seven horns and has all power and authority in heaven and earth, so the sons of God shall likewise have the fullness of power and shall do those "greater works." Will you be with them? Will you open your heart to enter into the greatest of ministries? "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches!"

## The Fear of the Lord

Ex. 15:11; Deut. 5:29; 6:24; Job 28:28;  
Ps. 19:9; 111:10; Prov. 1:7; 8:13; 14:26-27; 15:33;  
19:23; Isa. 6:3, 5; Mat. 14:26; Acts 9:31;  
2 Tim. 1:7; Heb. 12:28; Rev. 14:6-7

Our hearts have been thrilled and stirred beyond measure as we have lifted at least a tiny corner of the veil in the previous thirteen chapters to peer into the glories of that blessed realm of the seven Spirits of God. In this chapter, we approach nearer, to touch the seventh and last of this seven-fold Spirit: the Spirit of the Fear of the Lord.

It is Jesus who has the Spirit of the Fear of the Lord. This Spirit is sent forth into our hearts from the very heart of Him, the Lamb in the midst of the throne. As with all the seven Spirits of God, this Spirit, the Fear of the Lord, shall be a most remarkable thing in the end-time ministry as the sons of God bring in the next phase of the Kingdom of God in that glorious age of the ages.

The first principle we must understand is that the fear of the Lord has nothing to do with being afraid. Jesus does not have the spirit of fright! Jesus was not terrified of His Father, neither does He impart to men the spirit of terror. "God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." (2 Tim. 1:7)

In the Scriptures, our English word "fear" is translated from the Hebrew word "yirah" or the Greek word "phobos." These words both have two principal meanings: (1) that apprehension of evil or danger which may incite one to flee or fight; an unpleasant emotion caused by some threat, imagined or real; an expectation of harm or pain which evokes a feeling of alarm, dread, or disquiet; and (2) that awe and reverence which a man

of sense feels in the presence of that which is high and eminent, such as a powerful king. A child feels the first of these kinds of fear in the presence of a harsh and cruel parent, and the second before a parent who is good and loving though he must also be just.

In the New Testament, the Greek word "phobos" is used for both senses. Frightened and terrified because they thought they saw a ghost, Jesus' disciples "cried out for fear." (Mat. 14:26) But, "Then the churches had rest throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 9:31) This is the second meaning of fear, the awesome reverence of God.

To illustrate the true nature of the fear of the Lord, I quote the following story (I do not know the author, but as far as I know, this is a true story):

*Years ago I married a young couple who were, and still are, very much in love with one another. They had met when they were thirteen and fourteen, had never looked at anyone else, and wouldn't today after all these years. They went away on their honeymoon and after a few weeks returned home. I saw them the next Sunday and greeted them with a little pleasantry. I asked the groom if his bride had burned the roast for their first dinner. They laughed, and she said, "Oh, I was afraid that I was going to. I had read about so many new brides being unable to cook, so I decided that John was going to have the very best meal a bride could prepare for her husband. About three o'clock, I got everything out and started to work. When I finally put things on to cook, I wanted everything to turn out well and was afraid they wouldn't, and, of course, he had to be a little late, and I was so afraid the dinner would be spoiled..."*

*I interrupted her to say, "You have said three times that you were afraid. Did you think that John was going to beat you?"*

*She pouted and said, "Of course not." She looked at him with all the love of her heart in her eyes.*

*"But," I persisted, "You said that you were afraid..."*

*She broke in, "Oh, you know what I mean!"*

*And of course I knew what she meant. Her fear was not fright; her fear was a great and intense desire to serve and to please the one to whom she had given herself entirely, the one whom she respected and esteemed above all others.*

Perhaps this simple story will help us understand what is meant by the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord, in the scriptural sense, is a godly thing, a wonderful thing, a lovely thing. How many precious Christians, influenced by false doctrines of Babylon's religions, have no conception of the beauty and joy of a pure and holy fear of the Lord, in contrast to the fright or terror of the Lord.

When I was a boy, the churches in which I was reared painted a picture of God as One who is so exacting, demanding, and judgmental, that if you went to bed at night with one little sin unconfessed, not under the blood of Jesus, and the "rapture" took place during the night, you would be left behind! I tell you that in those days I could not truly love God for being afraid of Him! Thought of the Lord's coming sent no thrill of glory through my soul – it struck terror in my heart; for God was so holy, so exacting and demanding, that I was quite sure, beyond reasonable doubt, that I could never be fully ready to stand before His fearsome presence.

How my ransomed soul exults with joy unspeakable and full of glory that since that time I have, at least in a measure, come to know Him as He really is! Do you think that we should be afraid of someone as gracious and merciful as our heavenly Father? Should we cringe before Him like a dog expecting a kick? What has God done to make us afraid of Him? He loves us! "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." (Jn. 3:16) He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world. He predestined us for Christ and sent Jesus to redeem us.

God said, "Oh that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear Me, and keep all My commandments always, that it might be well with them and their children forever." (Deut. 5:29) Here the Lord plainly says that He wants His people to "fear" Him. But He wants the same kind of fear that an obedient son has toward a loving father, "that it might be well with them." Moses said, "And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is today." (Deut. 6:24)

The fear that God desires as a continual attitude within His people is an awesome awareness – a profound knowledge of the infinite greatness of His power, His ability, His holiness, His wisdom, His purpose for and through our lives – and that He is the altogether righteous Judge. The fear of the Lord is overwhelming reverence for God. It is a profound respect mingled with awe, affection, and veneration. It is a reverential faith and trust in God. It is loving all that He loves and hating all that He hates. It is the adoration and admiration that desires to emulate Him and to reflect His glory.

Thus we read:

- “The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever.” (Ps. 19:9)
- “The fear of the Lord is to hate evil.” (Prov. 8:13)
- “In the fear of the Lord is a strong confidence.” (Prov. 14:26)
- “The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.” (Prov. 14:27)
- “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.” (Prov. 1:7)
- “The fear of the Lord tends to life.” (Prov. 19:23)
- “The fear of the Lord is the instruction for wisdom.” (Prov. 15:33)
- “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” (Ps. 111:10)

“Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.” (Heb. 12:28) God will never grant wisdom to the man whose soul is void of true reverence for God, for true reverence is true humility, and true humility places God’s will and God’s glory above all else. Without humility, wisdom only leads to pride. The glorious Kingdom of God is given in the power of the Holy Spirit only to devout and humble souls who seek His face in truth. Our exalted heavenly Father, full of power and wisdom and grace and truth, will not consent to walk with the arrogant and the scornful; neither will He be found in the midst of careless, irreverent, profane, or hypocritical men.

If deep within your heart you have a fervent desire to know God and to have part in the righteous government which He is bringing forth across the earth in this day,

you must first remove the shoes from your feet when you walk upon His holy ground. If ever you would receive the fullness of the seven Spirits of God; if ever you would stand upon Zion’s holy hill and share the glory of sonship with the exalted Lamb of God; you must first pray earnestly for grace whereby you may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. Walk softly and with the deepest love and respect when you enter the presence of Him before whom majestic, powerful angels cover their faces. The God who is your loving Father is also the architect and creator of the universe!

The victorious children of Israel sang of His majesty by the Red Sea, proclaiming, “Who is like unto You, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?” (Ex. 15:11) Isaiah, the holy prophet from whose lips had poured forth mighty utterances of prophetic truth, upon beholding the glory of the Lord, cried, “Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.” (Isa. 6:5) Every true revelation of God will mightily increase deep respect for our all-glorious Father. Any so-called revelation which produces lightness, frivolity, carelessness, or looseness of living is not a revelation from above but from beneath.

Even to consider the attributes of God fills the saints with reverence and godly fear. They bow in awe to discover that God is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, eternal, immutable, and infinitely compassionate in His loving-kindness and tender mercy. Such qualities do not dwell within our human nature for they do not exist apart from Him.

When our spiritual eyes behold and our spiritual minds begin to grasp the sacred mysteries of God's eternal purposes which in other ages were not revealed to men, but which are now unfolded to those who walk in humility before Him, then our love and reverence for our wonderful Father increases beyond words. Then the slightest flippancy or looseness before Him appalls our souls, causing us to cringe or grieve in spirit. Yes, wicked men who know Him not will wag their idle tongues to curse and blaspheme that holy name which is above every name, but let no idle word of lightness or disrespect soil our own lips or bring dishonor to Him before whom all creation will one day bow and confess on bended knee; "Jesus Christ is Lord," to the glory of God the Father!

The Spirit of the Fear of the Lord will be one of the remarkable signs of the sonship of the true saints in this day. It shall be a wondrous thing in this end-time ministry. The fear of the Lord includes faith as well as reverence. God's unlimited faith shall be in action as if He Himself were visibly acting. Along with manifestations of God's power, there shall be the reverence that has been so sadly lacking. Worldly men treat the things of God with such scorn, but the Spirit of the Lord shall be so evidenced through the sons of God that men shall tremble, realizing that they face the true and living God. "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people, saying with a loud voice, 'Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth...'" (Rev. 14:6-7)

## Jesus and the Fear of the Lord

Prov. 14:27; Mat. 4:4; 10:28; Jn. 2:4; 6:38;  
Acts 2:23-24; Heb. 4:15; 5:7; 10:7

Jesus is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. He is the Lamb in the midst of the throne, from whom proceeds the seven Spirits of God. He is first-born among many brethren. He is the head of the body which is yet to receive the full measure of that Spirit which He received of the Father in His exaltation and glorification at the right hand of God. He is the first-born of the new creation. He is the forerunner who entered in beyond the veil for us. He is the way, the only door to the Father. He is the life-giving vine. He is our example, the pattern Son, and He is also the Son of God upon whom first rested the fullness of the Spirit of the Fear of the Lord. May you now, dear one, be quickened by the Spirit to appreciate what that means.

Jesus had a fear of God! He loved God – no doubt about that. But how clear it is that He set the example for us concerning the fear of God. It was the fear of God that directed His fervent prayers through all His walk upon earth as a Son of the Father. It was the fear of God that led Him through crucifixion and onward to His resurrection, ascension, and exaltation above the heavens.

Jesus was the perfect embodiment of the wisdom of God, and because that is so, we know that He also had a fear of God, for "The fear of the Lord [YHWH, Jehovah] is the beginning of wisdom." (Ps. 111:10) When Jesus was faced with the reality of His own upcoming crucifixion, the Word tells us that "He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared." (Heb. 5:7)

Hear it! Jesus feared! The truth in this verse of Scripture is most remarkable. It tells us not only that Jesus “offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him who was able to save Him from death,” but it also tells us that He was heard! How can we say that He was heard when, in fact, He died? How was He then saved from death, if He died? Yes, He died. But the wonderful fact is that He did not remain dead. He was heard – for He was raised from the dead. Why was He raised from the dead? Because He feared! “He was heard in that He feared.”

Not that He feared the cross, not that He feared what man could do to Him, and not that He feared death, but that He feared God. Only He who knew by experience this principle could teach us as He did, saying, “Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Mat. 10:28) Fear Him who is able to create such conditions within the inner man, conditions in the mind, conditions in the external world that will destroy both the inner and the outer man and reduce him to the dust from which he was formed.

Jesus loved God. Because He loved God, He knew Him. Because He knew God, He feared Him. Because He feared God, He was heard. Because He was heard, He was raised up from among the dead and exalted unto the fullness of the glory of the Father. Can this mean that the fear of the Lord leads to life? “The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.” (Prov. 14:27) “In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence [faith].” (Prov. 14:26) The fear of the Lord leads to faith and faith leads to life.

When Peter speaks to the multitude, he refers to Jesus in these words, “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.” (Acts 2:23) Whenever wicked hands are doing awful things to God’s people, remember that they are on God’s mind, and those wicked men are fulfilling the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. Peter goes on, “Whom God has raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.” (vs. 24) This shows us that Jesus Christ rose from the dead for a most remarkable reason: it was simply impossible for death to hold Him. Why? Long before that resurrection day the Lord had declared, “I came down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.” (Jn. 6:38)

He came to do the will of God. In the will of God we have the highest expression of His divine perfection, and at the same time, the highest energy of His divine power. Creation owes its being and beauty to the will of God; it is all the manifestation of God’s will. In all nature, the will of God is done. In heaven the mighty angels find their highest blessedness in doing God’s will.

Man, the highest of creation, was also made to do God’s will. This is our created purpose, our “eternal purpose.” But being in the image of God, man was also give a free will. Why? For this reason: in order that he might have the power to choose of his own accord to do God’s will. Instead, deceived by the devil, man committed the sin of choosing his own will rather than God’s will. This is the root and the wretchedness of sin, and this is the power of death.

Jesus Christ became man to bring us back to the blessedness of doing God's will. The great object of redemption was to make us and our wills free from bondage to sin and to allow us again to chose to do the will of God. In His life on earth, Jesus showed us what it is to live only for the will of God; in His death and resurrection He won for us the power to live and do the will of God as He had done. "Lo, I come to do Your will, O God." (Heb. 10:9) These words, uttered through the Holy Spirit by the mouth of one of God's prophets long before Christ's birth, are the key to His life on earth. At Nazareth in the carpenter's shop, at the Jordan with John the Baptist, in the wilderness with Satan, in public with the multitudes, living and dying, it was this that inspired, guided, and gladdened Him; the will of the Father was accomplished in Him and by Him.

Let us not think that this cost Him nothing. He says repeatedly, "Not My will, but the will of the Father," to let us understand that there was in every deed, a denial of His own human will. In Gethsemane the sacrifice of His own will reached its height, but His death on the cross was only the final expression of what had rendered His whole life acceptable to the Father.

Iniquity is not that man has a creature-will different from the Creator's. Iniquity is that he clings to his own will when it is seen to be contrary to the will of the Creator. As man, Jesus had a human will, the natural will which belongs to the human nature. As man, He did not always know beforehand what the will of God was. He had to wait, and be taught of God, and learn from time to time what that will was. But when the will of His Father was once known to Him,

He was always ready to submit His own human will and do the Father's will. It was this that constituted the perfection and the value of His self-sacrifice. He continuously, daily, hourly, surrendered Himself as a man to live only for and in the will of God His Father. He was always ready, even to the sacrifice at Golgotha, to do that will alone. This is the supreme mark of sonship.

Nothing could motivate or control Jesus Christ except the will of the Father. Nothing else in the world could hold Him. Sin could not hold Him. He was "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." (Heb. 4:15) Satan could not hold Him. His response to Satan's temptation was, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'" (Mat. 4:4) His mother could not hold Him. He remained submitted to his parents until He was thirty, but after being anointed by the Spirit, He said, "Woman, what have I to do with you?" (Jn. 2:4) His own personal desires could not hold Him, "I came not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." (Jn. 6:38) The hatred of His enemies could not hold Him. The pleas or plaudits of His friends could not hold Him. So it followed naturally that death itself could not hold Christ either, because nothing else but the perfect will of the Father could hold Him!

When we see something wonderful come to pass we say, "Isn't that a wonderful thing that just happened." Just "happened"? No, that wonderful thing was only the fruit of a seed that may have been planted long before. Alternately, when a dreadful thing "happens," that is also the fruit of some seed that was planted long before.

It grieves my spirit when I perceive the planting of bad seeds of greed, gluttony, lust, anxiousness, doubt, selfishness, rebellion, or pride, because I know what those seeds will produce. After their natural fruit of sickness, tragedy, bitterness, hardness of heart, and death matures, you cannot do much about it anymore; it is just too late. Only a miracle of God's grace can forgive the sin and start the process of cleansing and healing, and even then, painful scars often remain.

Conversely, it rejoices my heart to see the planting of a good seed in the tender heart of a young saint. This seed always starts with an open heart to know and do the will of God, but it often evidences itself in renewed determination to forsake the ways of the world and cast oneself fully upon the Word of God as it has been revealed to him. Though this may recur many times in the young saint's walk with God, it remains the same basic choice: to cease eating fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and begin feasting anew on the tree of life.

When that good seed has matured and brought forth its fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, steadfast faith, teachableness, and self-control, you can do nothing about that, either, for nothing in heaven or earth or hell can shake the fruits of the Holy Spirit. That fruit always matures unto life eternal. And so the resurrection from the dead just had to happen as the fruit of Christ's life and obedience unto death. It is my deepest conviction that this is the foremost principle of overcoming in the lives of all God's sons. When nothing else can hold us except the will of the Father, then every enemy shall be under our feet – including that last enemy, which is death.

## **The Basis for the Fear of the Lord**

Gen. 1:26; 2:17; 3:10, 15; Ps. 30:5; Eccl. 12:13-14;  
Isa. 9:6-7; 55:8-9; Zech. 3:9; Rom. 11:20; Phil. 2:12;  
Jn. 3:30; 10:10; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 15:21-26;  
Eph. 1:9-10; 4:13; Heb. 2:14; Rev. 5:6

The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life. That is why He said to us, "Be not high minded, but fear," (Rom. 11:20) and why He also says, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (Phil. 2:12) Where there is no "fear and trembling" in the inner man, ego still sits in some measure on the throne, and where ego sits as the man of sin enthroned in God's temple, there also sits an invitation to God's judgments.

We must never forget where God is. "What, know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Cor. 6:19-20) God is to be glorified in our bodies, which are His temple. There must be glory to God not only in the highest, but in His temple, which we are. Where we fail to glorify God in His temple, know this: God in the highest will descend as a rod of iron upon us.

Does this mean that God our Father is a mean old man up in heaven with a big stick in His hand, ready to club us over the head and cast us into hell at one false move? Is this the basis of the fear of the Lord? NO!

In the beginning, Adam and Eve failed to exercise the proper fear and reverence of God. They took His command lightly and disobeyed it. Their disobedience produced within them a painful fear – blind terror – the chilling, shocking, paralysis of fright,

which caused them to run and hide from God's presence. Adam said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid..." (Gen. 3:10) Let me ask you, was God full of wrath, spewing angry vengeance toward Adam and Eve when He came and found them hiding in the garden? I declare to you that He was not! His response to them was more like a father, "Where are you, Adam? Come out from hiding. I haven't changed."

And when they came, He talked with them kindly. Yes, He had to punish their sin, but it was not in wrathful judgments; it was in mercy and compassion. He slew a lamb and clothed their nakedness. He gave them a marvelous promise of redemption.

His punishment was that they would experience the inevitable effects which self-love always brings on itself. God never said to Adam, "In the day that you eat of the tree of knowledge, I will kill you!" Neither did He tell Adam, "In the day that you eat of the tree of knowledge, I will cast you into hell, where you will suffer in unbelievable torment for all eternity!" Adam's death was not something God inflicted on him out of vengeance. No! A thousand times, no! God didn't kill Adam and Eve in wrath. He had forewarned them in intense love, "In the day you eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall surely die." (Gen. 2:17)

God knew they would die, for death and the curse are simply the "wages of sin." Sin's wages are not paid by God, but by the "father" of sin and of death, to whom man subjected himself when he sinned. "Since the children are flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise partook of the same; that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil."

(Heb. 2:14) Again, "The thief comes not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy; I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (Jn. 10:10) The wages of sin are paid by the devil. Death and the curse are inevitably reaped as a result of what the sinner has sown.

God came and told this sinning couple that they would have sorrow because of their sin: sorrow in the man's life, sorrow in the woman's life. Sorrow is an inner reaction, for we are inner people. Sorrow is the inner response to suffering. Because worldly men have fallen into false material concepts of life in its outer forms and have been brought into disruption and disharmony in their outer living by grab-and-hold, dog-eat-dog activities, life is one continual suffering: wars, diseases, poverty, anxiety, fearfulness, murders, and strife. Then they blame God and wonder why He has done this to them!

But they are on the wrong foot. God did not do it to them. The sorrow is man's problem, for sorrow is our inner reaction to suffering. Man suffers because of sin and self. We are an inner people. And when God comes within by the quickening power of His Spirit and changes our sorrow into inner joy, all our outer sufferings turn to praise!

So it was the Father's special mercy, not wrathful judgment, when He told Adam and Eve three times over that they would have sorrow. Why? Because their sorrow would lead to dissatisfaction with their earthly conditions so they would desire a better way. Thank God for sorrow! Thank God the world is fermenting, dissatisfied, restless, rebellious at its present conditions. That is its hope. That's the best thing God could predict for His fallen children.

Thank God, behind the sorrow and at its roots lies guilt for not being what we ought to be. Thank God for guilt! In our guilt, we try to blame God (or others) in the desperate hope that if we balance our guilt with enough blame, the sorrow will go away. But praise God, both the sorrow and the guilt remain, and even turn to depression or despair, as we try every other way but God's perfect way: through the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ and into His resurrection life.

The period in which sin is permitted has been a dark night to humanity, never to be forgotten; but the glorious day of divine favor and righteousness is being ushered in by the Lord in His glorious body of sons. The Sun of Righteousness shall arise and shine fully and clearly into and upon all, bringing healing and blessing, which will more than counterbalance the dreadful night of weeping, sighing, pain, sickness, and death in which the groaning creation has been so long. (See Isa. 60:1-3 and Mal. 4:1-3)

Well does the psalmist prophesy, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning." (Ps. 30:5) As though by instinct, the entire creation, groaning and travailing in pain, waits for, longs for, and hopes for the day. Men too long for it, as a future "golden age" of peace and joy. Yet men grope blindly, trying to achieve it through the "wisdom of this world" which is foolishness (1 Cor. 3:19), unaware of God's gracious purposes. Man's highest understanding of such a golden age falls far short of what God has in store for mankind. The Creator is preparing a "lavish banquet for all peoples" (Isa. 25:6) which will astound His creatures, and be exceedingly beyond what anyone could ever ask or imagine. (Eph. 3:20)

To His wondering creatures, looking at the length and breadth, the height and depth of God's love surpassing all expectation, He exclaims, "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. And the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon Him... and shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord; and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek [teachable] of the earth. He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth [God's Word], and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play on the hole of the asp... they shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. 11:1-9)

When God spoke the consequences of the Fall, there was also the pronouncement of deliverance. The deliverance is in the seed of the woman which would bruise the head of the serpent. God told the serpent, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; it shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." (Gen. 3:15) A superficial interpretation is simply that snakes and mankind would hate and try to kill each other. But is that all?

I believe it is much more, for physical realities often portray deep spiritual truths. What does the serpent's seed represent? It is the take-over of the human family by that false father who would express his nature of self-centeredness in them. Thus the seed of the serpent represents all of fallen mankind.

What is the seed of the woman? First, it is a prophecy of Messiah. But even more, it represents the take-over of the human family by our true Father, expressing the fullness of God's own nature and image in and through man. Jesus Christ was the first man to be so possessed by the fullness of God. Through the woman's seed He came, the One capable of destroying all the works of the devil and transforming the devil's bondslaves into His own love-slaves. Praise God! There are even now, at this present time, "many brethren" being conformed into His glorious image, the life of God coming into the woman's seed, that His life may be lived out in man. Through these, the promised deliverance shall be ministered to the whole creation.

When Adam sinned, he was possessed of a fear which caused him to run and hide from God's presence. Yet, all God offered him was mercy and abundant provisions of life. Adam was afraid of God because man's guilt projects wrath on God. This distorts our concept of God, as if He were a monster or a sadist. Unenlightened eyes still see the Old Testament as portraying an avenging, wrathful God, instead of as the unchanging God of love who shines through the Bible from creation in the first chapter, to the full sunlight of His love in the last chapter, when "The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come! ... Let [every] one who wishes take the water of life without cost.'" (Rev. 22:17, NASB)

Certainly there is wrath. God is indeed a consuming fire, burning up all of Satan's works and ways, and even his very nature. But God's wrath is only manifest in those who have the wrong relationship to Him, those who, either by choice or ignorance, are serving their father the devil. That wrath is not Him as He is, who is all love, whose mercy endures forever, who so loved the world that He gave Himself to redeem us.

The wrath is what He must appear to be to those who live counter to His nature and counter to their own created purpose. The wrath operates in them, not in Him. This wrath, like the discipline of a firm but loving father, is always a good thing! It is directed not at them, but at the sin that binds them and the sin nature that controls them.

For example, if I have a right relationship to an electric switch and turn it on as I should do, I get a pleasant light. But if I defy any warnings and foolishly stick my finger into the apparatus, I can get a terrible shock! The shock is what I feel in myself through my unlawful contact. Its purpose is not to punish me, it is to teach me wisdom about using electricity. Similarly, if I obey the rules of the road I may drive my car and enjoy a lovely trip across the country. But if I speed and disregard the warnings along the way, I may end up bloody and unconscious in the hospital. The car that nearly killed me was not an enemy to me, trying to destroy me. The car's injury was a result of my unlawful relationship with it. I may blame the car, but it is I who am at fault. Driver's education classes show films of such terrible tragedies, and the purpose is to make young drivers fear – not fear to drive, but fear to develop a wrong relationship to laws of safe driving.

So it was not God who hid from the disobedient couple, it was they who hid from Him. God did not come breathing out threats of wrath and damnation, yet they feared Him. They, in their guilt, projected on Him a rejection which was really in themselves. And this is the wrath of God, a wrath sent from a heart of deepest love, sending judgment and destruction on every false way, every false hope, every idol, every perversion of truth, so that the sinner might come to the end of himself and turn again and repent and be received into the beloved.

We must not fear God in thinking that He is mean, wrathful, demanding, exacting, vindictive, or ruthless. We are to fear God because of who He really is – omnipotent, omniscient, immutable, eternal, all-wise, just, compassionate, full of loving kindness and tender mercies, our Father! What this means is that we should sense the solemn majesty of our divine Creator and Father and respond to Him with reverential fear.

If you were to hold a formal invitation to meet with the queen of England or the president of the United States, wouldn't you be a little fearful just before you came into the presence of such an important person? You would know you really had nothing to fear, yet you would be very respectful and altogether reverent in the presence of such a famous individual, wouldn't you? Of course! And how much more glorious, majestic, and worthy is the awesome God and our Father above all earthly monarchs and presidents. We live every moment of our lives under the watchful care of God; He knows everything about us, for He has planned and purposed it from before the foundation of the world. How we ought to reverence Him and stand

in awe of His incomprehensible majesty, His divine power and wisdom, His matchless love and abounding grace! We need to give glory to Him not only with our voices, but in our actions and beings. By gladly obeying Him and reproducing His character in our lives, we glorify the One who has given us His life. Such a holy and reverential fear of the Lord is the Spirit in which Jesus walked and ministered throughout His earthly life, and the Spirit in which all sons of God walk.

There are some who tell us that we are not to fear God. Yet Jesus was delivered from death because He did fear. (Heb. 5:7) And He not only feared, but He taught us to fear. For example, He said, "I say to you my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear. Fear the One who after He has killed has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him! Are not five sparrows sold for two cents? And yet not one of them is forgotten before God. Indeed the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear; you are of more value than many sparrows... Do not be anxious for your life, as to what you shall eat; nor for your body, as to what you shall put on. For life is more than food, and the body than clothing... for all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek; but your Father knows that you need these things. But seek for His Kingdom, and these things shall be added to you. Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the Kingdom." (Lk. 12:4-32 NASB) The King James renders verse 32, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." He says fear not. Don't be anxious. Don't be afraid.

But did you notice: right in the middle of His exhortations to fear not, Jesus inserts the command to fear the One who has all power and authority in His hands, the One who holds the keys to heaven and hell, the One who gives life or death in a word, the One who is perfect in holiness, awesome in majesty, and faultless in all His righteous judgments. “Yes, I tell you, fear Him!”

Solomon, after he had run the whole gamut of human thought, finally arrived at the end of his thought with this, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.” (Eccl. 12:13) Why? “For God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.” (vs. 14)

“Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.” It is interesting to note that the words “is” and “duty” in this verse are in italics in the Bible. When a word is in italics it means that it does not appear in the original language and is supplied by the translators in an effort to make the meaning clearer. However, many times the translators are adding their human understanding which obscures God’s intent. It is sometimes good to read it omitting the man-inserted words. This verse then reads, “Fear God and keep His commandments, for this the whole of man.” The meaning thus becomes clear: the fear of God is the whole man, or, a man who truly fears God is a whole man – the full ideal of man, as God originally purposed him to be when He said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” (Gen. 1:26) Until now, the only such “whole man,” one who completely feared God and kept all His commandments

and will, was Jesus Christ. And now, He has paid the price, He has opened up the way, He has entered in that we may become whole men – bearing the image of God.

To fear God and keep His commandments was the end conclusion of Solomon’s thoughts – but the end of man’s thoughts proved to be the beginning of the thoughts of God, for it is written, “The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.” The end of man, then, and the beginning of God in a man are one and the same: the fear of the Lord. Man’s end is God’s beginning. “I must decrease, but He must increase.” (Jn. 3:30)

Jesus was faced with death – and yet He was saved from death in that He feared. Noah was faced with the same prospects of judgment that all the others of his day were faced with – however, moved with fear, he prepared an ark that saved himself and his household. (Heb. 11:7) It is, then, the proper fear of God that brings men into life.

The Spirit of the Fear of the Lord is one of the seven Spirits of God. Here is another picture of the location of these seven Spirits. “I will bring forth My servant the branch. For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes.” (Zech. 3:9) We know these seven eyes are the seven Spirits of God, (Rev. 5:6) and that the rock represents Christ. (1 Cor. 10:4) These seven eyes, or seven Spirits, are upon the rock, the Christ, the only place of stability. If you have a passion to be a true son of God in this momentous day, then find a secure, unshaken place in the Lord Jesus Christ and stay there. Don’t let anything or anybody move you. Set your face like a flint toward the glorious hope set before you and refuse to be moved. Press on, saints of God!

# Chapter 15 – The Spirit of the Fear of the Lord

## (Part 2)

### Introduction

In the previous chapter on the seventh Spirit of Sonship, the Spirit of the Fear of the Lord, we saw that the fear of the Lord has nothing to do with being afraid. The Spirit of the Fear of the Lord is from Jesus Christ, and Jesus does not have, nor does He impart, the spirit of fright! Jesus was not, and is not, terrified of His Father, nor does He give us that spirit of terror. “God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” (2 Tim. 1:7)

In the Scriptures, our word “fear” is translated from the Hebrew “yirah” and the Greek “phobos.” These words have two principal meanings: first, a threat of harm or pain which evokes a feeling of alarm or dread; and second, that awe and reverence which you feel in the presence of an eminent ruler. A child feels the first of these kinds of fear for a harsh and cruel parent, and the second for a parent who is good and loving, but who disciplines firmly and justly.

The kind of fear God desires to be a continual attitude within His people is like an awesome awareness of His infinite power and ability, His holiness, His wisdom, His grand purpose in our lives – and that He is the altogether righteous Judge. The fear of the Lord is reverence for Him. It is profound respect, awe, affection, and veneration. It is reverential trust in God, His character, and His ways, coupled with hatred of everything opposed to His character and His ways.

Our fear of God is not because we view Him as being wrathful, exacting, vindictive, mean, or implacable. We reverently fear Him just because He is the awesome God – omnipotent, omniscient, immutable, eternal, all-wise, just, compassionate, full of loving kindness and tender mercies – our Father! We sense the solemn majesty of our divine Creator and Father, and we relate to Him in reverential fear.

This kind of fear is positive fear which embodies awe and reverence. Positive fear is good, while negative fear is bad. Negative fear embodies terror – chilling, shocking fright. This is the fear that “God has not given us.” However, every person has been born into the physical world with a natural capacity for both these kinds of fear.

When you were a child, you no doubt developed many fears. Some were the result of childhood fantasies of your own; some the result of frightening stories you heard; some obtained from books or movies. Did you ever fear the dark? Ever walk along a dark street with the leaves blowing and the trees swaying and imagine all sorts of evil creatures reaching out to grab you? You no doubt received your quota of childhood fairy tales of goblins, trolls, ogres, giants, demons, witches, and fairies. Remember the time when you were a child and it stormed so violently that you ran to jump into bed with your parents? Remember how you used to hide your eyes when the chiller movie got to the most suspenseful moment?

Well, maybe not everybody remembers childhood fears, but most people had them. And some never got over them. Fears of heights, of depths, of water, fire, wind, rain, lightning, the dark, pain, sickness, accident, tragedy, or death are all commonplace in the hidden fears of millions of people.

Fear can be a powerful force! A soldier who is decorated for heroism on the battlefield may have acted through blinding fear. A person held in the grip of vague fears over imagined spiritual consequences can make vital and life-changing decisions motivated solely by their fears, as we shall see when we discuss fear religion. Alternately, even more than motivating people, the power of fear can block or immobilize them, freezing them from accomplishing their created purpose.

The words of Job have been often quoted, “For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me.” (Job 3:25) Job had a fear of certain things – and they happened to him. But this is not always the case. There have been millions of people who spend their entire lifetime fearing things which never happen to them. Many people’s fears are superstitious fears. For example, some go through life with a fear of a dread disease – and they never get it. Others live in fear that they will get in a car wreck – and never do. Others – people I have known and who have passed on now – lived in mortal fear of the Communists or a worldwide nuclear holocaust. But they lived out their full lives in needless fear. What good did all their worrying do? Most things people worry about never happen. This very fact may help us not to worry. And, if something is going to happen, it will happen whether we worry about it or not, so why worry?

Three times in Psalm 37, we are told to not fret. Don’t fret about evildoers (vs. 1) or because of the one who prospers in his way while carrying out wicked schemes (vs. 7) because (vs. 8) “it leads only to evildoing.” Psalm 37 is called the “Fret Not Psalm.” However, fretting, worrying, being anxious or fearful is only the negative side of the Psalm. Look at the contrast, “Trust in the Lord... Delight yourself in the Lord... Commit your way to the Lord... Rest in the Lord... Wait for the Lord...” (vs. 3, 4, 5, 7, 34)

I believe that worries and wrong fears actually prevent us from trusting the Lord. Fear and worry is the opposite of faith. How can we say we believe in a sovereign, all-powerful, loving, faithful and true God, and at the same time be anxious about how our troubled circumstances will turn out? How can we delight ourselves in the Lord, rest in the Lord, and wait for the Lord when we are all fearful about some problem we have? No, that spirit of fearful fretting is certainly not the Spirit of the Fear of the Lord.

### **The Fear of the Lord**

Deut. 5:29; Ps. 25:14; 33:8, 10-12, 18-19; 34:7, 9;  
Ps. 115:11, 13-14; 118:4; Eccl. 12:13  
Rom. 14:23; 2 Tim. 1:7; Heb. 3:12; 1 Jn. 4:16, 18-19

It is of utmost importance to all who love and seek after God in this momentous hour that we should understand clearly and certainly that there is only one thing in the whole universe that we should fear – and that is God Himself. Any other fear is sin, for, “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” (Rom. 14:23) God said, “Oh that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear Me... that it might be well with them, and with their children forever.” (Deut. 5:29)

The Bible contains scores of statements concerning the fear of God. Exceeding great and precious promises are made to them that truly fear the Lord. “Oh fear the Lord, you His saints, for to those that fear Him, there is no want.” (Ps. 34:9) “You that fear the Lord, trust in the Lord. He is their help and their shield. ... He will bless them that fear the Lord, both small and great. The Lord shall increase you more and more...” (Ps. 115:11, 13-14) “Let them now that fear the Lord say, that His mercy endures forever.” (Ps. 118:4) “Who is the man who fears the Lord? He will instruct him in the way he should choose. His soul will abide in prosperity, and his descendents will inherit the land. The secret [or counsel, or intimacy] of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant.” (Ps. 25:12-14) “Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him... to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.” (Ps. 33:18-19) “The angel of the Lord encamps round about them that fear Him, and he delivers them.” (Ps. 34:7) “Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.” (Ps. 33:8)

I emphasize again that there is only one thing in the universe that we should fear and that is God. Some seventy-five times in the Scriptures the Lord admonishes His people, “fear not.” This means that we are not to fear with a negative fear of worry or fright. Solomon, the marvelous man of wisdom, after he had run the whole gamut of human thought, finally arrived at the end of his thought with this summary: “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God and keep His commandments, for this [is] the whole [duty] of man.” (Eccl. 12:13)

The right kind of fear, then, is a holy awe and reverent love of God, coupled with a fear to do anything contrary to His Word, His nature, or His character. It is being aware of God’s power, holiness, and goodness – but it is not terror, nor unnamed fright, nor fear of consequences. “And we have known and believed the love that God has toward us. God is love; and he who dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear has torment. He who fears is not made perfect in love. We love Him, because He first loved us.” (1 Jn. 4:16-19)

### **Fear Religion**

Ps. 19:9; Prov. 1:7; 8:13; 14:26, 27; 15:33; 19:23;  
2 Tim. 1:7; 1 Jn. 4:7-10

It is a fact that most fear has its roots in the unknown. People fear what they cannot see, what they do not understand, or what they imagine might be. It’s no wonder, then, that since religion deals with the unseen realm – with spirit beings, life after death, eternity, future punishments and rewards – people’s fears play an important part in the world’s religions. Fears of coming wrath in judgment, fears of spiritual punishment and exquisite never-ending torments in hell – all these fears virtually dominate most of the religions on earth. You may have heard of Eastern religions demanding self-inflicted pain; beds of nails or hot coals; deliberate self-inflicted blindness resulting from staring at the sun; some require the sacrificing of human babies or the disfigurement of the human body, pilgrimages made on bleeding knees, painful penance for sin, employment of fetishes, or purchase of costly indulgences – all of this is dominated by fear.

Years ago, in ignorance, I too thought that fear was a legitimate tool to motivate men to turn to God. I understood that fear of consequences is a mighty powerful force. So I sought to effectively use this tool in the salvation of souls by the dramatic preaching of judgment, hell-fire and damnation. I knew that if I could be sufficiently articulate and persuasive, if I could paint a picture vivid enough, if I could make God wrathful and malevolent enough, if I could portray the judgment of God as being vengeful enough, if I could make eternity long enough, hell hot enough, the shrieks and groans of the damned hopeless enough, the torture heinous enough, then I knew I could fill the altars with sobbing, repentant sinners.

I confess that the psychology worked very well, and I was able to frighten a great number of people to the altars. However, I must also confess that we had quite a few “backsliders” out of the revival meetings of those days. We used to joke about certain churches, saying that if you got twenty-five people saved there you didn’t really get anyone saved, but if you got twenty-six saved, you knew somebody had really met God, as the same people were always running up to the altars and sobbing their way through to salvation in every revival meeting.

When men are moved to repentance by the emotion of fear, their repentance often lasts only as long as it takes for their stirred emotions to subside. On a Sunday night, when the flames of hell seemed so close they could hear them crackle, it was natural for them to run to the altar and sob and cry and beg God for mercy, making all kinds of promises and commitments to God until their conscience and emotions were soothed.

The following week, however, when death seemed far away and hell seemed unreal, it became difficult for these people to walk out the superficial consecration made in the emotional heat of the Sunday evening revival meeting. They would naturally slip back into the patterns of their normal lives.

Do I mean by this that we now belittle sin or minimize sin’s punishments in hell? Certainly not. God forbid! But I have come to see as clearly as crystal through God’s faithful dealings that there is, in all truth, only one thing in the entire universe that men need to come to fear, and that is God! Not to be afraid of Him, cringing before Him like a beaten animal, but by giving Him absolute reverence, obedience, and love.

It is not the fear of hell that is lacking in men, but the proper fear of the Lord. “the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever.” (Ps. 19:9) “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.” (Prov. 1:7) “The fear of the Lord is to hate evil.” (Prov. 8:13) “The fear of the Lord is the instruction for wisdom.” (Prov. 15:33) “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” (Ps. 111:10) “The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.” (Prov. 14:27)

If men fear hell they will seek to escape. That is selfish, self-centered fear. Its point is just to preserve self. Those “saved” through fear of hell are merely trying to save themselves, but whoever seeks to save his life will lose it. (Mat. 16:25) If men are saved because they are afraid of going to hell, then they have yet to come to truly know and love the Lord who delivers from such fears. If they fear the Lord, they will seek a relationship and harmony with Him, because the proper fear of the Lord is centered on Him, not self.

If fear of judgment was God's method of bringing men to righteousness, we should expect to find that the community where the flames of hell were the stock argument to woo men from sin would be noted for its spirituality and holiness of life. Witness, then, the Roman Catholic religion in the Dark Ages, holding over its adherents the constant threat of eternal damnation and filling its golden coffers from the pockets of her poor terrified sheep. Was there ever such righteousness and spirituality among them then, that a Luther should not be needed?

Fear is force. It is a weapon of man and of law. But love is more powerful. It is the all-conquering sceptre of God. It is love, not fear, that has bound the saints as willing loveslaves to His service. God's love does not force but entreats. It loves the sinner but hates the sin and anything that separates Him from His beloved. This love disciplines only that the chastened may, at last, partake of His holiness and inherit the Kingdom. This love overcomes men's fears. It will continue its perfect work until God is all in all. "... love is from God... for God is love. By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us..." (1 Jn. 4:7-10)

*"Love is the answer  
To bring life to this world, my friend.  
Love is the road map  
To restore all back into Christ again.  
Love conquers all our foes,  
All our lack in understanding Him.  
Love brings the unity  
Of the Son, that we may all be one." §*

## Things We Should Not Fear

Ps. 23:4; 34:1, 4; Heb. 13:5-6

I cannot emphasize too strongly that the only legitimate fear in the universe is the fear of the Lord. This is one of the seven Spirits of God which rested upon Jesus the head and now must come to rest upon His body. This is the Spirit emanating from the seven eyes of revelation and horns of power. Those walking by the same anointing as their glorious and exalted head will be known by the fact that they fear nothing but God their Father. Any who walk in fear (either fright or reverence) of anything but God need desperately to be delivered from their fears that they might raise their voices in chorus with the psalmist who declared, "I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth... I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears." (Ps. 34:1, 4) "For He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you. So that we may boldly say, 'The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.'" (Heb. 13:5-6)

Even in the "valley of the shadow of death," He has promised to be with us, so we need "fear no evil." (Ps. 23:4) We are not to fear evil. We are not to fear the wrath of men. We are not to fear sickness or tragedy. We are not to fear death. We are not to fear the devil. We are not to fear the judgment. We are not to fear hell. We are not to fear the antichrist or the beast. We are not to fear the tribulation. We are not to fear the world church systems of men. We are not to fear economic collapse. We are not to fear world government, Communists, the Illuminati, or the United Nations. Let us take a closer look at a few things the sons of God do not fear.

## Fear of Death

Mat. 28:6; Jn. 6:51; 11:17-27; 14:6; 2 Cor. 5:21;  
Col. 3:4; 2 Tim. 1:10; Phil. 3:20-21; Heb. 2:9, 14-15;  
1 Jn. 3:14; 5:9-13; Rev. 3:21; 13:8

There should be no fear of death in those who are called to be the sons of God. Jesus Christ "... has abolished death, and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." (2 Tim. 1:10) The Word of God is true. It is not a silly fairy tale. It is not a lie. Men are liars. God is true. So when God says, "Christ... has abolished death," we need to simply believe it and rejoice with joy unspeakable, full of glory!

Christ on Golgotha bore every sin of every sinner. He who knew no sin was made sin for us. (2 Cor. 5:21) And since He became our sin, when He died, our sin died. Then and there the unending death that had fallen on Adam and his race, fell on another. "The bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." (Jn. 6:51)

That is the free gift to every son of Adam who was ever born or ever will be, for death is actually abolished. To all who will believe and accept it, there is no longer any such thing as death. When Jesus died, sin died. When He arose, death died. The death of death became an actuality in very fact on the resurrection morn when the triumphant proclamation went forth, "He is not here, for He is risen!" (Mat. 28:6) It was effective even from the day that God closed Eden's gates, though not yet manifested. (Rev. 13:8) This is an established fact, merely because God's Word says it. Now the only question remaining is whether or not we are going to believe it. Walking with God is walking by faith and the battle is always over the Word. "Yea, has God said...?" (Gen. 3:1)

Jesus wept at the tomb of Lazarus. (Jn. 11:35) Why? Was He sad that Lazarus had died before He could get there? Was He sad for Mary and Martha, that they had just lost their dear brother? Was He sad that He had just lost a faithful disciple and friend? Was He sad for Lazarus, for a life cut short and so many unfulfilled goals? Or for his family and friends who loved and needed him?

Not at all. Jesus saw through all that. Jesus wept because he saw the multitude lost and hopeless, enslaved by their fear of death. Their faith in death was huge, like an overwhelming flood, while their faith in life was smaller than a mustard seed. Somehow, He had to break their faith in death and offer them the hope for faith in life instead.

Jesus explained it to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" (Jn. 11:25-26) What He was saying is, "Dear Martha, your faith is fastened on the wrong thing. I am life, and life is more powerful than death. Just put your faith in Me, and you won't have to be concerned about death."

Then all Jesus needed to do was speak the words, "Lazarus, come forth!" and life overcame death, just like that. You see, Jesus knew even then, even before He died and rose again, that life had won the victory!

Now someone is going to question the foregoing statements and ask why it is that, if death is abolished, men continue to die. Men who have received the gift of life do not continue to die! Oh, their bodies go to the grave. We call it natural death. But it is not death. Not when you see them seated on the right hand of glory by the eyes of faith!

Most men are already dead while they walk around on two feet. The only living ones are those inspired by the Spirit to see Jesus with the eyes of faith. “And you has He quickened [made alive] who were dead in trespasses and sins.” (Eph. 2:1) “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.” (1 Jn. 3:14)

The Scripture states that Jesus “tasted death for every man.” (Heb. 2:9) He not only tasted the death of His physical body, but He tasted what death really is, sin. “The sting of death is sin...” (1 Cor. 15:56) This is why He not only died for us but was also “made sin” for us. (2 Cor. 5:21) He tasted the actuality of death! Death is a condition, a state of being. Jesus tasted even this death for us. Mark carefully, He only tasted it. He remained in death but three days. He merely sampled it. But He sampled it in the place of every son of Adam; praise God! Then He arose and abolished death, conquering it by the awesome power of His eternal life!

Death is abolished. And thus we read, “This is that testimony – that evidence: God gave us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who possesses the Son has that life; he who does not possess the Son of God does not have that life. I write this to you who believe... so that you may know that you already have eternal life.” (1 Jn. 5:11-13)

Thank God! Oh blessed deliverance; oh wonderful freedom! We know that death is abolished, that we have passed from death into life, and regardless of what may happen to this old earthly mortal house in which we have our temporary residence, I can assure you in all certainty that we shall not die! “And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?” (Jn. 11:26)

Loud are the professions and boundless the claims of myriad apostate orders and cults and “isms.” They are full of words. They have their formulas for attaining to a ‘higher plane.’ Long and tedious are their meditations, mindless insipid repetition their chants and prayers. But here, in the lowly way in which the Master trod, is reality. Here is life itself – not an endless array of theories concerning life and how to attain it, but the actual possession – we have it! Bless His name! How did we come to possess it? Simply by possessing its Author by faith.

Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” (Jn. 14:6) When we are filled with Him, filled with His Spirit, then we are filled with the life which He is, “Christ who is our life.” (Col. 3:4) Praise God! Death is abolished! The fear of death has been destroyed. “Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” (Heb. 2:14-15)

But what about this physical shell that is our earthly home? Again, see it by eyes of faith. Even it shall be transformed. Jesus, our head and pattern, came forth from the grave in a resurrected and glorified body which arose imperishable, immortal, full of glory, honor, and power. (1 Cor. 15:35-58) That is why “our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we eagerly await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall transform our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the power that He has even to subdue all things unto Himself.” (Phil. 3:20-21)

## Fear of Satan

Num. 21:6; Isa. 8:13; Mat. 28:18; Jn. 8:44; 17:2;  
Rom. 6:16; Heb. 2:14; 4:9-10; 10:31; 12:28-29;  
Eph. 4:27; 6:11; James 4:8; Pet. 5:8-9; 1 Jn. 4:4, 18

Many Christians live their lives in fear of what the devil has power to do to them. To hear them talk, the “old devil” is always “after them.” With no fear of contradiction, I declare to you that there is not one single verse of Scripture telling us to fear Satan. God’s Word warns us of Satan the devil. “Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.” (Eph. 6:11) It urges, “... do not give the devil an opportunity [a foothold, a place].” (Eph. 4:27, AMP) It tells us to resist him. “Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” (James 4:8) “Be sober; be vigilant [alert, watchful]; because your adversary the devil, walks about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour; whom resist steadfast in the faith [a calm, patient assurance], knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.” (1 Pet. 5:8-9) But the Bible never says to fear him.

Through the years, I have learned something of what it means to resist Satan “steadfast in the faith,” in that calm and patient assurance. In past years of missionary work, we walked in darkened lands where demons stalk, where every kind of demonic activity operates, where mediums, witch doctors, voodoo, and such powers abound. These powers are so prevalent in some countries that it is quite common to move into a house inhabited by evil spirits, where objects move about, floating through the air, and demons dance at night upon your bedstead, shaking the bed as you sleep, trying to instill fear.

Many of our missionary friends have repeatedly experienced such occurrences. I can testify that God graciously gave us that calm, patient assurance to resist the devil and all demonic powers – to know that they are bound even in our presence – to declare that they cannot dwell where we dwell, they cannot manifest where we live – to believe that even at our presence they must flee. Through our years on the mission field, Satan’s spirits did not hang around where we lived, and they did not bother us with their petty manifestations by which they frighten the fearful and through which they gain the reverence of the weak and ignorant. I do not say this boastfully, but I do declare that by the spirit of grace and faith in the power of our glorious God, I am not afraid of the devil.

It is high time for all of God’s saints to learn that Satan is nothing more than a bag of wind. He has absolutely no power over any child of God, that is, unless that one chooses to give way for him. “Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He also Himself took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.” (Heb. 2:14) The Amplified Bible renders this, “Since, therefore, these His children share in flesh and blood – He Himself in a similar manner partook of the same nature, that by going through death He might bring to naught and make of no effect him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.” “... the devil... is a liar, and the father of it.” (Jn. 8:44) All his silly manifestations are lies. But God is true. And when God says that through His death Jesus Christ destroyed the devil, we need to believe it and walk in the liberty of the truth!

Christ arose victor over every foe, and if we are serving Him and yielding to Him then He is our Master and not another, for we are servants of the one to whom we yield ourselves to obey. (Rom. 6:16) Thus all who are continually complaining of their lack of victory are merely admitting that they have not laid hold on the provision, “greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.” (1 Jn. 4:4) Furthermore, “fear has torment.” Therefore, whoever is afraid of the devil or anything else is not made perfect in love; for “perfect love casts out fear.” (1 Jn. 4:18)

All who are living in constant dread of Satan and his devices are trying, themselves, in their own strength, to wage a warfare that was won for them two thousand years ago. These need to repent, forsake their shame, and accept the one and only victory. They need to come into God’s rest. (Heb. 4:9-10) They need to cease their own vain striving, yield themselves completely into the hands of the victor, and then go forward in His strength. May the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation from God give us eyes to see and hearts to understand that it is a shame for the people of God to have any fear of the devil or his power. The God of omnipotence and glory has commanded us, “Sanctify the Lord of hosts Himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread.” (Isa. 8:13)

Christ is King. He rules, and not the devil. Before He ascended He stated, “all power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.” (Mat. 28:18) “All power” means “all power.” It leaves no room for Satan to have some power. And this unbounded power is not just a recent acquisition. Before Jesus ascended, He petitioned the Father to glorify Him with the glory which He had before the

world was. (Jn. 17:5) The glory and power which He now possesses, He also possessed before time began. So we have no time for people who serve a puny god who is so weak and timid that he runs impotently from before Satan’s power. And neither do God’s saints have to run from Satan! Oh, that God’s people might once and for all learn this one truth, “Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world!” (1 Jn. 4:4)

Some teach that God saves and the devil destroys. But the devil cannot destroy anyone – without God’s permission! God is sovereign. God “created the destroyer to destroy.” (Isa. 54:14) After saving His people out of Egypt, God destroyed those who disbelieved, not the devil. The angels that kept not their first estate, God cast them down, not the devil. When Israel sinned, “God sent fiery serpents among them that bit them and destroyed them.” (Num. 21:6) It wasn’t the devil that kept them out of the promised land for forty years. God kept them out.

The old traditional idea is, “You try to live for God, and the devil is after you trying to drive you to hell.” But once God calls you and you belong to Him, whatever happens to you from there on comes from Him, not the devil. “I am confident of this very thing, that He who begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 1:6) So we need not be afraid of the devil; he can do nothing to us at all. But we do need the fear of the Lord in our hearts. “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” (Heb. 10:31) “Therefore since we receive a kingdom that cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire.” (Heb. 12:28-29)

## Fear of the End-times

Dan. 2:21; 7:18; Ps. 46:1-3; 91:1, 5-9; Isa. 25:9;  
Lk. 21:25-26; Jn. 19:10-11;  
2 Tim. 1:7; Phil. 1:27-29

There is a highway which runs north through southern Arizona, New Mexico and into Colorado. It is numbered Highway 666. We cross it when we drive from El Paso, Texas to Phoenix, Arizona. I commented to Lorain one time that I wondered how many people are afraid to drive that route because it has the number of antichrist. Later I learned from a brother that many people actually would rather not drive this highway because of its number. He also knows people who are convinced that they should drive especially carefully while on this road.

Of course it is always sound judgment to drive carefully, but why on Highway 666 any more than on Highway 66, or Highway 90, or any other? Obviously, Highway 666 has nothing to do with the mention of 666 in Revelation 13. They are entirely different things, the only similarity being the number. Yet often, superstition causes people to worry senselessly. May the Lord thoroughly cleanse all who would be sons of God from all such silly superstitions!

You would be amazed to realize how much plain old superstition God's precious saints have in regard to end-time events. Some people become fearful around every election time. I heard one brother in Florida in 1960 predict that if John F. Kennedy won the election, the pope would rule the United States and every Bible-believing church would be closed up before his term was out. I heard of another preacher who predicted something similar. When Kennedy won the election this man had a heart attack and

almost died! I knew some lovely people who campaigned "for God and Goldwater." They believed that unless Barry Goldwater won the 1964 election, the great tribulation would fall upon the world. (He didn't, and it didn't, needless to say.) I know others who, because of fear of the beast government or New World Order or some other prophesied catastrophe, sold their homes and moved to a remote area which was said to be a "safe" place. Their lives would have been happier and more productive for God's Kingdom if they had stayed right where they were.

Too often people become fearful about what some world leader might do. But when Pilate said to Jesus, "Know you not that I have power to crucify you, and have power to release you?" Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against Me, except it were given you from above." (Jn. 19:10-11)

I do believe in casting my vote in each election as God leads, and there are some Christians who certainly have been called of God to enter the political arena. But I have come to see that there is really little point in becoming all worked up or anxious over the carnal politics of "this present evil world," as though my vote will preserve the world from the Communists, or from the beast, or from the tribulation. I still believe that it is the Most High God who "changes the times and the seasons. He removes kings and sets up kings. He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with Him." (Dan. 2: 21-22) Yes, I know. God uses people. If you are one whom God has called to serve in the political realm, then nothing I have to say here will dissuade or offend you, as long as you are aware that you are serving the Lord and not a political system!

There are many preachers, even in the end-time message, sad to say, who specialize in preaching fear instead of the glory of God. These suppose they must always tell the bad side of things. They wildly speculate about world events, presidents, economic collapse, the antichrist, and so on, supposing that every national or world crisis portends the end, and that every natural catastrophe signals the imminence of the rapture. With each new election or crisis, they suspect a vast conspiracy. If they don't like Jews, they blame on them all the trouble in the world. Or it is the Communists – anyone they don't like is branded a Communist. Or they blame the United Nations, some minority group, the Illuminati, the world bankers, computer systems, or the Catholics. They continually live as if we're on the brink of Armageddon, and apparently feel they should preach their fears so they will have plenty of company.

One brother said in a meeting with us in 1971 that the “beast government” would rise up in the earth and take over the United States within three or four years. Though many years have passed since then, he has continued to preach and predict that the beast government will rise up and take over the United States in three or four years. One wonders when his “three or four years” will finally come to an end!

Repeatedly, for the past eighteen years, I have heard brethren prophesying that “the tribulation will begin this year,” or “we will get our glorified bodies this year,” or “the sons of God will be manifested this year,” or “the Millennium will begin this year,” or worst of all, “the rapture will come this year, and you'd better change your ways today or you'll be left behind!”

Well, all the dates have come and gone, and none of those things have happened. My earnest prayer is that God will deliver His people, especially those who have received a revelation of the glorious truth of sonship and the end-time purposes of God, from this carnal and soulish sensationalism. I am glad that all the dates and predictions have failed, not because I want to label anybody as a false prophet, but because I know deep down within my spirit that the majority of God's people (myself included) simply are not ready for those things to happen. Be honest, if the rapture were to occur today, would you be ready? Have you purified yourself as He is pure? (1 Jn. 3:3) My overall sense is that the Bride has not yet “made herself ready” by clothing “herself in fine linen, bright and clean, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.” (Rev. 19:7-8)

I am not saying there are no troubles in the world or that we are not living even in the very last of the last days. I am not saying that there is no threat from Communism, or that the rule of the beast is not in some way beginning to take shape, or that the fearsome day of the Lord is not at hand, or that national and international events in this hour are not related to prophecies in Daniel and Revelation. But I see it is a question of where the emphasis should be placed and in what spirit the Word should be ministered.

Paul said to think on things that are pure, lovely, and of good report. “And the peace of God, which passes understanding, shall guard your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.” (Phil. 4:7-8) The Spirit of the Fear of the Lord always ministers peace to our hearts and minds because it guards and protects us from all other fears.

Not that it is wrong to speak of those things of darkness that are coming upon the earth, but if we dwell unduly on them, or if teaching them ministers a spirit of fright, anxiousness, or apprehensiveness among the Lord's people, then that teaching is not of God's Spirit. Fright is not of God, brethren! How much better to spend our time and energy edifying the body of Christ, declaring those things that enable God's saints to be full of faith and the Holy Spirit, strong and victorious, confident and courageous – holy!

Terrible may be the hour which is upon us, yet there is absolutely no need for alarm in the heart of any saint of God. There is no need to fear – only a need for understanding and godly concern. Jesus warned us in detail of end-time catastrophes and tribulations, but then added, “When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draws nigh.” (Lk. 21:28) We should rejoice when we see these things coming to pass, not out of a cynical, careless, or reckless attitude, but because we know that the impending collapse of this present world order is like a trumpet call heralding the coming of the Kingdom which shall never be destroyed, over which Christ and the sons of God will reign. The antichrist “... made war with the saints and prevailed against them until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Most High... Then the sovereignty, the dominion, and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Most High. His Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom. ...The saints of the Most High shall take the Kingdom and possess the Kingdom forever...” (Dan. 7:21-27, 18)

“Only conduct yourselves in a manner worth of the gospel of Christ... standing firm in one Spirit, with one mind... in no way alarmed by your opponents – which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too, from God.” (Phil. 1:27-29, NASB) In the King James, verse 28 reads “... in nothing terrified by your adversaries,” and in the Amplified Bible, “... do not for a moment be frightened or intimidated in anything by your opponents and adversaries.” In all these things be not frightened, fearful, anxious, startled, doubtful, threatened, or anything else that would keep you from standing firm in faith. For your steadfast faith is a “sign of their destruction.”

We do not have our heads stuck in the sand like the proverbial ostrich, pretending that the hour is not dark and treacherous. But we will not fear; we will not be terrified of the night, for, though we are in the night, we are not of the night. “When they say, ‘Peace and safety’ then sudden destruction comes upon them... But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you as a thief. You are all children of light, and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness.” (1 Thes. 5:4-5)

“He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow [covering, protection, care] of the Almighty. ... You shall not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flies by day; nor for the pestilence that walks in darkness; nor for the destruction that wastes at mid-day. A thousand shall fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come nigh you... because you have made the Lord my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place.” (Ps. 91:1, 5-7, 9)

Jesus outlined the terrible events of this end-time, saying that there would be “upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them for fear and for looking on the things which are coming...” (Lk. 21:25-26) This can easily point to this present time, for never before has there been such widespread fear on the part of the people, especially the leaders, as there is today. Never before such a high rate of heart attacks triggered by the unbearable stress of these perplexing times. Jesus likened this to the roaring of the sea and the waves – a very apt symbol indeed of the restless, discontented, surging masses of mankind today as they strive hopelessly to avert the calamities which they fear on every side. They know not that these calamities are inexorably brought by the onrushing tide of human selfishness and implemented by ghastly instruments of destruction provided by the very science that boasts it is leading the world into utopia.

The prophet David also foretold this time in which we are living, and like Jesus, he too likened the chaos of this present evil world to the relentless lashing of the sea and waves, as the clamorous demands of men and nations strike out against the bulwarks of a civilization that was once thought to be impregnable. David’s prophecy is addressed to those who have faith in the wonderful promises of God, and of these he declares, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.” (Ps. 46:1-3)

“We will not fear!” declares the prophet. We will not fear though the earth (social order) be removed. We will not fear though the mountains (strong kingdoms) be carried into the midst of the sea (brought down by raging, surging masses of Godless humanity). We will not fear though the waters (peoples) be troubled. We will not fear though the mountains (kingdoms) shake. There is no place to hide – no “safe area” unto which to flee. But – we will not fear. Hallelujah! For God is our refuge.

See that you do not fear. People write me from time to time, asking whether or not they should join some group who are going to some “wilderness” hideout. My answer is to stay clear of all such foolish schemes. The idea of gathering up a group of people and fleeing to a wilderness hideout is a childish notion that can only end in confusion, loss, and heartbreak. Some want to know if they should buy acreage in some “safe” place where they can establish a community and weather out the storm of coming tribulation. While moving farther away from the great metropolitan centers of sin and corruption certainly has its advantages, let me assure you that there is no such thing as a safe area in any geographical spot of this sin-cursed world! Beloved ones, there is only one truly safe hiding place, “in Christ,” and that is wide open to us all. All the great sonship promises of the 91<sup>st</sup> Psalm are made, not to those hiding away in the woods, but to those that dwell in the secret place of the Most High, who say, “The Lord is my refuge and my fortress – my God; in Him I trust!” For, “He shall cover me with His feathers, and under His wings do I trust; His truth is my shield and buckler.” (Ps. 91:2, 4)

Daniel didn't have to find a wilderness hideout to escape the lion's den. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego didn't flee to some desert spot to escape the fiery furnace. Noah "passed through" the waters of the flood and was delivered. The children of Israel never needed any fortress to protect them from any enemy, regardless how powerful or formidable, as long they made God their refuge and strength. (And their strongest fortresses did them no good when they forsook Him!)

It is neither right nor necessary for men to sell their belongings and go away to some hidden place where they hope to escape the tribulation. Such schemes are usually the product of some deluded fellow full of fears. I assure you that the spirit which motivates those who follow after such "revelations" (schemes) is the spirit of fear. It is not from God! It is only when "doctrines of demons" begin to creep into a person's thinking that various kinds of dark fears emerge. Ideas about "fleeing" stem from fear of physical harm or martyrdom. When a person dwells on his physical protection, he has stopped thinking on "those things which are above," and is far more concerned, for the moment, on "those things which are beneath," his earthly, mortal existence. Such a person is reasoning from fear, and not from faith.

Fear religion is everywhere, alas, even in the camp of the saints. Satan is the author of all fear, except the fear of the Lord. When the prophets of doom prophesy destruction upon your area, those moved by the spirit of fear will sell their home and flee! But if your life is motivated by the fear of the Lord, you will wait on God, try the spirits, (1 Jn. 4:1) and then make your judgment out of the witness of the Holy Spirit in your own heart.

Mark well, my beloved brethren, this difference between the spirit of fear and the Spirit of the Fear of the Lord. Mark well the difference in the results. True prophets of the Lord at times prophesy of judgment. But in receiving the message, we react either out of fear of the judgment or out of reverence of the Lord. How we walk in this hour shows which company we are in: the company of the sons of God, upon whom rests the seven Spirits of God, or the company of them that "draw back unto perdition." (Heb. 10:39) "He who overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son. But the fearful and unbelieving... shall have their part in the lake of fire..." (Rev. 21:7-8)

A dear brother has so well written in this connection, that I feel led to quote:

"No need for panic, for hasty action – you can well afford to wait for God. He goes before you, He goes with you, He fights for you, and He remains right with you, and all with the purpose of your ultimate salvation. He is bringing forth many sons unto glory, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Our salvation is of first priority in His purpose. Wonderful! The angelic hosts are commissioned to minister for those who are heirs of salvation. All creation groans and travails together awaiting the birthing of the sons of God. Everything in the universe is directed towards this event in God's plan of the ages. Why then should we tremble – make haste in some fearful, panic-motivated action to try and save ourselves? He will save us, 'And in that day it shall be said, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.'" (Isa. 25:9)

# Chapter 16 – The Seven Spirits of God and the Work of Judgment

## Introduction

“And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as having been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.” (Rev. 5:6)

The seven Spirits of God is a most enlightening subject in the portentous days in which we live. It is interesting to note that all the Scriptures directly alluding to the seven Spirits of God are found in the three books of Isaiah, Zechariah, and Revelation. These are all prophetic books. Isaiah is the book of redemption – and certainly we are anticipating a great redemption (salvation) to be revealed in these last days. (1 Pet. 1:5) Zechariah was a great prophet of restoration – and soon we shall witness the glorious “period of the restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.” (Acts 3:21) The book of Revelation is the one book of prophecy in the New Testament – it is the Revelation of Jesus Christ and of His Bride, the church. It reveals the unfolding of God’s plan during the church age, through the age of the Kingdom of God, and even on into the distant “ages to come.” (Eph. 2:7) So, in these books in which God deals with the subject of the seven Spirits of God, there is an indication of their three-fold import: redemption, restoration and revelation.

In the many Scriptures we have studied thus far, we have seen that it is Jesus Christ who has the seven Spirits of God. (Rev. 3:1) The location and source of the seven Spirits is in Christ and before the throne. (Rev. 4:5; 5:6) But while Christ and the throne are the center and source of the seven Spirits, the scope of the ministry of the seven Spirits is shown in the last phrase of Revelation 5:6, “... the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.” This shows that the ministry of the seven Spirits is specifically related to the fulfilling of God’s purposes in the earth. Let us not forget, in this connection, that the seven Spirits of God rest ultimately not only upon our exalted Lord and head in heaven, but also upon His glorified body on earth.

As the anointed body of Christ enters into the fullness of the seven Spirits of God in this last hour, great and glorious blessings shall surely pour forth upon the earth-realm. We shall understand as never before what John means when he speaks of the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. The time is at hand when the body of Christ, that glorious company of the sons of God, shall minister as none have ever ministered. What will make their ministry so unique and transcendent? The seven Spirits of God in and through them! We have seen the gifts of the Spirit in operation, and we thank God for them, limited as they have been, but soon we will see the seven Spirits of God operate in fullness within the sons of God.

We have not yet seen this, despite the claims of some who presume that they have already entered into the fullness. For those who qualify for that mighty company of overcomers there awaits the Spirit given without measure to them, leading into the unimagined and as yet incomprehensible ministry of the seven Spirits of God.

To fully understand the ministry of the seven Spirits of God, we need to go to Isaiah and consider the great work of judgment of these seven Spirits. “The Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge and of the Fear of the Lord; and shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord; and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins... They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” (Isa. 11:2-5, 9)

In these verses we see that the principle work of the seven Spirits is judgment. “He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes... with righteousness shall He judge the poor... and reprove with equity for [in favor of] the meek of the earth... He shall smite the earth [natural realm] with the rod [authority] of His mouth [word]...” All these represent the wonderful accomplishments of the seven Spirits of God through the sons of God.

## **The Work of Judgment**

Ps. 43:1-2; 75:6-7

When we come to the thought of God’s judgment, we approach a subject upon which there has been a fathomless sea of ignorance and misunderstanding. Contrary to popular opinions of Babylon’s religions, there is no such thing as a general judgment for all men. Such a doctrine is pagan in origin and flows from the philosophies of demons. The idea that there is in the future one particular time and place in which all created beings shall be brought before the bar of divine justice and consigned to eternal bliss or eternal torment is contrary to the Word of God.

The view usually entertained whenever one hears the words, “Judgment Day” is of Christ coming to earth, seated upon a great white throne, from which He summons every sinner before Him to be judged, amidst great convulsions of nature – earthquakes, opening graves, rending rocks, and falling mountains; that the trembling sinners will be brought from depths of everlasting woe to hear their many sins rehearsed, only to be returned to an eternal and merciless doom of torture; and that the saints will be brought from heaven to witness the misery and despair of the damned, to be vindicated because of their faith in the Savior, and to return to heaven for eternity. Sadly, many saints even live in the fear that they may appear on “the Judgment Day” as one to be judged. I do not hesitate to say that this is a very crude conception, out of harmony with the overall scriptural picture of judgment. This distorted picture follows from a too literal interpretation of a few passages of Scripture which are only understood by the Spirit, while ignoring many other passages.

There are far more judgments than most people realize. The fact is, the Bible speaks of many judgments. Some judgments are past, some are continuously present, and some are yet future. So it is misleading to speak of “the judgment” as though it were only one event limited to some time in the future. A careful and prayerful study of the Word will show that there are judgments of unholy angels, of Satan, of Israel, of cities, of nations, of sin itself, of death, of the believer, of servants, of sons, of unbelievers, and so on. They each take place at different times and in different surroundings. We will look at some of these in detail in just a bit.

Before proceeding, however, we need to understand exactly what is meant by the word “judgment.” Judgment is translated in the Old Testament primarily from the Hebrew word “mishpat” which just means “a verdict.” It may be either favorable or unfavorable. Most people consider only the negative aspect of judgment, the unfavorable verdict, unto wrath and condemnation. It should take only a moment’s reflection, however, to see that the same judge who sentences one man to pay a fine and another to die in the electric chair, may suspend the sentence of a third man and declare yet a fourth man “not guilty” – acquitted.

It is plain that different “judgments” or “verdicts” may come from the same judge. Thus, the work of the judge is not merely to condemn the guilty and mete out sentences, but to weigh all the facts and circumstances in each case and render a just verdict, favorable or unfavorable, as the case may require. By law, neither the wrath of the judge against the crime nor his partiality regarding the accused should alter the judgment.

The “judge” of a beauty contest does not condemn or damn any of the contestants who fail to receive the highest recognition. He merely renders a “verdict” as to whom, in his estimation, is “the fairest of them all.” Yes, the others are “put down,” but only by comparison to the one who is honored. The psalmist spoke of this when he said, “For promotion comes neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge. He puts down one, and sets up another.” (Ps. 75:6-7) At another time, David implores the Lord for a favorable verdict, praying, “Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation, for You are the God of my strength.” (Ps. 43:1-2)

But the word “judgment” signifies even more than the rendering of a verdict. It includes the idea of a trial, as well as the decision based upon that trial. This is true not only of the English word “judgment”, but also of the Greek word from which it is translated in the New Testament. In the Greek New Testament there are a number of terms used in connection with the judgments of God. Each is based on the “kri” stem of “krino” which means “I judge.” There is the word “krisis” from which we derive our English word “crisis” and which carries basically the same meaning. It denotes an experience and time of crucial testing, and has reference to the experience one undergoes out of which the decision, or judgment, is made. “Krima” relates to condemnation of the one who did the “crime.” “Krites” and “kritikos” both speak of the judge and his “critical” decision, while yet another Greek word, “kriterion,” refers to the basis for his decision or sentence, which translates to “criterion” in English.

## Past Times of Judgment

Gen. 2:17; 6:5-7; 19:14; Isa. 14:3-6, 17; 47:6 ff  
Jer. 25:17-31; 51:36; Ezk. 5:8; 7:19; Dan. 5:1-4;  
Joel 2:28-31; Obad. 1, 15-16; Lk. 21:22; Acts 2:16-20;  
Rom. 1:18; 5:18; 1 Cor. 15:21-22; 1 Jn. 2:2; Jude 7

The first judgment (trial and sentence) was at the beginning, in Eden, when the whole human race, as represented in its head, Adam, stood on trial before God. The result of that trial was the verdict – guilty, disobedient. His sin was deemed worthy of punishment and correction; and the penalty inflicted was death – “Dieing you shall die.” (Gen. 2:17, margin) And so it is that “In Adam all die.” (1 Cor. 15:21-22)

Most have never thought of this as a judgment day for mankind, but such it was, for there was a trial, a sentencing, and the sentence was, as we all know, fully carried out. That trial time in Eden was the world’s first judgment day, and the decision of the Judge has ever since been enforced. Again we read, “The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness of men.” (Rom. 1:18) This wrath of God may be seen in every funeral procession. Every tomb and every grave stone is a witness to it. It is felt in every ache and pain, in every tragedy and sorrow, in every frustration or torment, in the ignorance, poverty, and fear we see daily around us – all of which are the results of the first trial and sentence – the righteous sentence of God, that we are unworthy of the life and blessings originally provided for one created in the very likeness of God.

But, praise the Lord! Mankind is to be recovered from the sentence of that first trial, for the penalty was not inflicted forever, only until the Redeemer should come and pay it, by offering Himself as the payment.

So it is written of Jesus, “Now we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.” (Jn. 4:42) “The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I give for the life of the world.” (Jn. 6:51) “God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.” (Jn. 3:17) “Therefore as by the offence of one [Adam], judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of One [Christ] the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.” (Rom. 5:18) “And He is the propitiation [payment] for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.” (1 Jn. 2:2) “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not counting their trespasses against them; and He has committed unto us [the saints] the word of reconciliation.” (2 Cor. 5:19) Thus we see the scope of man’s first judgment and the provision for his release from the penalty inflicted. Bless His name!

There have been many other judgments beyond this general judgment that fell upon man in the beginning. At various times in the past, God has called peoples and nations to account for their actions and executed His judgments by bringing destructions upon them. The best known of these is the world-wide deluge in the days of Noah, of which we read, “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; for I am sorry that I have made them.” (Gen. 6:5-7) But after His resurrection, Jesus, “... went and preached to the spirits in prison which were disobedient ... in the days of Noah.” (1 Pet. 3:19-20)

The destructive judgments of God have always come as a result of people's wicked conduct in their daily lives. Sodom and Gomorrah are further examples of this. God inspected those cities and determined that the sin of the inhabitants was very heavy; He decided to bring the cities to ruin. (Gen. 18:20-21; 19:14) Later Jude wrote that those cities suffered the "vengeance" (Greek: judgment) of fire which brought destruction. (Jude 7) So those cities experienced a day of judgment.

God constructed a legal case against ancient Babylon, God's weapon of discipline against rebellious Israel. (2 Chron. 36) Because they abused the Jews and used the vessels from Solomon's temple to worship false gods even after King Nebuchadnezzar had learned about the true God, Babylon was in line for a destructive judgment. That came about in the year 538 BC when Babylon was overthrown by the Medes and Persians. (See Jer. 51:36; Isa. 14:3-6, 17; 47:6 ff; Dan. 2:47; Dan. 5)

Jeremiah prophesied that God would "put Himself in judgment" with Edom, among others. (Jer. 25:17-31) The nation that had shown repeated hatred for the Lord and His people, suffered destructive judgment. As prophesied, Edom and its entire civilization have been totally obliterated from the earth.

Likewise, when Judah and Jerusalem became unfaithful and earned the Lord's wrath, He promised to "execute judgment in the midst of her." (Ezk. 5:8) This destructive judgment came many times, such as when King Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem and the temple and exiled the Israelites to Babylon. (Ezk. 7) After seventy years in exile, the Persian King Cyrus freed the remnant. They returned to Israel and rebuilt their temple. But once again they were unfaithful.

So another more severe "day" or time of judgment on Jerusalem was prophesied. Joel foretold an outpouring of the Spirit of God, to begin "before that great and terrible day of the Lord." (Joel 2:2-31) Under the anointing of the Spirit, Peter, on the day of Pentecost, explained that they were seeing a fulfillment of that prophecy. (Acts 2:16-20) That particular day of destruction came in 70 AD when the Roman armies executed God's judgment on the Jews. That judgment is not fully over yet. Though it has lasted for nineteen long centuries, the Jews are still struggling to repossess their land.

### **Future Times of Destructive Judgment**

2 Cor. 11:2; 2 Thes. 1:7-10; 1 Pet. 3:7;  
Rev. 1:4-8, 20-23; 17:1-2, 16-17

The Word of God specifically foretells a number of yet future judgments which are destructive in their nature. Revelation points to a time when "Babylon the great, mother of harlots" will be judged. Babylon signifies the universal world church system of men. Babylon is called "a woman."

The New Testament church is also portrayed as a woman, the Bride of Christ. (Eph. 5:22-32) The woman in Revelation 12 is the true church, the glorious body of Christ walking in the Spirit of God. In this sense, Babylon is that tendency within the mind of man to stray from the Spirit, to look at other lovers. Babylon is called "the great harlot." (Rev. 17:1) We all, at one time or another, have been seduced by her, (James 4:4; Ezk. 16:32 ff) even if separated from the world's religions. "Come out of her, my people, that you be not partakers of her sins and that you receive not of her plagues." (Rev. 18:4)

Another woman is mentioned, (Rev. 17:3) which also symbolizes a church, but her character is impure and corrupted, for she is herself a harlot and the mother of harlots like herself. That world religious church system is the subject of the prophecies in Revelation 17-18. Babylon is not limited to any single ecclesiastical body. It is composed of all who are walking apart from the life of the Spirit and the headship of Jesus Christ.

For two thousand years, God has been forming a heavenly people born of Spirit, the true church of the firstborn whose names are enrolled in heaven. But right along side this glorious company of the Spirit-filled and Spirit-led, the enemy has planted the tares: doctors of the law, bishops, ministers, popes, priests, and teachers poring over the dead letter of the word, but never being quickened by the Spirit of Truth. These blind leaders of the blind are the lords of a vast and powerful system which calls itself "the church," but which is not the church at all, but an abyss of incomprehensible darkness and confusion that hold's men's spirits in such fear and bondage that they can never see the glory of God or His transcendent purpose in their lives. All who follow them are enslaved to lifeless rituals, doctrines, and traditions, "always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." (2 Tim. 3:7)

It is only when the blazing fire of the omnipotent Spirit sovereignly penetrates the dankness and death of Babylon's walls that men first catch a glimpse of the living Christ of God. The chains fall off, the prison doors swing open on their rusty hinges and these followers of the Lamb behold a world of freedom and revelation beyond the walls of denominationalism, ritualism, and tradition.

Men will never attain to sonship within the walls of Babylon! The piercing voice of the Spirit commands, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and you shall be My sons and My daughters, says the Lord almighty." (2 Cor. 6:17-18) Sects and denominations have nothing to do with the true church. They are all man-made organizations, led by men (or women) and patterned after human business enterprises, and they are the prison houses of Babylon. The church is a people related to God by Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. They are a people born from above, born free. And yet, many of God's people have sat (and still sit) in Babylon. Unto them our blessed Lord speaks today, "Come out of her, my people, that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues." (Rev. 18:4)

God has decreed His judgment against this idolatrous system of Babylon. "There came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying, 'Come hither; I will show you the judgment of the great whore that sits upon many waters.' So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness, and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns... And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings... these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God has put it in their hearts to fulfill His will, and to agree, and to give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled... 'Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!'" (Rev. 17:1-3, 12, 16-17; 18:2)

This work of destructive judgment upon the harlot system of Babylon has already commenced. The real reason behind the present ecumenical movement is that it is an effort to save the system through outward unity, for the pews and coffers of many of Babylon's churches have been emptying. Communist countries have wrought great havoc upon organized churches, breaking their back in some areas. So many of God's people today, not seeing by the Spirit what God is doing in this hour, oppose the Spirit of God and groan, lament, and demonstrate because of what He is performing.

How often, in our blindness, we get the cart before the horse! Christians spend great sums of money and expend time and energy fighting Communism or some other pagan or anti-Christian order because it persecutes the saints and destroys their churches.

But the Christians of the early church never formed some John Birch society to fight the pagan Roman Empire! They did not even groan or lament the fact of their persecution, tribulation, and martyrdom. They never lent their support to some "opposition government" which sought by military might to liberate them from the oppression of the Caesars. The Christians did not organize or mobilize against the Jews who persecuted them. The spirit of the saints in that day was, "They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name." (Acts 5:41) Paul said that he rejoiced in his sufferings, and Peter exhorted the saints, "Rejoice, inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings; and when His glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy." (1 Pet. 4:13)

The great principles that govern our present walk in the Kingdom of God are laid down by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus declared, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad! for great is your reward in heaven." (Mat. 5:10-12) The Word of God resounds with this note of triumph and joy in the face of trouble and tribulation. Yet in this hour, many Christians shrink in horror and fear before the advance of Communism or Islam or some other world power. But let me assure you that they have not been able, anywhere, to destroy the true church of the living God, those born from above, walking by the Spirit of God.

Many true followers of the Lamb have taken up their crosses and in underground churches behind the iron curtain, have become strong in the power of His might and are doing exploits. I prophesy to you in the name of the Lord that the day is coming when the mighty invincible power of the Lord shall burst forth, even in Russia, from the midst of God's people who have been purified by persecution. So great shall be the swelling of the tide of the omnipotent Spirit through the saints in that day that the revival that shall come shall literally knock the Communist dictators off their thrones of power and bring their godless system down to everlasting ruin and shame. (Editor's note: This was written by Brother Eby in 1978. Now in 1994, we are beginning to see the fulfillment of this prophecy in ways that are beyond our comprehension in scope, magnitude, and suddenness.)

The same can be said of the Islamic nations, where Christianity is hated and we regularly hear of the massacre of Christians by angry Muslims in the name of Allah. We are neither to fear nor be dismayed because of the tribulation upon God's people in those lands. Communism can never defeat or destroy the chosen of God and neither can any other false religion, but I declare to you by the word of the Lord that it will end in the destruction of all Babylon's religions. Why is there so little religious freedom in these lands? Why have the church properties been confiscated or burned and the church leaders jailed or killed? Why have even state religionists been hounded and harassed, stripped of the power they had when state churches ruled over the lives of the people? Why, I ask? Because God, long centuries ago, decreed that Babylon would be judged.

God has raised up Communists and Muslims as instruments of her judgment. When Babylon is obliterated from the face of the earth, God's saints will be exhorted to, "Rejoice over her, you heaven [those seated with Christ in the heavenlies], and you holy apostles and prophets; for God has avenged you on her." (Rev. 18:20)

God has His means to destroy Babylon in America, too! For years now the call has been going forth by the Spirit of Revelation, "Come out of her, My people... that you receive not of her plagues." (Rev. 18:4) We think we are immune to any persecution in America because of our Christian heritage, but consider the state of the church now – her static and idolatrous doctrines, her dead rituals and traditions, and her unspiritual methods and institutions. Yes, America too is over-ripe for judgment.

The Spirit of God shall do a thorough job of calling His people out unto Himself. "Rejoice over her [Babylon], O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets; for God has avenged you on her... Thus with violence will that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers and musicians, and that of pipers [praise and worship], and trumpeters [ministries sounding forth a message from God], shall be heard no more at all in you; and the sound of a millstone [the grinding of meal for bread, the Word of God] shall be heard no more at all in you; and the light of a candle [even the little light that was in Babylon] shall shine no more at all in you; and the voice of the bridegroom [Jesus] and of the bride [the elect] shall be heard no more at all in you; for by your sorceries were all nations deceived." (Rev. 18:20-23)

Speaking of yet another destructive judgment, Peter compared it to the Flood in Noah's day, except this time it will come not by water but by fire. "The heavens [ruling powers] and earth [social order], which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition [destruction]." (2 Pet. 3:7) Yes, my friend, this present world order is coming to an end. This evil world will end in a day of fiery judgment. It will all burn up. Communism. Socialism. Democracies. Religions. Economic systems. Ecclesiastical institutions. Science. Technology. Lodges. Seminaries. Schools. Churches. All will pass away amid great commotion. "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for a new heavens [government of God] and a new earth [social order], wherein dwells righteousness." (2 Pet. 3:13)

## Judgments of the Believer

Isa. 42:1; Dan. 12:3; Mat. 1:21; 3:17; 16:27; 23:11;  
Rom. 1:18; 3:21-26; 6:23; 8:1, 15-17; Eph. 1:4-5; 2:8-9;  
1 Cor. 3:11-15; 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; 11:31-32;  
Gal. 2:20; 3:13, 26; 4:6-7; 2 Tim. 1:9; 1 Pet. 2:24;  
Heb. 12:5-11, 29; 1 Jn. 3:1-3; Rev. 1:18; 7:3; 11:18

The typical Christian today has the idea that there is only one judgment – at the great white throne; and that there everyone, good and bad, saved and lost, saint and sinner will stand before the Lord and be separated like sheep and goats. It may come as a shock to many to learn that the Bible teaches no such thing! Especially with regard to the saints, God's judgment is far more complex.

We have already discussed some past and future destructive judgments. But the Scriptures reveal many other judgments as well, including three distinct judgments that must be experienced by the people of God. One is already past, one is continuously present, and one is yet future. In one we are judged as sinners, in one we are judged as sons, and in one we are judged as servants.

### Judged As Sinners

This judgment, the judgment of our sins, and of us as sinners, is already past for every true Christian. "He [Jesus] personally bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness." (1 Pet. 2:24) "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." (1 Cor. 15:3) He died for our sins almost 2000 years ago. "It is finished." (Jn. 19:30) There is absolutely nothing that you or I can do to add to its effectiveness except to believe it and rest our faith on it. The sins of the believer in Christ were judged at the cross, and the believer as a sinner was judged at the cross – in Jesus.

Whether they are sins of the past, or of the present, or of the future – all were judged at Golgotha. The omniscient God in His foreknowledge of all things throughout all time, laid all of the believer's sins upon Christ as He hung there upon that cruel tree as our Substitute, our sacrifice for sin.

Because the Father chose every one of the "elect" "in Christ" before He made the universe or framed the ages (Eph. 1:4-5), He saw each of us as the one under wrath as He placed our judgment upon Christ. This is why Paul could say, "I am crucified with Christ." (Gal. 2:20; see also Rom. 6:1-11) Every one of God's elect, having been chosen "in Christ" before the foundation of the world, was seen to be "in Christ" at Golgotha, and our never-to-be-repeated death sentence was carried out in full on the cross. He who was without sin has paid the penalty for all the sins of all who believe, therefore we are absolutely without condemnation by the grace and verdict of the all-glorious God. This is why Paul cries out triumphantly, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 8:1)

Yes, Jesus paid the full price. We don't have to pay it; our salvation is a free gift. It is free, but it wasn't cheap. What did it cost Him? He left His throne of glory, emptied Himself to become mere man, and humbled Himself further to a "cross kind of death." (Phil. 2:6-11) "Wherefore He says, 'When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.' Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things." (Eph. 4:8-10)

What does it mean that He descended? There are at least three different aspects to this humbling process. Each involved a price that Jesus paid to buy our redemption. The first was that as almighty God, He left His glory and set aside His divinity, His infinite wisdom, power, and knowledge, to become a weak, helpless baby at Bethlehem. He had to grow up, learn wisdom, suffer temptation, and learn to follow the Spirit just like we do.

That was a pretty big price to pay, and He paid it out of love for us. But there was much more. He suffered the rejection of the very people He came to save, along with their condemnation, torture, and crucifixion on a Roman cross. The price here was huge, more than we can comprehend, especially since He could have called a million angels to come and save Him out of it in a minute.

But the third aspect to his “descent” was even more costly. It says that “He also descended into the lower parts of the earth.” (Eph. 4:9) Most of us don’t know what that means. We, like many in Old Testament times, have this vague idea of “Sheol” (the abode of the dead) being “somewhere down there” below our feet, so we assume it only means He went to the grave. The psalmist said of his enemies, “Let them go down alive to Sheol.” (Ps. 55:15) This referred to Korah and his band, who were swallowed up alive when the “earth opened its mouth.” (Num. 16:32) Theories and flights of fancy abound, of many levels of “dwelling” places under the earth for the souls of the dead, with the highest being in Paradise or at “Abraham’s bosom” while the lowest is obviously the hot magma at the earth’s core, where Satan entices sinners and later where he and all who followed him are tortured.

None of that is the cost of which I speak. To understand this third aspect of His “descent,” we need to understand the rest of the verse, “He who descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things.” (Eph. 4:8-10) Both His descent and His ascent are in the same realms, the heavenly realms, realms of spirit, and have nothing to do with whatever physical levels we may find in this earth.

These are words of truth and glory, spoken by the Holy Spirit to those men and women who long to be sons and daughters of God almighty. Let us think soberly and prayerfully on these things, that the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation from God may give us the ability to explore the heights and depths of these glorious realms of the Christ, the Son. He descended, then He ascended, blessed thought! And I am convinced by the Spirit of God that none can ever hope to fully appreciate the height to which He has ascended unless first they catch a glimpse of the depth to which He descended and the cost He paid there. Let us meditate for a bit upon the depth to which He descended, and then the height to which He ascended.

Settle it firmly in your mind that we are not dealing with geographical or celestial locations – places in the earth or the physical universe. We want no theories nor guesses. We want truth. We want nothing but the highest authority. And what better authority can we find than the One who made the heavens and who fills them with Himself? While on earth in humility, a man among men, Jesus made this remarkable statement, “No man has ascended up to heaven, but He who came down from heaven, even the Son of Man, which is in heaven.” (Jn. 3:13)

When Jesus said that He was even then, as a man, in heaven, He used the usual Greek word for heaven, “ouranos.” The meaning of the word is elevation, height, exaltation. But this exaltation is something so vast, so infinite, so inexhaustible that a person can be in it, can then descend from it, and yet still possess it or be in it.

Speaking of the vastness and majesty of the universe, the psalmist David proclaims, “The heavens declare the glory of God.” Our earth is a rather small planet revolving around an unremarkable star. It takes the light from our sun 8 minutes to get to earth, traveling at 186,000 miles per second. That same light travels for 5 more hours before reaching the planet Pluto. But if we could travel at the speed of light, it would take us 4.3 years just to get to the nearest star, Alpha Centauri. In fact, only about 20 stars are within 20 light years (120 million million miles) of our sun. The sun is one of the smaller stars in our galaxy, the Milky Way, composed of hundreds of billions of stars. Some stars, called supergiants, are as much as 1000 times larger than our sun! To get to the farthest star in our galaxy, we would have to travel at the speed of light for about 80,000 years. But that is just the beginning. The Milky Way Galaxy is one of about 20 galaxies in our local group, the farthest of which is 3 million light years away. But our local group is only one of over a hundred clusters of galaxies (called the local supercluster) within 150 million light years of us. The largest of these is Virgo, which has thousands of member galaxies, each with many billions of stars. But if we could travel in our imaginary space ship at the speed of light for 5 billion years in any direction, we

could reach at least 50 other such clusters and superclusters of galaxies. Man’s largest telescopes cannot reach much farther than this, except for very bright objects such as Quasars, which have been seen as far away as 20 billion light years. As far as men have been able to probe into space, it seems to have no end. The universe and space appear to be infinite. To us the universe truly seems unlimited and inexhaustible, for it declares the glory of God, and He is infinite, eternal, and inexhaustible.

If someone could fully comprehend this incredible universe, then he might be close to comprehending the infinite, eternal God. But the universe is only a limited, physical picture of a far more glorious reality. The “heaven” in which the Almighty dwells is not some limited spot out there somewhere in the universe where God sits on a great white throne and lives amidst streets of gold, jewel-studded mansions, and the fluttering wings of angels. Firstly, God is Spirit and Spirit has absolutely no need for material buildings in which to live, physical streets upon which to walk, or a literal throne upon which to sit. Secondly, God is omnipresent Spirit, equally present everywhere at the same time. “Whither shall I go from Your Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from Your presence? If I ascend up into heaven, You are there. If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning... even there shall Your hand lead me.” (Ps. 139:6-10) Solomon, at the dedication of his temple, said, “... the house which I build is great, for great is our God above all gods. But who is able to build Him a house, seeing the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him.” (2 Chron. 2:5-6)

Thus the true heaven in which God dwells is not this visible, physical universe. It has nothing to do with the space-matter-time continuum. The true heaven is the realm of God Himself. The true heaven is that unseen, invisible realm of spirit in which God eternally abides. “The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.” (2 Cor. 4:1)

Since God is omnipresent, the unseen, invisible spiritual realm (dimension) which is His dwelling place is also omnipresent. That means heaven is all around us, all the time. Our finite human minds know nothing of that high and holy realm, for by natural physical birth we dwell only in the realm of material, visible things. Our physical eyes are unable to penetrate into that unseen realm of spirit, for they can perceive only the realms of matter and energy. Our physical ears cannot hear the sounds of that invisible spirit realm, for they are restricted to a range of vibrations on the physical plane. But, beyond any doubt, that invisible realm of spirit is even more real than this material realm we know. And that glorious spirit life which fills the highest heaven, the dwelling place of the Almighty, is also omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, and fills all things.

Heaven is all around us. But natural men and carnal minds must, by new birth, by spirit birth, be raised out of their limited earthly consciousness in order to even begin to see into that transcendent realm of spirit life, spirit reality. An angel of heaven may be present right in the room with you at this moment, but you could never see, hear, or sense him unless the eyes of your spirit were opened to peer into that higher realm of spirit life in which he dwells.

But even in that unseen realm of spirit, there are levels of life that differ. An angel is a spirit being, therefore associated with heaven, but the angel’s individual level of life is on a much lower plane than the life of God who created him. “For unto which of the angels said He at any time, you are My Son, this day have I begotten you?” (Heb. 1:5) The angels are just a created life-form, not an inherited life from God via birth.

Every living being possesses a realm of dominion, and that dominion corresponds to the quality of life. Every animal possesses a limited realm of dominion – over other animals or over its “territory.” Man is over the animals because he possesses a higher kind of life and therefore a higher dominion. Angels move in a higher yet dominion, at least as far as “fallen” man is concerned, but it is a lower dominion than God for their quality of life is lower than God. The highest form of spirit life in the universe is the life of God Himself. He is over all, blessed forever!

Similarly, Satan and his demons also exert influence over a realm of dominion, a level of “heaven,” if you will. The fact that their dominion is usurped is not the issue here – only that it is not a physical location, but of the same essence as all other realms of spiritual dominion – the realm of spirit.

Each quality of life and each realm of dominion speaks of a “heaven,” a realm of height, elevation and exaltation. Therefore, God not only dwells in heaven, the realm of spirit life and dominion, but He also dwells in the highest heaven of all, the very height of all life and power. And so we read of Christ, “He who descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things.” (Eph. 4:10)

When Christ descended, He did far more than merely leave one place and go to another. Since heaven is not a “place” but a realm of life and dominion, to “descend” does not speak of a change of location, rather, a change of being. The Spirit of God leaves no uncertainty about this. “From the beginning He [Jesus] had the nature of God. Yet He did not regard equality with God as something at which He should grasp [hold on to]. Nay, He stripped Himself of His glory, and took on Him the nature of a bond-servant by becoming a man like other men. And being recognized as truly human, He humbled Himself and even stooped to die; and that a death on the cross. It is because of this also that God has so highly exalted Him, and has conferred on Him the name which is supreme above every other name, in order that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of beings in heaven, of those on the earth, and of those in the underworld; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Phil. 2:6-11, Weymouth)

Yes, Christ descended, but this is not speaking geographically, as from the sky to the earth and thence down into the grave. He descended in form and substance, in rank and dominion, in the essence of His being, to become a man, to live, suffer, and die as even the least among men. Thus He identified with all that is common to man. “... as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil. ... For in truth He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham.” (Heb. 2:14, 16)

Yes, beloved, Christ descended from the high and holy realm of the eternal God into the full depths of the human experience, both into the depth of what man is, and beneath even that, into an identification and participation with the entire dreadful realm of darkness and death into which mankind has fallen. He became obedient in this walk even unto death. He “tasted death for every man.” (Heb. 2:9) As I said, His descent has three distinct aspects, each with a price that He paid out of love for us: (1) He descended from glory to manhood. (2) He was despised and rejected, tormented and crucified. (3) He “descended into the lower parts of the earth.” (Eph. 4:9) Having established that this is not some physical location underground, we are now ready to explore what it means.

When Jesus died, He experienced far more than physical death – the terrible pain, the oozing of blood from His veins, the heart stopping, and the coldness of physical death. I declare to you that death is so much more than this! Most men are dead while they walk around on two feet. You and I were once dead. “And you has He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.” (Eph. 2:1) “We know we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren.” (1 Jn. 3:14) The death promised Adam was far worse than death of a physical body. It involves the whole experience of man in his alienation from the life that is in God. Death is a state of being. The power of death is sin. Out of man’s sin has arisen the horrible reality of a realm of death – manifest in every sorrow, tragedy, pain, heartache, trouble, sickness, hatred, strife, ignorance, fear, and torment known to man. All this is the result of man’s alienation from the life of God.

Christ descended, first in the incarnation, secondly in the judgment of the cross. He then descended into the lowest parts of the earth, into the deepest woe of mankind. The Son of God left His glory and descended to the depths of shame and reproach. He came and took our place of disgrace. Our Lord was the Mighty God. But He descended, humbled Himself, and took upon Himself the likeness of sinful flesh. He became “despised and rejected, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” (Isa. 53:3) “He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” (2 Cor. 5:21)

Ah! Christ did not only die physically, but He was made sin for us! “Sin for us,” not sinful, but taking unto Him the whole sin of our race, one vast aggregate of sin, of all men, past, present, and future. He made our condition His own. He made our doom His own. He experienced the pangs of the lowest hells into which men have sunk. “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.” (Gal. 3:13)

To put it bluntly, Jesus paid the highest price of all – He descended into hell for us. Now, what does that mean? Remember, this is not a physical, geographical place. The Bible has many descriptions of hell – many colorful pictures – all symbolic of a profound spiritual truth: hell is the separation of sinful mankind from the life of God in Christ. When Jesus took our sin He descended into hell, crying out in agony, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” And what was the result of that separation? The natural consequence of sin: all the torment, pain, anguish, and hopelessness of any soul that is separated from the source of life.

Hell is called a “lake of fire” and “the second death” (Rev. 2:11; 20:14), “wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength” and torment “with fire and brimstone” (Rev. 14:10), the “destruction of the wicked” (Ps. 9:5; 94:23; Acts 3:23), “chains of darkness” (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6), “eternal fire” (Jude 7), “the bottomless pit” or the “abyss” (Rev. 9:1; 20:1-3), “outer darkness” with “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Mat. 8:12), and “everlasting punishment.” (Mat. 25:46) In addition, it is said to be a place of burning and a place of torment, where the rich man was “in agony in this flame” (Lk. 16:24) and where “their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched.” (Mk. 9:48; Isa. 66:24)

All these and more are biblical pictures of the “everlasting” state of sinful man with no connection to the life of God in Christ – the natural consequences of sin. All these are the “death” that Adam earned at the Fall. I do not try to minimize hell. I only ask that you be careful not to create some future “place” of eternal torment and damnation for those who reject the gospel, because this torment, this separation from God, is right now for all who have not yet been quickened by the Holy Spirit. Yes, this is right now the normal state of the majority of humanity, who are bound by sin in darkness and death.

Some have sunk lower than others – many look fine to our Spirit un-aided eyes. But they are in hell, and they will remain in hell until they are reconnected to the life of God in Christ. I don’t deny that this torment will get worse, much worse, for those who quench the Spirit’s call and harden their hearts. But that lowest “lake of fire” is still of the same essence: the death of separation from the life of God in Christ Jesus.

This is not separation from God. That cannot be, for He is everywhere present at all times. But the tree of life is gone, and all that is left is the wrath of God against sin. “Our God is a consuming fire.” (Heb. 12:28) He is busy “shaking everything that can be shaken, in order that those things which cannot be shaken will remain.” (vs. 26-27) That is the purpose of hell: to destroy that sinful nature and burn up all our “wood, hay, and stubble,” (1 Cor. 3:12) all the things of the flesh that we once held so dear, all that fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That is what unquenchable fire does – it consumes everything that can be consumed. Now do we begin to comprehend the terrible price Jesus paid when He cried, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

Why did He do it? “He who descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things!” (Eph. 4:10) In His descent, He paid the debt in full for man’s sin. He drank the full cup of man’s curse – God’s holy wrath upon man’s sin. He became our sin, so when Jesus died, our sin died. At Golgotha the atonement was finished. The death that had fallen upon Adam and his race, now fell on another.

Jesus is “the [only] way” to the Father. (Jn. 14:6) He also said, “I am the door. If anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved.” (Jn. 10:9) After Jesus took all our sin and its punishment into hell and paid the penalty in the all-consuming fire of God, the Father raised Him from the dead, thus opening that door! Now Jesus can say, “I have the keys of death and hell” (Rev. 1:18), and “I have put before you an open door which no man can shut.” (Rev. 3:8) Now He can go about this business of filling all things with Himself.

In some places, the law allows substitutional punishment. Let us suppose that I am found guilty of a crime in such a court. I am sentenced to be beaten. But I have a friend. And when judgment is pronounced, my friend steps forward and asks the judge to be permitted to take my stripes. He pleads that I was not altogether to blame and that he is much more able to bear the suffering than I. Then he is led away in my stead. I go free in his rightful place. He simply trades places with me. And once he has bared his back and the stripes have fallen, that ends the matter. The penalty can never again be demanded. Jesus took our stripes, and “by His scourging we are healed.” (Isa. 53:4-5) “The bread which I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” (Jn. 6:51) Thank God, the good Book is true! The wages of sin is actually death, and Jesus died that death. The debt is paid in full!

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus...” (Rom. 8:1) No condemnation! The word in the Greek is “katakrima” and speaks of an “adverse sentence; to be judged against.” I cannot be judged against! No judgment! “There is therefore now no judgment to them who are in Christ Jesus.”

He does not say, “There is nothing in them that deserves judgment,” for there is, and they see it and know it, but it shall not be held against them. This one glorious truth should deliver every believer from any guilt complexes, depression, and condemnation. There are other judgments for the believer, but in the judgment of sin and sinners, the believer cannot and shall not appear. That judgment is past, finished. Jesus was judged for us. The debt is paid in full. Hallelujah!

Thank God, it is really true! “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” (Rom. 3:23-24) Thank God, it’s not an infamous fairy tale! “All things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given to us the [same] ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them... for He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” (2 Cor. 5:18-21) Thank God, I shall never have to stand in judgment for my sin. My case will not even be reviewed. It is settled forever.

In His descent, Christ partook of everything man had become through the Fall. In His ascension, He rose up from the lowest hells of man’s bondage and degradation, passing up through all realms of life and dominion, to the highest heaven, conquering and overcoming in every realm. In exalting Him, the Father opened that door which no man can shut. Thus He consecrated for us a new and living way into the fullness of God. Jesus paid the price to win the keys of death and hell. He did it all for us, out of deepest love, as our forerunner to show us the way, that we also may pass from the deepest hell up through all the heavens, to discover our life in Him in the highest heaven.

Oh! that my feeble pen could convey to you the reality and glory of Jesus ascending! “Where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us... Having therefore, brethren, confidence to enter the holy place... by a new and living way, which He consecrated for us, through the veil.” (Heb. 6:20; 10:19-20)

He showed us the way by Himself walking in it. Blessed truth, that we may now follow him in that way into the place into which He has entered. His descent was in His state of being. His ascent was up into the eternal glory of God’s divine life. The “new and living way” speaks of our ascent, a change in our state of being that we may become the righteousness of God in Christ.

This has nothing to do with “going” anywhere. It has to do with “being.” Being conformed to His image. Sharing His glory. Changed into His likeness. Filled with the fullness of His Spirit, even the seven-fold intensified Spirit of Jehovah. Sitting upon His throne. Possessing His mind. Walking in His life. Heirs of God. Joint heirs with Christ. Sons. Beyond the veil. The fullness of God. Not some day, away off somewhere beyond the blue, but right here and now!

For fifteen centuries, the Israelites had a sanctuary with a most holy place into which, under pain of death, no one might enter. Its one witness was: sinful man cannot dwell in God’s holy presence nor have a share in that which pertains to His realm. And now, how changed it all is! Just as then the warning sounded: “Enter not!” so now the call goes forth: “Enter in! The veil is rent; the most holy place is open; the way in is consecrated for you; the Father waits to welcome you to His bosom. Henceforth you are to live in Christ, ascending up from realm to realm, overcoming, conquering in each realm. Son of God, Your Father longs for you to enter, to dwell, and to go out no more forever.”

Our judgment as sinners is forever past. In the next chapter, we shall consider two other judgments we face: the judgment of sons and the judgment of servants.

# Chapter 17 – The Seven Spirits of God and the Work of Judgment (Part 2)

## Introduction

“And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as having been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.” (Rev. 5:6)

To understand the ministry of the seven Spirits of God we must consider their work of judgment. “And the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge and of the Fear of the Lord; and shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord; and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins... They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” (Isa. 11:2-5, 9)

As discussed in the previous chapter, we can clearly see here that one principle work of the seven Spirits of God is to bring forth God’s judgments in the earth. Look again at all the judgments in these verses.

“He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes... with righteousness shall He judge the poor... reprove with equity for the meek of the earth... He shall smite the earth [carnal realm] with the rod [authority] of His mouth [the Word]... the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord.” These judgments are part of the wonderful ministry of the seven Spirit of God.

Most Christians think that there is only one judgment – at the great white throne; and that everyone, good and bad, saved and lost, saint and sinner will meet there and be forever separated like sheep and goats. What a shock it must be for them to learn that the Bible teaches no such thing! Yes, there will come a judgment day when each rebel who hardens his heart and blasphemes the Spirit is cast into the lake of fire to pay the law’s penalty for his own sin. But there are more judgments than most people realize. The truth is, there are many judgments, some already past, some continuously present, and some yet future. It is misleading to speak of “the judgment” as though it were only one event limited to one “day” in the future. A careful study of the Word, with the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation from God, will reveal that there are many judgments, including judgments of unholy angels, of Satan, of Israel, of cities, of nations, of sin, of death, of the believer, of servants, of sons, of the wicked, and so on. Each occurs at a different time and in different surroundings.

Among many judgments set forth in the Word of God are three distinct judgments that pertain to the people of God. Of these three judgments of saints, one is already past; one is continuously present; and one is yet future. In one we are judged as sinners; in one we are judged as sons; and in one we are judged as servants. The previous chapter discussed our judgment as sinners, which is a judgment that is already past. It was fully accomplished 1900 years ago in our behalf, once and for all time, by the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross at Golgotha.

### **Judged As Sons**

Rom. 6; 8:14-16; 1 Cor. 6:2; 11:31-32;  
Gal. 3:26; 4:6-7; Heb. 12:5-11; 1 Jn. 3:2-3

Through the regenerating power of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, God has given us new birth, making us His own children. “For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” (Gal. 3:26) “Beloved, now are we the sons of God.” (1 Jn. 3:2) “And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore you are no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.” (Gal. 4:6-7) “For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons, by which we cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit, that we are children of God.” (Rom. 8:14-16)

It has been the Father’s good pleasure to bring us into this relationship of sonship to Himself. Now His supreme desire for us is that we may grow up and become mature, that we may be sons indeed. He has given us

the standing of sons through faith in Jesus Christ. But He desires also that we become fully sons in state of being as well. He wants His sons to be Son-like! And being the great and faithful Father that He is, He deals with us unto this expected end. In order to make us Son-like He brings us into judgment – son judgment. The prodigal son, though a son, was not being Son-like. What about you, beloved brother or sister? If you are in Christ by faith, you are born into God’s family and you are His son. The Father has planned for His sons to reflect His glory, to be like unto Himself in mind, nature, will, purpose, and power. In order to make us so, He faithfully brings us into judgment – son judgment. God desires, even insists, that His sons be Son-like. As long as we fall short, He judges us – not for our harm, but for our benefit.

“For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned [judged] with the world.” (1 Cor. 11:31-32) There are several thoughts in this verse which we should note in passing. Firstly, when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, disciplined by the Lord. This chastening of the Lord is the son-judgment of which we speak, for chastening and discipline are one form of judgment. Secondly, if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. If we would properly discipline ourselves, the Lord would have no need to discipline us any further. The terms judgment, chastening, and discipline are identical when talking about this judgment of sons. Thirdly, when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord that we should not be condemned (by implication, judged more severely) with the world on Judgment Day.

How clear that there is appointed a day of judgment, chastening, and correction for the world. “He has appointed a day, in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He has ordained.” (Acts 17:31) The saints of God, members of the corporate Son, are to be the instruments through which that judgment of the world shall be executed. “Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world?” (1 Cor. 6:2)

Paul emphasizes that we saints must be judged now, so that we will not be judged with the world. The judgment, chastening, discipline, testing, or trial of the sons of God must take place at this present time, in this present age, before that coming age of the Kingdom is introduced; because it is the Christ, head and body, who is destined to administer the work of judgment on the world. Thus the Lord declares that if we are judged now, either by judging ourselves or by coming under the chastening of the Lord, then we “shall not come into condemnation [Greek: krisis, judgment] with the world.” We shall not share in the world’s judgment day of chastening and trial. Our chastening must be complete and our sin nature fully dealt with before we can judge the world.

In the last section of chapter 13, “Knowing Christ as His Bride,” we reviewed the principle of brideship to Christ, stating that, “The way to sonship is through brideship.” When Jesus returns from the Father’s right hand, He is coming for His Bride. Now, let’s get this straight; there is no Scripture to indicate that the saints are left in bondage to their sinful flesh natures until Christ returns and zaps them into instant holiness at the rapture! The flesh nature loves that sort of teaching, but it is heresy.

Just the opposite. Many Scriptures such as Romans 6 clearly teach that the saints are now free from the bondage of sin. “Are we to continue in sin that grace may increase? God forbid! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? ... he who has died is freed from sin... so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus... having been freed from sin, you became slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification... having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life; for the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom. 6:1, 2, 7, 11, 18, 22, 23)

Why do so many Christians vigorously and emphatically insist that we can never be free from sin short of heaven? A passage often used to prove this doctrine of Babylon is, “... we shall be [future tense] changed.” (1 Cor. 15:52) But this actually refers to the redemption of our physical bodies. Another passage is where Paul admits, “Not that I have... already become perfect.” (Phil. 3:12) People lightly say, “If the apostle Paul never made it, then what chance have I, short of glory?” Perhaps the problem is that they see the secret sins in their own hearts and don’t want to deal with them, so they use these verses as excuses to justify themselves, with the thought, “I don’t need to purify myself – Jesus will take care of it all at the rapture.” Well, God never makes excuses for sin. He simply commands “Be holy, for I am holy!” (1 Pet. 1:16) “And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself as He is pure.” (1 Jn. 3:3) “So... let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” (2 Cor. 7:1)

Some may respond, “That’s impossible; I just can’t! Nobody can!” And in a way, they are right. Nobody, by the strength of his own will, can make himself holy. Yet we are commanded to be holy. Do you think God would command us to do the impossible?

The way, the truth, the answer, is as always, the Lord Jesus Christ. “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and blameless.” (Eph. 5:25-27) So that’s what the discipline of Hebrews 12 is all about, “... He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness.” (vs. 10) Jesus is at work here, preparing His own Bride. “Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His Bride has made herself ready. And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.” (Rev. 19:7-8) The “righteous acts of the saints” are not started after we get to heaven! They begin right here on earth, by Christians who take seriously the command of God to “Be holy, as I am holy.” By submitting to the discipline of the Lord and to the washing of His Word as a bride prepares and beautifies herself for her husband, we are now becoming holy. This is son-judgment, for brideship must precede sonship. It doesn’t bother me that the apostle Paul hadn’t made it when he wrote to the Philippians, or even if no one has yet made it. This I know. When Jesus returns for His Bride, she will be ready! Praise God.

So, then, the present time, this present life, is to each of the truly consecrated ones his “day of judgment” – his day of testing, discipline, proving, and chastening, his day of being brought into perfection in Christ. The apostle Peter’s words agree with this, “Judgment [Greek: krima, final decision] must begin at the house of God.” (1 Pet. 4:17)

Let all men know that the time is come when judgment must begin at the house of God. The Lord will surely bring every son under his hand of judgment. However, He prefers that we judge ourselves, that we be not judged of Him. When we walk in some fleshly deed, if we recognize it in ourselves and condemn it, confess it to God, and bring it to judgment within us, we are perfected in that area of our life. But if we fail to properly deal with our sin by bringing our flesh to judgment, or worse, if we tolerate our sin, or try to hide it, or do not even acknowledge it as sin, then God has to judge us Himself.

“You have forgotten the exhortation which addresses you as sons, ‘My son [this is son judgment], do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reprov’d by Him; for those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and scourges every son whom He receives.’ If you endure discipline, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all partake, then are you bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us and we respected them, shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness.

“All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.” (Heb. 12:5-11) These verses reveal the timing, nature and purpose of our son-judgment. This judgment is continuous, in the present. It has not already been accomplished for us by Jesus, neither is it reserved for some future “judgment day,” but it is going on right here and now whenever we need it, “that we might share His holiness.”

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He [Jesus] shall appear [for His Bride], we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And every man who has this hope in Him purifies himself [chastens himself, judges himself], even as He [Jesus] is pure [chaste].” (1 Jn. 3:2-3)

### **The Disciplines of God**

Lk. 2:40; Rom. 8:12-21, 28-30; Heb. 2:10; 3:1-11, 19;  
Heb. 4:1-2; 5:8-9; 12:3-11; Rev. 2:26-27; 21:7

“We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestine to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” (Rom. 8:28-29) This entire chapter teems with expansive vistas of divine revelation of God’s eternal purposes. The two verses quoted here give a summary of unimaginable importance. It is necessary to catch at least a glimmer of that before one can even begin to appreciate God’s present dealings with His sons. What is God doing here, anyway? What is His eternal purpose?

“That He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” “For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering, for... He is not ashamed to call them brethren.” (Heb. 2:10-11) God has brought one Son to glory. But He is not finished. He is bringing many sons to glory. The entire creation, which was subjected to vanity and futility, is groaning and travailing for the manifestation of these sons of God, in hope that through them it will be set free from its bondage to corruption. (Rom. 8:19-21) What a magnificent and glorious calling! Not only sons of God and brothers of Christ, but now deliverers of all creation from its bondage to sin! This is the wonderful future for that blessed company of the sons of God.

Up to this present time, only One has fully entered in to glory. But this One is declared to be our Brother, the Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, God has exalted our Brother, our Kinsman, and He is God’s own Son. He is bringing many sons to glory because He is the firstborn among many brethren. The exaltation of our Brother means that the “many brethren” will also be exalted. His perfection is the earnest (guarantee) of our perfection, His resurrection is the earnest of our resurrection, and His exaltation is the earnest of our exaltation into the household of the Father and His sons. “... all things were created by Him and for Him... by Him all things consist; and He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead... for it pleased the Father that in Him should all the fullness dwell, and... by Him to reconcile all things to Himself...” (Col. 1:16-20)

“[God] has put all things under His feet, and gave Him [Christ] to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” (Eph. 1:22-23) May the Spirit graciously unveil to our hearts this one sublime truth that the Son must have His place before the sons can have their place; but, having His place, the sons have access through Him to their place! Oh yes, this kinship with the Exalted One means for us the deliverance and overthrow of every enemy. Our entrance into sonship is bound up with the exaltation of Jesus Christ.

How we rejoice in the faithfulness of our exalted elder Brother in bringing many sons to glory! “Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as also was Moses faithful in all his house.” (Heb. 3:1-2) Christ Jesus, the Apostle of our profession, was faithful – blessed thought! Faithfulness is trustworthiness. As we see Jesus faithful to Him who appointed Him, our faith and trust will rise into total and joyful assurance that He will indeed faithfully fulfill all God’s promises in us, that in us too He will be faithful as a Son over His own house! Glory!

Moses was a type of Christ in many respects: in his suffering and rejection by his brethren, in his zeal and sacrifice of all for God, in his years of preparation, in his fellowship with God, in his faithfulness to say and do whatever God asked, and in his willingness to give his life for the sake of the Israelites. The marks of an apostle, as they were to be perfectly revealed in Jesus Christ, are seen in Moses, but only as a shadow and a prophecy, a testimony of things to come.

“Consider Jesus... For He has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by some man; but the Builder of all things is God. Now Moses was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house; whose house we are, if we hold fast the confidence and the boast of our hope firm unto the end.” (Heb. 3:3-6) Faithful Moses was not yet part of the house Jesus is building. Moses was just a servant in His house. But faithful Jesus is a Son over His house, and we, the saints, are that house!

Yes, Christ is faithful as a Son over His house. Would you have the full experience of all that means and brings? Then, consider Jesus, who is faithful! Yield yourself to Him as His house. Trust His faithfulness to do the work. He will build and glorify His house.

And yet, let us not for one moment lose sight of the condition: our perfection as sons also hangs upon this wonderful and terrible little word “if.” “Christ was faithful as a Son over His own house; whose house are we, if...” Hebrews 12, the wonderful passage which speaks of God’s dealings with us as sons, has a great big “if” there also. “If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons.” (Heb. 12:7) How strange! It almost looks as if you are not a son if you do not endure chastening. And, beloved, sobering as the thought may be, that is exactly what it means. You and I have not as yet come to the fullness – the manifestation of sonship which reveals the house of God in all its glory and power. It is something future, though imminent, it is prospective, if... if...

Throughout the book of Hebrews Israel in the wilderness is mentioned as a warning to God's sons. "... the Holy Spirit says, 'Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as when they provoked Me, in the day of trial in the wilderness, when your fathers tried Me... therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart; and they did not know My ways.' So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.' So we see that they were not able to enter in because of unbelief. Therefore let us fear lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it. For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.'" (Heb. 3:7-11, 19; 4:1-2)

Israel did not become God's house as He intended. He could not rest His holy dwelling place among them, nor express His nature and power through them. So He withdrew even the visitation He had given them, and they perished in the wilderness. They did not endure discipline. They would not let God deal with them as with sons. They did not accept their adoption into God's house. They fell short of God's glory. This truth is given in Hebrews as a warning: We are His house, if... God deals with you as with sons, if... Never forget that "if!"

What the blessed Son of God is in His glory, He now becomes in us progressively; Christ is being more and more enlarged in us as a Son over His house. All that we now experience under the mighty hand of God is with this one thing in view, that Christ may be formed in us. (Gal. 4:19)

"My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when you are rebuked of Him; for whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives. If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons." (Heb. 12:5-7) The Lord is putting us on trial through chastening. He is bringing us to judgment through discipline. Take any child and put him under discipline and you will find out what is in his heart, whether he is going to be obedient or not, whether he is going to respond with grace or anger. Put the child under discipline, and you will discover all the rebellion that is in that child's nature; but you will also discover any love that is there, and any humility, and any meekness (teachableness). That is how the Lord is dealing with us.

We can say that we are not going to have any more of this discipline, we cannot endure any more of the severity of God, but, remember, dear one, that in discipline the throne is at stake, not only for Him but for us. The Lord has a wonderful purpose for His sons in union with the Son as joint-heirs and fellow-rulers of the whole vast universe. All our training is in that direction. So it is prospective – it is future (though imminent). The "if" is there. We are God's house, if... We are sons, if... We shall reign with Him, if... May the Lord's discipline so prevail in us that the "if" loses its power and at last ceases to be, and we are His house, His sons.

In speaking of the discipline of the Lord let me make one thing clear. All discipline from the Father is "son judgment," but not all discipline is punishment. Some discipline is punitive in nature, while other discipline is designed only to test, refine, purify, reveal, cultivate, and increase some good quality.

Traditionally, the military services have imposed strict discipline. This is not because the men are rebellious or have done something for which they must be punished. No! The discipline is there to establish in them the qualities necessary in a good soldier: instant obedience, knowledge, skill, and endurance. In preparation for the ancient Greek Olympian Games, the contestants were under rigid rules and strict discipline. Every competitor was obliged to undergo a severe and protracted training, during which time he focused all his efforts and avoided excesses of any kind. Greek sage and stoic philosopher Epictetus indicates the scope of the discipline: "Would you be a victor in the Olympic games? So in good truth would I, for it is a glorious thing; but pray consider what must go before, and what may follow, and so proceed to the attempt. You must live by rule, eat what will be disagreeable, refrain from delicacies; you must oblige yourself to exercises at the appointed hour, in heat and in cold; you must abstain from wine and cold liquors; in a word, you must be as submissive to all the directions of your master as to those of a physician."

These men were under discipline, but they were not being punished. Similarly, the discipline of God, though it may contain punishment if needed, is the "son judgment" for the purpose of working faith, obedience, understanding, wisdom, the divine nature, and the revelation of the Lord in our lives.

I have been on a self-imposed rigid diet for the past eighteen months and have lost nearly forty-five pounds. I was considerably overweight and steadily gaining. The wisdom of God told me that I needed discipline in that area of my life. So I brought my body

under discipline. In order to maintain my correct weight, I now find it necessary to continue in this discipline as a perpetual way of life. With this diet I am not punishing my body for being bad! I am, however, bringing it under proper control for its own good.

This is how it is with the disciplines of the Father. He is not always punishing us for something bad when He sends His rod of chastening into our lives, but he always sends that which works for our good, which produces the development of His life within. "For they [our natural fathers] disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness." (Heb. 12:10) Chastening from God is essential to the development of spiritual character, just as proper correction is essential for a child's moral, intellectual, and emotional development.

If you truly desire to go on with God to become a son, then you must come out of the nursery of man's comfortable religion and enter into the school of God. You will find the nature of this school to be difficult! God is going to thrust His sons into the most difficult situations. A thing is only difficult if you cannot cope with it. If you can handle it all yourself, then you don't need God, and you won't grow in Spirit. But if you find the thing altogether beyond your self, beyond your own strength, wisdom, and knowledge, then you are in difficulty – and that is the sort of thing the Lord does with people who aspire to be sons. He places them in difficult situations, and His object is to get them to reach up, beyond themselves, to get their spiritual senses exercised so that they may experientially gain the wisdom, knowledge, strength, and nature of God.

Anyone can be a baby. It doesn't take any genius or experience to be a child. Birth will make you that. You have nothing to do with it. But it takes some processing to be a son. The difference is simply this: infants have everything done for them, and they live only in the blessings of that for which they contributed nothing. A spiritual babe is one who lives on the blessings and benefits of other saint's abilities, strength, knowledge, prayers, faith, accomplishment, experience, wisdom, and ministry. The babe doesn't do anything for himself. Everything is done and prepared for him. Everything is coming to him from the outside; nothing has been done by the child himself. Someone else must wash, feed, and clothe him.

This is how it is with spiritual babes. They always want to be ministered to. They continually need your prayers. They always require your encouragement, strength, help, and faith. They have volumes of prayer requests, all urgent, desperate needs. They stand in every prayer line, always show up when a prophet is in town, and ring the elder's telephone off the wall. Babies will always drain, drain, drain you of your time and energy. Not that that is wrong! We all love babies! This is just the way infants are.

But a son, in the spiritual and scriptural sense, is one who has discovered the source of life within himself, who is progressively coming out of the realm where everything is done for him and he is constantly drawing from others, to the place where the power and glory of God is being formed in his own life. He is becoming competent in the ability of the indwelling life of the Son within, and no longer dependent upon what others can impart to him. Everything is not being

brought ready-made to him. Rather, what he needs is being developed within Him, and he is making it his own reality and experience by the exercise of his own spiritual senses.

In order to deal with us and bring us to this place of maturity, the Lord puts us in difficult situations. His whole object is to get our spiritual senses exercised, that Christ may be formed within, (Gal. 4:19) that we may attain to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. (Eph. 4:13) God says, "I will compass you about, hedge you in, and shut you up. I will precipitate you into severe pressures and problems, and I will strip away every prop, everything upon which you have leaned, in which you have trusted, from which you have drawn strength. I will wean you. I will discipline and teach you. I will 'grow you up' out of your childishness and dependency and make a son of you."

So our comfortable things fall away and we find ourselves in a realm with which we cannot cope, like the boy who cannot swim being thrown by his buddies into the deep end of the pool. Now it's sink or swim! Those who helped us before are watching beside the pool to see if we will discover the courage within to spread our arms and swim. Are they being mean? Or is that love?

We have been in the habit of asking and getting answers; now, no one can answer our questions. No prophet gives us a word. Nobody's prayers avail anything. The rivers all run dry. We are separated from all that has sustained us. God is shutting us up to the fact that it has to become ours by experience. Our spiritual food is no longer something we are given from without, but something being grown within us.

If we are going to truly come through to God's full and intended end, we must know the Lord for ourselves in an inward way, as an inward life and source of all things. Unto that end, it may be necessary for the Lord to suspend all external helps and render all others incapable of coming to our rescue, flinging us wholly upon Himself, that we may prove Him and know Him. This is the process of son judgment.

This son judgment, this chastening, is one of the marks of sonship. "If you are without discipline... then are you bastards, and not sons." (Heb. 12:8) The suffering is not in itself a sign of sonship. An enemy or a criminal may be scourged; a slave may be chastened as well as a son. But to him who is a son, he recognizes the hand of his Father and is aware of the high and holy heritage unto which he is being prepared. Thus the chastisement calls him to meet this part of a son's experience in the spirit and hope of a son, with an assurance that it will draw him nearer and lock him closer to the Father, making him partaker of His holiness.

How important it is that we recognize that our Father's chastening is out of love, a token of the Father's care. Rejoice and be thankful! For sons, "all things work together for good." Our world is full of suffering and sorrow. For most men their pain is a product of the darkness into which mankind has fallen. But for us – blessed truth! Every trial comes from our Father as a call to come away unto Him, to trust Him, to experience His power and love and sufficiency. Let this truth be burned into your heart: in every trial, small or great, first of all recognize God's hand in it. Link it to God! Not as a punishment but as the training of sons!

## Judged As Servants

Isa. 42:1; Dan. 12:3; Mat. 1:21; 3:17; 16:27; 23:11; Rom. 1:1; 6:23; 8:17; 1 Cor. 3:11-15; Eph. 2:8-9; 2 Tim. 1:9; Heb. 12:29; 1 Jn. 3:1; Rev. 1:1; 7:3; 11:18

This is the one judgment that is yet completely future for Christians. It involves rewards for works, not a dealing with sin, nor a discipline for the perfecting of sons. It is vital to our understanding of this subject that we see clearly the distinction between these three key terms: salvation, inheritance, and reward. Salvation is relative to sinners, inheritance is relative to sons, and reward is relative to servants. **Salvation** means to be rescued from the power of sin and death. It is the free gift of God to everyone who believes. "She shall bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." (Mat. 1:21) "By grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast." (Eph. 2:8-9) **Inheritance** is what a son receives by virtue of his relationship to the Father. It is not a gift; it is his by right. "Wherefore you are no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." (Gal. 4:7) "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." (Rom. 8:17) **Reward** is something that is paid for services rendered. It is not a free gift, as is salvation, nor is it given because of right, as is an inheritance. It is earned by work! "For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works." (Mat. 16:27) "The nations were enraged, and Your wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to give their reward to Your bondservants..." (Rev. 11:18)

We know that we were all included in the judgment of sin that was meted out upon Jesus Christ at Golgotha. All were included “in Him” and therefore judged “in Him” upon the cross. Furthermore, we know that we may each be included in the judgment of sons as we follow on to know the Lord and remain yielded unto all His dealings and processings. It is when we think of servants that there arises so much misunderstanding among the Lord’s people. When we speak of servants, some saints boast that this calling does not apply to them, for they are no longer servants, but sons. And that is very true in the spirit in which Paul affirms, “Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts crying, ‘Abba, Father.’ Wherefore, you are no longer a servant but a son; and if a son, then a heir of God through Christ.” (Gal. 4:6-7)

It is far from the truth, however, to say that there is no sense in which those who are sons are also servants. Paul is speaking here of our relationship to God the Father. Under the Old Testament, the people of God had not received new birth by the Spirit and so were not, by birth, children of God. They were a house of servants. Their relationship to God was the relationship of servants. They were not sons. Now, bless His name, He has redeemed us from the curse of the law that we might receive the standing of sons, and He has birthed into our hearts the Spirit of His Son, the Spirit of Sonship, whereby we cry, “Abba, Father!” This has brought about a change of relationship to God the Father. Unto Him we are no longer servants, but sons. However, the change in our relationship to God must of necessity also change our relationship to men.

It is here that we must be very clear in our understanding. Unto God I may be a son, but unto men I may be a servant. I cannot be a servant to God, for I am a son. But I cannot be a son to men, therefore, I must associate with men in a relationship through which I can minister unto them the life of the Son which abides within me. The only way by which I may minister Christ unto men is as a servant. To minister means “to serve;” both minister and servant are often translated from the same Greek word.

Can a son also be a servant? Jesus, the pattern Son, declared, “Whoever would be great among you, let him be your minister; and whoever would be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister [serve], and to give His life a ransom for many.” (Mat. 20:26-28) Jesus was a Son to His Father, but He came as a servant unto men. It is the Son who serves! He is a Servant-Son. The same Jesus of whom the Father witnessed, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,” (Mat. 3:17) of Him the Father also says, “Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; Mine elect, in whom My soul delights; I have put My Spirit upon Him; He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.” (Isa. 42:1) Matthew repeats this passage to confirm that it refers to Jesus. (Mat. 12:15-21) John understood this truth, for he wrote, “Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God,” (1 Jn. 3:1) but later stated, “The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John.” (Rev. 1:1)

The apostle Paul also understood this truth, for he wrote, “Wherefore you are no more a servant but a son,” (Gal. 4:7) but then later wrote, “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle.” (Rom. 1:1) Was Paul a son or a servant? Was the apostle John a son or a servant? Is Jesus a Son or a Servant? And lest we exalt ourselves above even them, we further find that, of the 144,000 in the Revelation, that glorious company of God’s sons who stand with the Lamb upon Zion’s holy mountain, even of this many-membered company of overcoming sons is written, “Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.” (Rev. 7:3) So there you have it. The sons are the servants. Not servants to God, but sons of God who are servants of God unto men – humble ministers of the sure mercies of the Lord.

The Son who came as a Servant said to His lowly disciples, “I am among you as He who serves.” (Lk. 22:27) “If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.” (Jn. 13:14)

Three things are seen as Jesus washed His disciple’s feet:

1. The form of a servant which He took upon Himself,
2. The cleansing which was the object of that service, and
3. The love which was its motivation.

May God’s Spirit graciously enlighten the eyes of our understanding that we may see the mighty Son in the form of a servant! All had been prepared for the last supper, including the water with which to wash their feet according to their custom. But in this upper room there was only Jesus and His disciples – no servant to do the work.

Each one waits for the other; none of the twelve considers humbling himself to render even this service. As they sat at the table they were full of other, loftier, thoughts – who among them would be greatest in the Kingdom they were expecting. (Lk. 22:26-27) Suddenly, Jesus arises, lays aside His outer robe, girds Himself with a towel, and begins to wash their feet. Oh glorious spectacle, upon which mighty angels reverently gazed with adoring wonder. Christ Jesus, Creator and King of the universe; Christ the Mighty God and Father of eternity, the movement of whose hand would summon untold legions of angels to serve Him, who might with one word of love have attracted throngs of loyal servants delighted to do the work – this Jesus lowers Himself to the servant’s place, takes into His own holy hands the soiled feet of carnal men, and washes them!

He does this in full consciousness of the divine glory of His sonship, for John writes, “Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God and was returning to God, rose.” (Jn. 13:3) For the hands into which God has given all things, there is nothing common or unclean. The humbleness of an act or work never lowers the person; rather, the honor of the person elevates the work; he imparts his own worth to even the lowest of service. In such profound humiliation (as men think of it), our Lord finds divine glory, and is thus the leader and pattern for all who would follow Him in this path of sonship to God. It is as the Son that He is the Servant! What value has sonship without its overflow into the depths in which men dwell? In fact, it is the glory of sonship to reach out the hand of service to lift others up alongside.

The whole purpose of sonship is that God may be expressed and communicated to men, even down to the lowest hell in which they dwell. Sonship is not designed to be some country-club set of super-spiritual elite gods who spend their time polishing their halos and basking in the meretricious brilliancy of their own self-importance.

In taking the form of a servant, Jesus proclaims the divine order of the Kingdom of God, the house of sons. The higher one wishes to stand in the Kingdom, the more it must be his joy to be the servant of all. "And Jesus called them to Him and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men hold them in subjection, tyrannizing over them. Not so shall it be among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever desires to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be waited on but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.'" (Mat. 20:25-28, AMP) "Whoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." (Mat. 23:11) "And He sat down and called the twelve, and said to them, 'If any man desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.'" (Mk. 9:35)

The higher I rise in the consciousness of being like Christ, God's beloved Son, the deeper shall I stoop to identify with and minister to all around me. As sons, there we must live, moving about among the sorrow and tragedy of humanity as the servants of all. No condition is too wretched, no hell too low for us to stoop to serve, to bless, to lift, to redeem, not caring for our own honor or interest, if we can but impart the blessing of the Kingdom of life, love, and light.

A servant counts it no humiliation to set aside personal rights and serve others; he is not ashamed of being counted inferior; it is his place and work to serve others. The reason some who call themselves "sons" so often have no desire to bless others is that they think of themselves as superior, as if it is somehow beneath them to stoop to serve. But if, on our road to sonship, we first learn to identify with the creation which we are ordained to bring to deliverance, to associate with the lowest of men in the blessed spirit of a servant, what a blessing we shall be to the world! For thus are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. (Rev. 5:6)

It is only as a son you can truly be a servant, for only the Son possesses that life which can quicken and reconcile all things. It was as the Son that Christ Jesus took the form of a Servant. A son of God is in the world to reveal His Father's glory, to display God's life-form, to demonstrate His wisdom and ways, His nature and character, His holiness and justice, and to pour forth His love unto all creation bringing life and hope. Only as a servant-son can this divine life be communicated to the sinful, needy world.

"For You, O Lord, were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation; and have made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign over the earth." (Rev. 5:9-10) Sons and servants. Kings and priests. Can you see the parallel between those two? It is the son who reigns and the priest who serves. Under the Old Covenant the offices of king and priest were separate, but in the New they are combined. Why? Because in Christ the two offices are joined. Christ the King has become our High Priest.

He makes us kings and priests! Do we wish to know the full purpose of this? Why is Jesus seated as both King and Priest upon the throne of the heavens? The answer is not far to seek. It is that man may be blessed, and that God may be glorified in man. He lives as King to reveal the Kingdom of God in us and through us to others. As Priest, He lives to serve and lift us, and others through us, with His life, to bring us near to God.

He makes us kings to give power and efficacy to the priesthood. This is why the idea of authority stands out so prominently. Jesus fills us with a kingly disposition. He enables us to rule over sin, over the flesh, and over the devil. He gives us authority over the world and over men. In the midst of all our circumstances and difficulties, of all opposition or cruelty, of all powers of the flesh, the world, and the devil, the son who yields himself to be made king by Christ lives in the joyous certainty that he is one with Him who has already won the victory, and that he in Him is more than conqueror. This is the heritage of the sons of God, and in this heritage we do take delight. But why? So we can run around with noses in the air exercising His “all authority in heaven and on earth”? Not at all. He makes us kings so we can serve creation as priests unto God.

He makes us king-priests that we might serve creation with power and authority, that we might bring men near unto Him, and that we might be filled with the fullness of the sevenfold intensified Spirit of God, to be a channel for the outflowing of his eternal life to all creation. How else can creation be delivered from its bondage to corruption and find its identity in the glorious liberty that belongs to the sons of God?

As priests, we intercede for others; we pray for them, work among them, teach and instruct them, bless and lift them up, deliver and redeem them – to bring them to God. To be a king is marvelous, but to be a priest is no idle, self-seeking blessedness. The high priest is the mediator, to go between God and men. Christ Jesus is our great High Priest, the “one mediator between God and men.” (1 Tim. 2:5) Now that we are joined with Christ as His many-membered body, we are also to share in His priesthood, as mediators for God on behalf of the world.

It is a compelling power to enter into God’s presence on behalf of mankind – and into man’s presence on behalf of God! It is the power to receive from the Lamb all the blessings and provisions of His wonderful life – and to distribute them. In a spiritual sense, as king-priests, we bring God down to mankind and bring mankind up to God. “And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne... stood a Lamb as having been slain, having seven horns [power, kingship] and seven eyes [vision, priesthood, revelation, communication], which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth... and has made us kings and priests; and we shall reign over the earth.” (Rev. 5:6, 10)

As priests, we have the commission, and as kings, we have the authority and power to do what? To send forth the seven Spirits of God into all the earth. Jesus, the pattern Son, sacrificed His life as our High Priest. Just so as priests we too present our bodies a living sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is our spiritual service of worship. (Rom. 12:1) This service as His king-priests sent forth to minister the seven Spirits of God, is what reconciles the world to God. (2 Cor. 5:19)

As we bring this chapter to a close, I wish to mention again the divine order: sinners are given the free gift of salvation, sons receive an inheritance from the Father, and servants earn rewards for their labors. Salvation is a free gift, an inheritance is given because of relationship, and rewards are given because of work done. All born-again ones are saved by grace and receive their inheritance as sons. But in addition to that, the true servants of God are rewarded according to their works. As sons we shall truly receive the inheritance, but as servants we shall in no wise lose our reward.

Great glory and heavenly wealth awaits those who become profitable servants, fully equipped to serve. “For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man’s work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which He has built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.” (1 Cor. 3:15)

The above verses speak eloquently of the judgment of servants. Paul mentions this servant-judgment again in Romans. “But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, ‘As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.’ So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” (Rom. 14:10-12)

In these two passages, Paul states that Christ, the foundation of the house of sons, is being built upon by every child of God. Some of our works which we are seeking to build on Him are spoken of as “wood, hay, and stubble.” These are all works which are built on Christ but they are not of the nature of Christ; they are actually works of the flesh rather than works of the Spirit. Without doubt, the great majority of “works” being done today by the earthly-kingdom-building Babylon dwellers of popular Christianity fall into this category. Hay, wood, and stubble are not sins, such as lying, drunkenness, or adultery; instead, they are (so-called) “good Christian works” which are built up on the foundation of Christ and done in His name, although not products of His Spirit.

Constantly we receive letters in the mail telling of some grand endeavor for God – a missionary program, television or radio outreach, church building program, revival campaign, Bible school, or other great work, along with pleas for financial help and a self-addressed reply envelope in which the poor and the widows are urged to mail in their offerings. With glib tongues telling how the world will be won for God, well-meaning people are urged to give their support to grandiose programs hatched by worldly-kingdom-building preachers who may live in wanton luxury. Their programs are not the plan of God at all, but merely the product of an imaginative, scheming, avaricious mind. Billions of dollars have thus been squeezed from God’s saints to build cathedrals and promote innumerable programs to do this or that for God which, not only did God not ordain, but were in all truth a stench in His nostrils and an abomination before His face.

When all these good religious fleshly works are brought into the blazing presence of the holy God, they will one and all go up in smoke. What a bonfire that will be! I declare to you that the fires of that judgment shall be seen to the ends of the universe, that every creature in heaven and earth may know once for all that, "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it!" (Ps. 127:1) All works which are to the glory of the creature rather than to the glory of the Creator, will be totally consumed.

Other works are called "gold, silver, precious stones." These symbols speak of works of faith and righteousness wrought in and through us by the Holy Spirit. These are the works which are products of His life, wrought in union with His Holy Spirit and in harmony with His nature. Gold and silver are refined by fire. Precious stones are fire resistant. These are Hebrew symbols for those works which are made pure by the consuming fire of our great and glorious God and, therefore, will remain forever.

The apostle goes on to say that every work which successfully passes the test by fire (which "abides") will be rewarded. Obviously, the "wood, hay, and stubble" variety of carnal works, which were not of the Spirit nor to the glory of God, will go up in smoke. (Praise the Lord!) But those works of the "gold, silver, and precious stones" variety, which are accomplished in and through us by the blessed Holy Spirit to the glory of God alone, will be rewarded. This is the order of the judgment of servants. "With good will render service, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that whatever good thing a man does, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether bond or free." (Eph. 6:8)

This has nothing to do with salvation. No, our sin judgment is already past, forever settled. We are neither saved nor lost by the kind of works we build upon the foundation of Christ. However, our works are judged "as by fire" to burn up all those originating from the flesh and not the Spirit.

Paul makes a breathtaking statement, that a man's works may all be consumed by the blazing presence of the Shekina so that he has absolutely no reward, but he himself "shall be saved!" Even if everything that a believer supposedly "accomplished for God" burns up because it was all carnal "good" works, empty, vain religious exercises, still he himself shall be saved by the abundant grace of our merciful Father! The purpose of judging our works as believers is that He may reward our works of righteousness and forever abolish all that is of the flesh.

What do you suppose our rewards will be? Multiple gold crowns? Bigger mansions? Fancier harps? Jewels and riches? Prestige or fame? I think not. Our rewards will be the increase of life from the seed we planted, for a seed always brings forth after its kind. "Whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you he shall not lose his reward." (Mat. 10:42) "Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me." (Mat. 25:40) Every act of kindness done in Jesus' name and by the leading of His Spirit will result in an increase in His Kingdom. What a reward! What joy shall be ours when we view with awe the bountiful increase and blessing of just the right word or deed at just the right time, as only the Holy Spirit can direct!

# Chapter 18 – The Seven Spirits of God and the Work of Judgment (Part 3)

## Introduction

“And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as having been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.” (Rev. 5:6)

As the anointed body of Christ enters into the fullness of the seven Spirits of God in this last hour, great and glorious blessing shall surely pour forth upon the earth-realm. We shall understand now, as never before, just what John means when he speaks of the seven Spirits of God being sent forth into all the earth. The hour is at hand when the end-time body of Christ, that glorious company of the sons of God, shall minister as none have ever ministered. What will make their ministry so transcendent? The operation of the seven Spirits of God in and through them. We have seen the gifts of the Spirit in operation, and we praise God for them. But soon we will see the seven-fold intensified Spirit of God operating in the sons of God.

We have not yet seen this, despite the claims of some who presume that they have already entered into the fullness of all that pertains to sonship. That mighty company of overcomers must yet receive the Spirit without measure, the incomparable ministry of the seven Spirits of God. In this power the sons of God shall minister judgment unto redemption, reconciliation, and restoration.

## The Nature of Judgment

1 Chron. 16:28-34; Ps. 9:7-8; 33:3-5; 89:14; 96:10-13; 98:4, 8-9; 101:1; Isa. 11:3-11; 26:8-9; 42:1-4; Jer. 4:2

In the previous chapters we discussed many different judgments of God. Let us return now to our original thought of the work of judgment to be accomplished by the Christ of God, head and body, through the ministry of the seven Spirits of God. Isaiah declares of this judgment work, “And the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge and of the Fear of the Lord; and shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord; and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and He shall smite the earth with the rod [authority] of His mouth [the Word], and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt about His loins, and faithfulness the belt about His waist... for the whole earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall stand a root of Jesse for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek; and His rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people...” (Isa. 11:2-5, 9-11)

The cunning of the arch-deceiver, Satan, has robbed much of the church of the blessed assurances of the approaching time when God's righteous judgments shall break forth in the earth. Most people know that the Bible tells of a coming "judgment day," but the average person, believer or not, regards it only with a sense of fear and dread. Because of this fear, there is, to them, no less welcome tidings than that the Lord is coming, or that the age is ending, or that the day of the Lord is at hand. Many tremble inwardly at the thought of God's judgments, preferring not to hear the subject mentioned. Some try to avoid judgment altogether, or even invent doctrines claiming they will be snatched up to heaven before the judgments begin. They have no idea of the wondrous blessings in store for a sin-weary world under the glorious reign of the sons of God filled with the fullness of His seven Spirits.

How differently did the holy prophets and apostles regard that promised day of judgment! Note the expectation in Isaiah's spirit as he says, "Yes, in the way of Your judgments, O Lord, have we waited for You ... with my soul have I desired You in the night; yes, with my spirit within me will I seek You early; for when Your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." (Isa. 26:8-9) Isaiah assures us that the day of God's judgments will be glorious and desirable, because it is God's just judgments that awaken mankind to learn righteousness. Nothing else has worked, nor can work. But God's holy and awesome judgments, sent in perfect justice, will finally succeed. This is a promise, based on the unfailing and sure Word of God. We can count on it!

If the desire of your heart is anything like the desire of my heart, this is a blessed assurance: the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness! How my ransomed soul longs to behold such a thing! Every time I see a newspaper, I am seized with an intense yearning for the inhabitants of the world to learn righteousness. If I watch the evening news on television, my spirit is deeply moved to intercede earnestly for the inhabitants of the world to learn righteousness. As I drive across our great land or walk the streets of our cities and towns, contemplating the lost condition even of my own neighbors, friends, and relatives – my spirit groans with unutterable supplication that the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. What a marvelous gift of our wise and loving Father that, to this end, He has ordained judgment to come forth in the earth!

Hear the note of triumph and exaltation as David speaks by the Holy Spirit:

*Give unto the Lord, ye kindreds of the people,  
Give unto the Lord glory and strength,  
Give unto the Lord the glory due His name.  
Bring an offering, and come before Him,  
Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness;  
Fear before Him, all the earth...  
Let the heavens be glad and let the earth rejoice;  
And let men say among the nations,  
The Lord reigns!  
Let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof;  
Let the fields rejoice, and all that are therein.  
Then shall the trees of the wood  
Sing aloud at the presence of the Lord,  
Because he comes to judge the earth.  
O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good;  
For His mercy endures forever!*

(1 Chron. 16:28-34)

Why do the “trees of the forest” (people of the nations) “sing aloud” when He comes to judge the earth? One would think they might weep and wail or shrink in fear and consternation at the very thought of His judgments. So why all the singing and rejoicing? Because God’s judgments are an expression of His goodness and everlasting mercy, designed to teach the inhabitants of the world righteousness. The earth shall rejoice because this means we have reached the turning point in our degeneration and have come to times of regeneration. His presence, with His holiness and intolerance of evil, brings all the changes necessary for harmony with His righteousness. There shall surely be severe purging, crushing, burning, shattering, and melting; but when they have accomplished their desired results, His new life shall flow freely in victorious restoration.

This same ecstatic exclamation of joy and gladness at the prospects of the coming of God’s righteous judgment into the earth is found throughout the Psalms and Prophets. If you are truly destined to stand among the company of the sons of God, the long-awaited liberators of creation, you will most assuredly share the thrill of the heavenly harmony within David’s inspired song, “Say among the nations that the Lord reigns; the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved; He shall judge the people righteously. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein; then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord; for He comes, for He comes to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth.” (Ps. 96:10-13)

“Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth! Make a loud noise; rejoice and sing praise. Let the sea [peoples, nations] roar, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. Let the floods [armies] clap their hands, let the hills [third-world nations] be joyful together before the Lord; for He comes to judge the earth; with righteousness shall He judge the world, and the peoples with equity.” (Ps. 98:4, 8-9)

The words judge, judgment, or justice are used often in the Scriptures, but only occasionally do they denote the negative aspect of judgment: condemnation, wrath, or destruction. More often, judgment is spoken of as something desirable, beneficial, and glorious. For example, “But the Lord shall endure forever. He has prepared His throne for judgment. And He shall judge the world in righteousness. He shall minister judgment to the people in equity [justly].” (Ps. 9:7-8) “Sing unto Him a new song... for the word of the Lord is right; all His works are done in truth. He loves righteousness and judgment; the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.” (Ps. 33:3-5) “Justice and judgment are the habitation of Your throne; mercy and truth shall go before Your face. Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound.” (Ps. 89:14-15) “I will sing of mercy and judgment; unto You, O Lord, will I sing.” (Ps. 101:1) “Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen One, in whom My soul delights; I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations... He shall faithfully bring forth justice [judgment]. He shall not fail nor be discouraged until He has established justice in the earth, and the coastlands shall wait expectantly [eagerly] for His law.” (Isa. 42:1-4)

## Judgment of the Nations

Gen. 10:1-32; 22:18; Deut. 32:8; Isa. 52:15; Jer. 3:17;  
Ps. 2:8; 22:27-28; 48:2; 67:1-7; 72:11; 82:8; 86:9-10;  
Ezk. 39:25-29; Mic. 4:1-3; Zech. 2:10-11;  
Mat. 5:37; Acts 17:26-27; Rom. 11:25-32; Eph. 1:11;  
1 Tim. 1:15; 1 Jn. 4:14; Rev. 3:12; 21:23-27; 22:1-2

Nothing is more evident in the Word of God than the fact that God has a great and wonderful plan which He is working out in the lives of all people. Many saints recognize that God has a predestined purpose in the lives of each of His people, an appointed end for Israel, an eternal purpose for the church, and a foreordained plan for the overcoming sons of God. We must also understand that God is actively dealing with all the nations by His predetermined plan and purpose.

Everyone understands this in regard to Israel. God has not only provided salvation for all men, but He has specifically promised to the people of Israel a national salvation. This means the day is coming when the Lord will no longer save merely individuals out of Israel, but He shall set His hand to so mightily move upon them by His Spirit that the entire nation shall turn to the Lord and be converted. "Therefore thus says the Lord God; now will I return [restore] the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel... when I have brought them again from the [alien] people and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and when I am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations; then shall they know that I am the Lord their God... which... have gathered them unto their own land and have left none of them any more there. Neither will I hide My face any more from them; for I [will] have poured out My Spirit upon the house of Israel, says the Lord God." (Ezk. 39:25-29)

Paul speaks unmistakably of this national salvation of Israel. "For I would not, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own conceit; that a partial blindness has happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles is come in. And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob... Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God has concluded all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all." (Rom. 11:25-32)

From the dawn of human history, God has had the formation, development, and destiny of nations in mind and purpose. The nations had their origins at the destruction of the Tower of Babel about 3180 BC, 270 years after the Flood. A most remarkable and comprehensive list of the descendants of Noah is found in Genesis chapter 10. It lists those who became heads of the families and tribes which later developed into nations. Even critics of the Bible often admit that this passage is an amazingly accurate historical document. There is no comparable catalog of ancient nations available from any other source. It is unparalleled in its antiquity and comprehensiveness. It ends, "These are the families of the sons of Noah according to their... nations; and out of these the nations were separated after the Flood." (Gen. 10:32)

Except for ancient oral traditions, this chapter is the only link between the historic nations of antiquity and the prehistoric time of Noah and the antediluvians. It is possible in many cases to identify names in Genesis 10 with ancient nations and peoples that are only now being uncovered by archaeology.

After the great Flood, the descendants of Noah remained in Mesopotamia until God confused their languages at the Tower of Babel. “So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth, and they stopped building the city.” (Gen. 11:8) They migrated over the entire globe, forming many tribes and nations. Jewish legend has it that they all began with seventy distinct languages at the Tower of Babel, and this may be true, as there are about that many different non-derivative language groups in the earth today. Please note that though the language groups may be unique and the racial characteristics very strong, all people on earth are from “one blood” (Acts 17:26) as they all came from Noah. Racial differences stem from the inbreeding that occurs when a family group remains isolated for hundreds of years.

Let all men know that almighty God is the designer and architect of all the nations in the world. The time periods and localities in which nations flourish have all been pre-arranged by Him who “works all things after the counsel of His own will.” (Eph. 1:11)

“When the Most High divided the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of man [at Babel], He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.” (Deut. 32:8) This reveals that from the beginning it was God who set the bounds of habitation (national borders) of all the nations, and amazingly enough, these boundaries were established in relation to Israel. The implication, which is consistent with the rest of Scripture, is that from the beginning God designed all the other nations to surround, chastise, test, encourage or support His own people Israel.

Paul stood on Mars Hill and preached, “Men of Athens... God that made the world and all things therein... gives to all life and breath and all things, and has made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord...” (Acts 17:26-27) Why did God do all this? So that mankind would seek the Lord.

While there may yet be a future and more glorious fulfillment of this, it is remarkable that the ancient land of Canaan was originally reserved by the wisdom and goodness of God for the possession of His own ancient people. The theater was small, but wonderfully suited for the convenient observation of the whole human race – at the junction of the two continents of Asia and Africa, almost within sight of Europe. From this spot as from a common center the reports of God’s wonders, His mighty power and His awesome glory were rapidly wafted to every part of the globe. The glad tidings of salvation through His Son spread like wildfire as the disciples of Jesus were set ablaze by the life and power of their glorified Lord at Pentecost by the filling of the Holy Spirit. Yes, God set the bounds of habitation for all nations and planted Israel at the crossroads, so that all nations should seek after God.

Out of Abraham came Israel; out of Israel came Christ; out of Christ has come the church, His Bride; out of the church shall come forth the “man child,” (Rev. 12:5) the holy sons of God who are destined to bring deliverance to all creation that it might be fulfilled which God promised to father Abraham, “And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” (Gen. 22:18)

All nations shall be blessed! From the very beginning, God not only designed the nations of men that dwell upon the earth, He also planned and purposed to bless them – each and every one of them! This speaks not of the blessing of Israel, or the blessing of the church, or the blessing of the saints of God; it is the nations themselves that are destined to come under God’s gracious hand of blessing and reviving.

David, sweet singer of Israel, sang of this hope in the Spirit of Prophecy, “God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause His face to shine upon us; that Your way may be known upon earth, and Your saving health among all the nations. Let the people praise You, O God; let all the people praise You! Oh let the nations be glad and sing for joy; for You, O Lord shall judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth... yes, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him.” (Ps. 67:1-4; 72:11)

The day is surely coming when all nations shall be joined to the Lord and fulfill their obligations to Him as their Maker and Savior. “Arise, O God, judge the earth; for You shall inherit all nations... All nations that You have made shall come and worship before You, O Lord; and shall glorify Your name. For You are very great, and You do wondrous things.” (Ps. 82:8; 86:9-10)

Many such precious “fragments” reveal God’s ultimate purpose for mankind, when “all the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all kindreds of the nations shall worship before You, for the Kingdom is the Lord’s; He is the governor among the nations.” (Ps. 22:27-28) “For from Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things, to Him be glory forever.” (Rom. 11:36)

“Ask of Me, and I will give you the heathen [Heb: nations] for Your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Your possession.” (Ps. 2:8) In this grand prophecy of redemption, God the Father is speaking to His beloved Son. Surely the will and plan of God is revealed in His most gracious request, and surely this was the purpose for which Jesus came into the world. “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” (1 Tim. 1:15) “The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.” (1 Jn. 4:14) With this divine plan in view, David triumphantly sang, “Oh let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for You shall judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth... God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear [reverence] Him.” (Ps. 67:4-7) “All nations shall call Him blessed... and blessed be His glorious name forever, and let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen.” (Ps. 72:17-19)

Blessed beyond my puny ability to describe shall be that day when, “He shall sprinkle [cleanse, sanctify] many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at Him; for that which had not been told them they shall see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.” (Isa. 52:15) “Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of you, says the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be My people.” (Zech. 2:10-11) “Now to Him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but is now made manifest and... known to all nations for the obedience of faith.” (Rom. 16:25-26)

“But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain [government] of the house of the Lord [the sons of God] shall be established in the top of the mountains [over the strong kingdoms, super-powers], and it [also] shall be exalted above the hills [over weaker kingdoms, third-world nations]; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain [government] of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we [the nations] will walk in His paths;’ for the law of the Lord shall go forth out of Zion [sons of God], and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem [the church]. And He shall judge among [between] the peoples [ethnic groups] and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” (Mic. 4:1-3)

“And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them who are saved shall walk in the light of it; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it... and there shall be no more curse.” (Rev. 21:24-26; 22:3) As Jerusalem was the seat of the empire, the center of government, under the Old Testament pattern or type of the Kingdom of God, it will again occupy the same position, and be the “city of the great King.” (Ps. 48:2; Mat. 5:35) A city is a symbol of a kingdom or dominion; so God’s Kingdom is symbolized by the New Jerusalem, the new dominion coming from heaven to earth.

At first this dominion will consist only of the overcomers out of the church (Rev. 2:26-27; 3:12), which, as seen by John, will come down to earth “out of heaven from God” (Rev. 21:2) ; that is, this dominion will take control over the earth when the present world-order is destroyed by fire during the day of the Lord. (2 Pet. 3:11-13; Rev. 21:1) This heavenly city, or spiritual government, is the one for which Abraham longed, “a city which has foundations” (Heb. 11:10-16) – a government established in righteousness, built upon the sure foundation of Christ.

Glorious city of peace! Whose walls signify salvation, protection, and blessing to all who enter it, whose foundations laid in righteousness can never be moved, and whose builder and designer is God! At first only overcomers are permitted in the new Jerusalem, but Revelation 21 and 22 make it clear that it doesn’t end there. It is in the light which will shine from this glorious city (Kingdom) of God that the nations will walk on the highway of holiness, up to perfection and full harmony with God, so the kings of the earth may enter it in glory. (Rev. 21:24)

Yet none can enter that holy city who would defile it, none who live in (or love) deceit and unrighteousness – not until they are cleansed and healed by the life-giving Spirit of the “sun of righteousness” as He arises “with healing in His wings.” (Mal. 4:2) “The leaves of the tree [the Word of God] are for the healing of the nations.” (Rev. 22:2) Jeremiah rejoiced to see this day. “At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord in Jerusalem; neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart.” (Jer. 3:17)

## God's Purpose for the Church

Acts 13:48; 15:14-18; Rom. 8:29; Gal. 4:19;  
Eph. 1:3-10, 21-23; 2:5-7; 3:8-11; 1 Jn. 3:2; Rev. 20:6

We have shown clearly from Scripture that God has from the beginning, both formed and marked out the path of destiny for every nation upon the face of the earth. Unceasingly and untiringly God has been shaping all things for His eternal purposes. After the Flood, beginning with Abraham, God divided mankind into two groups – one family was chosen out from all others. Later we recognize these two groups as Israelites and Gentiles. The Israelites were selected to bear witness before a wicked and idolatrous world of the one true and living God.

They always remembered that they were chosen, but quickly forgot what they were chosen for. Instead of bearing witness to the nations they despised and hated them! Or, worse yet, they copied them and became corrupted by their wickedness and idolatry.

So beginning at Pentecost in 31 AD, another group appeared, called the church, the body of Christ. Its name denotes that it is a “called out” group, composed of both Israelites and Gentiles, chosen to proclaim, not only the power, wisdom, and righteousness of God, but especially His grace. They are to proclaim to the world God’s solution for the problems of sin, sorrow, and death, the solution God wrought only in Christ.

The apostle James made a statement to the council at Jerusalem in which he clearly defines the outline of God’s purpose for the church in this age and the next. “Simeon has declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, ‘After this I will

return, and will build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen... and I will set it up; that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles [nations], upon whom My name is called,’ says the Lord, who does all these things.” (Acts 15:14-18)

Dispensationally, this is one of the most important passages in the Bible. It gives God’s true purpose for this age of sin and the next “Kingdom” age. It states first that God’s purpose during this present age has been to “visit the Gentiles to take out of them a [chosen] people for His name.”

I cannot emphasize too strongly that it is to the selection and training of that chosen group that the activities of God in the world are now devoted. It may come as a shock to some, but it is absolutely true that God’s plan for this present age of sin has never been the conversion of the world! World-wide salvation was never in God’s mind or purpose for this dispensation. God has not been “trying” to save the world, as some ignorant souls might have us believe. God’s purpose during this church age, is simply to “call out” a people for His name. The gospel has never, anywhere, converted all, but everywhere has called out some. Out from the billions on earth, God is choosing a few, an elect company, to bear his name. This has been in progress since Pentecost.

Ever since then God has been forming His church, the body of Christ, the called-out ones. God’s purpose in His church is not merely to save a few from sin and hell and carry them away to some far-off heaven somewhere, leaving the rest to burn in hell forever. No, His purpose in this age is that His church might be formed into His nature and perfected in unity, to reveal His glory.

It is here, in the true church, that Jesus Christ first establishes His government to rule and reign on the throne of men's lives. God's plan is to first establish His dominion in the hearts of His elect, maturing them from babes to true sons, and imbuing them with the glorious mind of Christ until they become His will and nature in the earth.

Sadly, most Christians never come to this. They are too busy playing church while waiting for their mansion over the hilltop, or blundering around in the "good works," carnal programs, foolishness, and shame of a wretched Babylonian religious system. But even as the dispensation of the law, at its consummation, brought forth that which it pointed to – Jesus Christ, the Son of God – so this present church age must, in these last days, at its consummation, bring forth that which it pointed to – the many-membered body of Christ; matured, overcoming, and perfected into the exact likeness and fullness of its glorious and exalted head – until it can be said in all truth, "... as He is, so are we in this present world." (1 Jn. 4:17)

God never intended that Christ should rule over all nations during this present age. His reign is confined entirely to that little company of footstep followers who have heard His voice and who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. (Rev. 14:4) These are the blessed sons of God who become the very embodiment of His divine government. This may seem to be an extremely slow method and a very small Kingdom for such a great King, but consider the lowly birth of the One in whose footsteps we follow. I cannot over-emphasize the importance of this lowly beginning for a government whose authority is destined to "subdue all things." (Phil. 3:21)

May God grant us vision to see that not only is He maturing His nature in the hearts and lives of an elect company of believers, but through His faithful dealings with them He is actually forming them into a divine government – a ruling body of His sons!

Why? To bear His name through their short time in the flesh, then whisk them off to heaven to strum a harp? My spirit cries out no! A thousand times, no! "After these things [after God has completed His work of calling out and perfecting the church], I will return, and I will rebuild the tabernacle of David... that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord..." (Acts 15:16-17, NASB)

Our wise and gracious heavenly Father is even now forming His government of faithful sons whom He shall use as kings and priests in the coming age to bring His Kingdom to its fullness in all the earth. Through these glorious kings and priests, all the rest of mankind, all the nations, will seek the Lord!

This worldwide Kingdom of "manifest sons" (Rom. 8:18-23) cannot become reality until this elect body is fully prepared and trained. The nations will not seek the Lord until they see Him revealed in His sons. But once they see Him, in all His authority and power and glory, in the beauty of His true nature – His self-giving love, joy, and peace – they cannot help but turn to seek Him!

God, through nearly 2000 long years, has been choosing that company, slowly but surely and wisely, preparing them through the fiery furnaces of trials and afflictions to sit together with Him upon His throne. "That you may be blameless... sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world." (Phil. 2:15)

What God is planning to do with His sons in the age to come, even in the ages to come, is little understood by the majority of the Lord's people in this hour. This purpose is abundantly clear in many Scriptures, such as Paul's epistle to the Ephesians. "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will... He made known to us the mystery of His will... with a view to an administration [government] suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon earth... in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenlies, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. And He has put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all... And [He] has raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus, in order that in the ages to come He might show [display] the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." (Eph. 1:4-5, 9-10, 19-23; 2:6-7)

God not only chose the members of the body of Christ, not only predestined them to the adoption of sons and accepted them in the beloved, but He also did for them exactly what He did with Christ. He has "quickened us together with Christ... and raised us up

together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (Eph. 2:5-6) God has given to these members of the body of Christ the highest standing that is possible to give! The sons are not only reckoned "in Christ" in their standing, they are to be like Him, (I Jn. 3:2) destined to reign with Him upon His throne. (Rev. 20:6) But that is not just to honor the sons! It is all part of a calculated program of God for "the ages to come."

What is that program? Here it is: "That in the ages to come He might show [display, exhibit] the exceeding riches of his grace in His kindness toward us in Christ." (Eph. 2:7) To exhibit His grace! To put His grace on display! Display it to whom? Not to those who already know it – that would be useless. And not to those who could never receive it, that would be sadistic cruelty. But to those who do not yet know it but will surely receive it when they see its fullness! Such a magnificent display of His grace will finally awaken the nations, "... that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord..." Through His sons, "He shall sprinkle [cleanse] many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at Him; for that which had not been told them they shall see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider." (Isa. 52:15)

In this present age, salvation is limited, only given to "as many as are ordained unto eternal life." (Acts 13:48) God is not trying to save the world now; He is only working to perfect His elect, His "called-out ones." But in the ages to come, God shall so powerfully display His matchless grace through His beloved sons that "'the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the nations upon whom My name is called,' says the Lord, who does all these things." (Acts 15:17-18)

If this is not true, then the ruling and reigning of the sons of God as kings and priests would be purposeless nonsense. But it is true. To reign with Him as a kingdom of serving priests in order to demonstrate His grace “in the ages to come” is the task of “the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” (Eph. 1:22-23)

How we long for that blessed day when the whole earth will be filled with His glory, when all the nations shall come and worship before Him! One of the weaknesses within human nature is that impetuous desire to “get this show on the road.” In our carnal excitement and fleshly zeal we wonder, like the disciples of old, why the Lord tarries, why He does not finish His work, why we must pass through this seeming endless veil of affliction and trouble, ere we behold the baring of His mighty arm and the triumph of His Kingdom. The hour seems to be so late! Some are so anxious to see the Kingdom of God that they chart dates to try to predict when the sons of God will be manifested.

I do not hesitate to say that all such prophecies are simply products of wishful thinking, misinterpreted dreams and visions, or vain imaginations, and are, one and all, naught but foolishness. Some proclaimed that the Millennium would begin in 1978-79 according to revelations found on the Great Pyramid in Egypt. Another gave 88 reasons why the rapture would occur in 1988, then when that passed, they tried again in 1989. Yet others were sure the Lord would return for His Bride at the turn of the century, as if our year 2000 had any significance on God’s calendar. This “date setting” has been going on for many years and will continue as long as there are people gullible enough to buy it.

Beloved, brethren, I have no desire to be cynical about these things, but the Spirit of Jehovah would have His chosen ones to get their eyes off dates, pyramids, newspaper headlines, computers, world leaders, world events, supposed antichrists and their beast governments, so-called “mark of the beast” financial systems, and all the rest of the dime-store sideshows which capture the minds of so many apprehended to be sons of the Most High. A correct understanding of these things (and most saint’s understanding is not correct) can never add one inch to our spiritual stature. Looking at the darkness in the world and analyzing signs of corruption and evil that are manifest on the earth can never bring one son to perfection in Christ.

How much more profitably may we spend our time and meditation looking unto Him in intimate fellowship with the Lamb on Zion’s holy hill. God’s Spirit witnesses to my heart that the end is not yet; the finishing touches on God’s house of sons are not complete. “Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and you yourselves be like unto men that wait for their Lord...” (Lk. 12:35-36) Look unto Him. Wait for Him. Commune with Him. That is all you can do that will in any way “hasten the day.”

I am reminded of a story out of history. Several centuries ago, the Emperor of Japan commissioned a Japanese artist to paint a bird to be put on display in the emperor’s gallery. Months passed, then years. Finally, the emperor went to the artist’s studio to ask for an explanation. The artist set a blank canvas on the easel and in fifteen minutes completed the painting of a bird that became a masterpiece. The emperor asked why there had been such a long delay. The artist then

went from cabinet to cabinet; he produced armloads of drawings of feathers, heads, wings, feet, claws, eyes, and beaks of birds; these he placed one by one before the emperor. The emperor nodded and left the studio. He understood. The exquisite beauty of the painting completed in fifteen short minutes was merely the result of long years of research, preparation, and hard work.

Our Father shall have a glorious first-fruits company of sons in His own image which He shall put on display before the entire universe as the revelation of His own bountiful grace and matchless glory. The day of that unveiling shall surely come and will not tarry. In the meantime, and to that end, the blessed Holy Spirit of God is patiently and unrelentingly operating in the lives of His apprehended ones so that we may be conformed to the image of God's dear Son. (Rom. 8:29) This cannot take place in an instant, nor by a superficial experience of God. The time of our salvation and the times of our fillings with God's Holy Spirit were no more than declarations of the divine purpose. That is just the beginning of the long work. The whole process is a detailed and painstaking progress "until Christ be formed in you." (Gal. 4:19)

Then the great day shall come when the Emperor of emperors will fill us in a new and living visitation of His omnipotent Spirit and the completed work will flash forth in a moment; the glorious portrait of the Son of God exquisitely wrought upon the fabric of our lives, "that, by His goodness to us in Christ Jesus, He might display in the ages to come the transcendent riches of His grace... for we are God's own handiwork, created in Christ Jesus..." (Eph. 2:7, 10, Weymouth)

## Judgment and Restoration of Nations

Isa. 19:21-25; Jer. 48:47; Ezk. 16:49-61;  
Zech. 2:13-15; Zeph. 2:9; 49:6; Mat. 11:23-24; Jude 7

We have seen that there is a two-fold ministry of the sons of God: judgment and mercy. On the one hand, they shall exhibit His surpassing grace, and on the other hand, they shall bring judgment in the earth. But these two are not as far apart as one might think. The more the Spirit of revelation unfolds the truth, the more we see God's judgments in proper perspective, that they are corrective in their nature and used to bring forth a state of rightness in the earth. They shall not be executed in unholy wrath and vengeance, for mercy and grace shall balance the score! Judgments are desperately needed, but they are ever tempered with mercy, and when they have fulfilled their purpose, the judgments end, and the whole earth shall be full of God's mercy, life, and glory. Mercy recognizes the need of justice. Mercy knows that every mountain and hill must be brought low, but mercy is there to fill the valleys once the subduing is done.

With this thought of judgment and mercy in mind, let us look at some promises of God to specific peoples and nations. We all know the fearful judgment which fell on the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah. Jude tells us that they are "set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." (vs 7) These cities were so completely destroyed that today no trace of them can be found. Archeologists can only guess as to where they may have been located. After such a complete work of judgment, one would think that you could just forget about Sodom and Gomorrah and "write them off" forever.

And yet, God holds forth the promise of Sodom's eventual restoration. Not only that, but that promise is linked up with His promise to restore the people of Israel. Speaking to backslidden Judah and Israel as to a couple of harlot sisters, God declares to them in His great mercy, "Behold, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. They were haughty, and committed abominations before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw good. Neither has Samaria committed half of your sins; but you have multiplied your abominations more than they... When I shall bring again their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, then will I bring again the captivity of your captives in the midst of them... when your sisters, Sodom... and Samaria... shall return to their former estate, then you and your daughters shall return to your former estate... I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth and I will establish unto you an everlasting covenant. Then you shall remember your ways, and be ashamed..." (Ezk. 16:49-63)

Has this wonderful thing been accomplished? History shouts aloud that it has not – not yet! But, fear not, dear ones, for the same faithful and omnipotent God who declared, "And so all Israel shall be saved," also promises, "Sodom and her daughters shall return to their former estate."

Jesus saw this coming restoration of Sodom when He announced to the people of Capernaum, "And you, Capernaum, which are exalted unto heaven, shall be brought

down to hell; for if the mighty works that have been done in you, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained unto this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you." (Mat. 11:23-24)

When the people of these two cities rise up in the day of judgment, it will be easier for the sons of God to bring those of Sodom into harmony with the righteous rule of God's Kingdom than those of Capernaum. Although the men of Sodom were extremely wicked, if the miracles done in Capernaum had also been done in Sodom, they would have repented and been spared. So the men of Capernaum will have to be disciplined more severely to bring them to repentance. These verses can have no other meaning.

Another striking example of God's dealings with nations is found in the ancient nation of Assyria. It was one of the greatest of the empires that ruled the ancient world. Zephaniah prophesied the Lord's judgment against Assyria in about 615 BC, saying, "He will stretch out His hand against the north, and destroy Assyria; and will make Nineveh [capital of Assyria] a desolation, dry like a wilderness... This is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, 'I am! And there is none beside me.' How is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in! Every one that passes by her shall hiss, and wag his hand." (Zeph. 2:13-15) The Medes and Babylonians under Nabopolassar conquered Nineveh in 612 BC, and the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar eventually took the entire Assyrian empire. Today there are only dirt mounds covering the site of mighty Nineveh, and the kingdom of Assyria does not exist any more at all.

But now, hear this! “And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day... yes, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform it. And the Lord shall smite Egypt. He shall smite and heal it, and they shall return even to the Lord. In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria. The Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve [the Lord] with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third part with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land; whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt My people, Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel Mine inheritance.” (Isa. 19:21-25)

To claim that God will never restore Assyria or that He will not ultimately save them would be a blatant repudiation of the Word of God. Notice, too, that today Egypt is a Moslem nation, but, according to the above prophecy Egypt also shall come to know the Lord and shall serve Him as a nation – along with Israel and Assyria.

The nations of Moab and Ammon are two more examples, “Therefore as I live, says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, even the breeding of nettles, and salt pits, and a perpetual desolation.” (Zeph. 2:9) This would seem to be pretty final, but it is only final until the judgment is completed. For God promises of Moab, “Yet will I bring again [restore] the captivity of Moab in the latter days” (Jer. 48:47) and God also promises of Ammon, “And afterward I will bring again [restore] the captivity of the children of Ammon, says the Lord.” (Jer. 49:6)

If one reads only a portion of God’s Word, the facts are too few to calculate rightly the curve of God’s purposes. May the Spirit of Revelation enable us to see beyond the weeping of the night that we may behold the joy that comes in the morning. When every judgment has fulfilled its purpose, the judgments end. Then the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. “And He will destroy ... the covering cast over all people, and the veil [of blindness] that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord will wipe away every tear from their eyes...” Every tear! No more regrets, no more “if only’s,” no more mourning for a lost relative or loved one, no more anguish over the heathen. “... it shall be said in that day, ‘Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.’” (Isa. 25:7-9)

*The Lord is King! Lift up your voice,  
O earth; and all ye heavens, rejoice:  
From world to world the joy shall ring,  
The Lord omnipotent is King!*

*The Lord is King! Who then shall dare  
Resist His will, distrust His care,  
Or murmur at His wise decrees,  
Or doubt His royal promises?*

*The Lord is King! Child of the dust,  
The Judge of all the earth is just;  
Holy and true are all His ways:  
Let every creature speak His praise.*

*He reigns, and life and death are yours:  
One Lord, one empire, all secures;  
Thro’ earth and heav’n one song shall ring,  
The Lord omnipotent is King!*

–Josiah Conder, 1824

## Chapter 19 – The Seven Spirits of God and the Work of Judgment (Part 4)

“And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as having been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.” (Rev. 5:6)

“And the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge and of the Fear of the Lord; and He shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord; and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins. ... They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” (Isa. 11:2-5, 9)

### Judgment Day

Gen. 2:4; Ps. 82:5; Dan. 7:21-22; Lk. 22:28-30; Acts 17:31; 1 Cor. 6:2-3; 2 Cor. 6:2; 2 Thes. 2:2-3; 1 Tim. 6:15; Heb. 3:8-9; 2 Pet. 3:7-8; Rev. 20:1-4, 6; 19:11

On Mars Hill, the apostle Paul told the men of Athens, “... having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent,

because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.” (Acts 17:30-31, NASB) This verse sets forth three wonderful truths: (1) God has appointed a day; (2) In that day He shall judge the world in righteousness; (3) The Judge will be the Man whom He has ordained. God has appointed “a day” when He will judge the world – by Jesus Christ!

The term “day,” both in the Scriptures and in common usage, is most frequently used to represent a twelve or twenty-four hour period, but can signify any definite or special period of time. Thus, for instance, we speak of Abraham’s day, Noah’s day, Luther’s day, Washington’s day, and so on. In the Bible, the entire time of creation is called a day – we read of “... the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens” (Gen. 2:4) A “day” here is a definite period, which includes the six other days of creation listed in Genesis chapter 1. Then we read of “the day of temptation in the wilderness” which was forty years. (Heb. 3:8-9) Also we see the “day of vengeance,” “day of wrath” and “day of trouble” – terms applied both to the forty year period at the dispersion of the Jewish nation and to a similar period of trouble when the times of the Gentiles are brought to a close at the end of this age. “Now is the acceptable time, behold, now is the day of salvation.” (2 Cor. 6:2)

We also read of the “day of Christ,” the “day of judgment,” “the Lord’s day,” and “His day” – terms especially applicable to that glorious age of God’s Kingdom, in which Christ, head and body, will both reign over and judge the world in righteousness, granting wonderful blessings as well as rendering binding sentences. Of that day it is written, “... until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in His day shall show who is that blessed and only potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords.” (I Tim. 6:14-15)

Peter writes of this “day of judgment” when this present evil world will pass away. “The heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.” (2 Pet. 3:7) Then he goes on to explain just what he means by this day of judgment. “But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” (vs. 8)

Thus from Peter’s perspective, God’s judgment day may be a thousand years long. When Peter wrote of this day of judgment, he may have been thinking of “the great day of the Lord” – the thousand-year Sabbath of rest for God’s own elect, when Satan will be bound in the abyss and the worldly-minded will be in captivity and ruled over by those who for 6,000 years were their captives. (Rev. 20:1-4) But because many saints of his time anticipated this day of glory to come very soon, in their own lifetime, Peter inserted that next verse to warn them not to become dismayed on account of the long period yet to elapse before it should dawn. The six days of earth – six millennia – must pass before the millennial Sabbath Rest could come.

Both Peter and Paul lived and wrote in the morning of the fifth day. Both may have known that two thousand years must elapse before the seventh day could begin. So Paul warned the saints not to be deceived into thinking that the seventh day had already come. “But relative to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we beg you, brethren, not to allow your minds to be quickly unsettled or disturbed or kept excited or alarmed, whether it be by some pretended revelation of the Spirit or by word or by letter alleged to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has already arrived and is here. Let no one deceive or beguile you in any way, for that day will not come except the apostasy comes first, unless the predicted great falling away ... has come – and the man of lawlessness [man of sin] is revealed, who is the son of perdition.” (2 Thes. 2:1-3, AMP)

God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom he has ordained, and that Man is Christ, head and body. When giving his preview of this thousand-year judgment day, the apostle John wrote, “I saw thrones, and sitting on them were those [saints] to whom authority to act as judges and pass sentence was entrusted. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witnessing of Jesus and for the Word of God, and who had refused to pay homage to the beast... and they lived again, and ruled with Christ a thousand years. Blessed is the person who takes part in the first resurrection! Over them the second death has no power or authority, but they shall be ministers of God and of Christ, and they shall rule with Him for a thousand years.” (Rev. 20:4, 6)

“Thrones” are occupied by those who are given the authority to “act as judges.” Is this a glorious and exciting prospect, or does it cast a dismal shadow upon what would otherwise be a bright picture of that coming age of the ages? Judges? Sentences handed down? Judicial decisions? Authority? How are we to view such a prospect?

In conjunction with this vision, John says, “Then I saw an angel [representative of a ministry] descending from heaven; he was holding the key of the abyss – the bottomless pit – and a great chain was in his hand. And he gripped and overpowered the dragon, that old serpent of primeval times, who is the devil and Satan, and securely bound him for a thousand years. Then he hurled him into the abyss – the bottomless pit – and closed it and sealed it above him, so that he should no longer lead astray and deceive and seduce the nations until the thousand years were at an end.” (Rev. 20:1-3, AMP) Talk about judgment! Sentencing! Judicial authority! Power from heaven! A burning word of authority! John saw this present world-system judged and ended. (Rev. 6-11)

After six thousand years of sin, sorrow, war, tyranny, persecution, oppression, pain, and death, mankind needs deliverance. For over six-thousand years, the earth has been governed by the will of man, and the will of man has been usurped by the mind of Satan, god of this world. Men have been governed variously by emperors, dictators, kings, tyrants, prime ministers, or presidents, but the net result has always been the same, for the corrupt nature of man always asserts itself, seeking its own ambition, fulfilling its own desire, and doing its own will. Even the best of our leaders has ultimately failed us.

Are the people not deeply disappointed and perplexed today by the political and judicial system that operates in this hour, even here in the United States of America? Truly I can say to you that in our time, as at no previous time, the prophecies of Scripture have come true regarding our leaders. “They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are out of course.” (Ps. 82:5) Or, as the Amplified Bible puts this verse, “The magistrates and judges know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in the darkness; all the foundations of the earth [the fundamental principles upon which rest the administrations of justice] are shaking.”

Can anyone possibly imagine what would happen to a nation if all the members of its government were completely selfless instead of completely selfish, if they were sons of God walking in the mind and Spirit of Christ instead of our hand-shaking, baby-kissing politicians seeking to curry the favor of men for personal advantage, or if the judges judged by God’s Spirit of Wisdom and Discernment, instead of by the tricky technicalities of the law? What if the leaders of the world were filled with the Holy Spirit of God and moved under the power of that anointing, instead of building larger armies and navies, more sophisticated missiles, and more destructive bombs? What if judges and social workers had the Word of God in their mouths and power to cast the demon spirits out of men, instead of assigning them to a psychiatrist, mental hospital, or prison? To even contemplate such things in this age of darkness may bring a sad smile to our faces, but I can assure you in all confidence that this present “day of darkness” is even now

merging into God's great day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. The whole world system is swiftly sinking down and collapsing around us, and God is even now preparing a righteous government of holy sons of God to replace it.

Destruction of all the devil-controlled systems of this world will certainly call for a change of judgeships over mankind. In the proper course of things, then, new thrones of judgment come into existence. Only a better body of judges could be expected to occupy those new thrones of judgment, which are established by God's own authority in the heavenlies. This is a mighty deliverance for misled, mis-ruled, and misjudged mankind!

Two thousand years ago Jesus called the first twelve of this new order of judges. On the night of His betrayal, arrest, and mock trial by the highest court in Jerusalem, Jesus said to His small handful of followers, "You are those who have remained and persevered with Me in My trials. As My Father has appointed a Kingdom and conferred it on Me, so do I confer on you the privilege and decree that you may eat and drink at My table in My Kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Lk. 22:28-30) Those were the first appointed to this realm of authority, but there will be many others. "I beheld, and that horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints took possession of the Kingdom." (Dan. 7:21-22) "Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters?" (1 Cor. 6:2-3)

## **The Ministry of Judgment**

Gen. 3:5; Judg. 3:11-19; Ps. 2:1-5; 30:5; 98:9; 100:5; 103:9; 136:1-26; 149:5-9; Isa. 6:1-3; 11:2-4, 9; 26:9; 54:8; 57:16; 61:1-2; Jer. 3:12; Ezk. 7:3-4; 11:9-20; Dan. 2:35, 44; 7:18, 22, 27; Mic. 7:18; Acts 3:21; Jn. 5:19-20; Heb. 12:6; 1 Jn. 4:8; Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21; 20:4-6

If the saint's ministry of judgment were limited to just pronouncing decisions in that day when the world is brought to judgment, why is it that these holy judges are assigned a thousand years to judge the nations? Such a long period is assigned for a work to be done and not merely for pronouncement of verdicts and sentences. In the Bible, the ones whom God raised up as judges for His people did a lot more than settle disputes between individuals or hand down judicial decisions. Those judges were actually the leaders and deliverers of God's people.

There is one book in the Bible that is specifically named "Judges." As a book, it is a thriller! Therein we read of the fearless exploits of those mighty men whom God, "the Judge of all the earth," raised up for the salvation and deliverance of His oppressed and afflicted people. Acclaim the day of judgment that began when God raised up a judge to execute judgment for His afflicted ones! These judges were "saviors" of Israel by a special anointing of the Spirit of God.

It seems as if each generation has to learn the hard way. "... there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord... And they forsook the Lord... And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel... and He sold them into the hands of their enemies round about... so they were greatly distressed." (Judg. 2:10-15)

But, “When the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, He raised up a deliverer, who delivered them... and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war... and prevailed... and the land had rest.” (Judg. 3:9-11) Again, “The Lord raised up judges that delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. ... And when the Lord raised up judges, then the Lord was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge...” (Judg. 2:16, 18) As long as the judge remained over the people, the land had peace and God’s blessings returned.

Those wonderful judges were raised up only for Israel’s deliverance; but now, in this momentous hour, God is preparing a mighty company of judges whose responsibility it shall be to judge the world in righteousness! “And he who overcomes... to him will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron.” (Rev. 2:26-27) “To him who overcomes will I grant to sit with Me in My throne.” (Rev. 3:21) “I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given unto them... and they reigned with Christ a thousand years.” (Rev. 20:4, 6)

The church and the world have long been under the power and oppression of the evil adversary, Satan. Even the sons of God have been under this oppression, and they cry continually to God for deliverance. God hears their cry. In His perfect time, He will deliver them and give them the Kingdom. “Then the sovereignty, the dominion, and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of, the saints of, the Highest One. His Kingdom will be an everlasting one, and all dominions will serve and obey Him.” (Dan. 7:27)

The very thought of an age governed by the sons of God filled with His sevenfold intensified Spirit leaves me breathless! Words become totally inadequate; human ability to articulate the wonder of it fails completely. Our faltering minds cannot really appreciate nor comprehend the glory of Isaiah’s prophecy, “With righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall smite the earth with the rod [authority] of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips [word] shall He slay the wicked. The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” (Isa. 11:4, 9)

As we look at that typical order of judges under the Old Testament economy, we see that there are two distinct aspects to the ministry of judges. The first is negative judgment – discipline, punishment, severity, breaking, crushing, melting, shattering. The second is positive, redemptive judgment – deliverance, vindication, and restoration! The first is the means to achieve the second. Negative judgment is essential to fulfill the primary purpose of God, which is to bring to pass “the times of restitution of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.” (Acts 3:21) The first is an expression of God’s righteous anger and wrath, while the second shows God’s all-surpassing mercy and love.

David understood these two aspects of God’s nature. He writes, “His anger endures but for a moment,” (Ps. 30:5) but insists that “... His mercy endures forever.” (Ps. 136:1-26) These verses show that the Lord’s anger is limited and temporary – it endures only for a brief time – but His mercy lasts as long as mercy is needed – even forever!

Isaiah confirms the psalmist's words, saying, "I will not contend forever, neither will I always be angry; for [if I did] the spirit would grow faint before Me, and the breath of those whom I have made." (Isa. 57:16) "In a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on you, says the Lord our Redeemer." (Isa. 54:8) Isaiah prophesies in poetic language, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me... to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God." (Isa. 61:2) What a striking contrast between the duration of the Lord's mercy and His vengeance!

Jeremiah adds his witness, "Return... for I am merciful, says the Lord, and I will not keep anger forever." (Jer. 3:12) Micah, too, declares, "Who is a God like unto You, that pardons iniquity... He retains not His anger forever, because he delights in mercy." (Mic. 7:18) As David says again, "The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide, neither will He retain His anger forever." (Ps. 103:8-9) What a wonderful contrast between the short duration of God's anger and the enduring and eternal character of His love and mercy. "For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations." (Ps. 100:5)

*There's a wideness in God's mercy  
Like the wideness of the sea.  
There's a kindness in His justice  
Which is more than liberty.  
But we make His love too narrow  
With false limits of our own,  
And we magnify His strictness  
With a zeal He will not own.*

*For the love of God is wider  
Than the measure of man's mind,  
And the heart of the Eternal,  
Is most wonderfully kind!  
If our love were but more simple,  
We could take Him at His word,  
And our lives would be more loving  
In the likeness of our Lord.*

Frederick W. Faber, 1814-1863

We must never lose sight of the fact that God's anger is but part of His essential nature – love. "God is love." (1 Jn. 4:8) We must understand that even the judgment aspect of the ministry of the sons of God shall be in love. The dealings of the heavenly Father which appear to us to be only wrath and vengeance are, in truth, in love and with the ultimate intention of restoration.

It is not unreasonable to suppose that the ministry of love can come in judgment. This is easily understood when the purpose of judgment is considered. God's objectives in judgment are to demonstrate His power and authority, His total sovereignty over the affairs of men, and the righteousness, justice, truth, and beauty of His wisdom and ways, in contrast to the terrible consequences of any way but His. This is love! For it turns mankind away from that which would only destroy him, and turns him to consider that which can only bless him forever.

But God knows that mankind cannot receive His love without a heart transplant. Thus along with His love, mercy, and grace, God sends judgment upon all that is false or perverted, to break down the arrogant pride and stubborn spirit of human independence and rebellion which causes him to place his trust in his own wisdom and ingenuity.

The result is, "... when Your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." (Isa. 26:9) Thus the judgment is simply a training program. "All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness." (Heb. 12:11)

Ever since the Fall, the essence of all sin has always been man's effort to individuality and independence from God. This was the route Adam chose long ago, and it remains the breach between God and man today. God wanted men to be His sons, but Adam chose Satan's way: to live independently from God; to become as gods themselves. "And the serpent said to the woman. 'You shall not surely die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'" (Gen. 3:5)

This is the lie Satan gave to Adam and Eve, and that old deceiver is still pushing it today. This is a lie built on a foundation of lies, for mankind cannot exist for even an instant without God. All his feeble efforts at self-determination and independence are pure folly and futility. "Why are the nations in an uproar, and the peoples devising a vain thing? The kings of the earth take their stand, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, 'Let us tear their fetters apart, and cast away their cords from us!' He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. Then He will speak to them in His wrath and terrify them in His fury." (Ps. 2:1-5) This is the purpose of judgment: to expose the lie, that men's eyes might be opened and hearts prepared to receive the truth.

Jesus came to demonstrate the Father's eternal purpose in sonship. He said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but [only] what He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and greater works than these will He show Him, that you may marvel." (Jn. 5:19-20)

We might better catch this simple truth by thinking of Jesus with His earthly father in the carpenter's shop, learning his trade. The first thing you notice is His dependence, "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father doing." Then you are struck by the obedience that only seeks to imitate His father, "for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner." You then notice the loving intimacy as His father works with Him to teach Him the carpentry trade, keeping back none of its secrets, "For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing." Step by step, the Son is trained up to all that the father himself does. In this dependent obedience on his Son's part and loving teaching on the father's part, you see the goal: the father's desire for his Son to become all that he is, a master carpenter. "Greater works than these will [the Father] show [the Son] that you may marvel!"

In this picture, we have a picture of the relationship God intended to grow between Himself and the whole world of mankind. From the very beginning, God, our Father, created man to be in His own image and likeness. But alas! Man rejected the Father's plan and repudiated His love, and set about to "do his own thing" in defiance of God.

So, it is impossible to start fallen man on the road to restoration until he is first able to acknowledge that he is inescapably subject to a superior being – God. First, God has to get man’s attention. When man sees a demonstration of God’s infinite power, he begins to recognize the vanity and futility of independence from God. Finally, he is encouraged to take the first step toward his restoration to the original purpose of his creation. Deliverance from the factors and forces which keep him in bondage cannot be wrought until man is able to acknowledge the complete superiority, the absolute authority, the total sovereignty, and the unlimited ability of the God of love. Thus the first objective in divine judgment is to demonstrate the power of God.

The Scriptures abound with examples of this. A good one is found in the manner in which God brought judgment upon Israel for their backsliding from Him. “Now is the end come upon you. I will send My anger upon you, and will judge you according to your ways, and will bring retribution upon you for all your abominations. And My eye will not spare you, neither will I have pity; but I will bring recompense for your evil ways upon you, while all your abominations are in the midst of you, and you shall know that I am the Lord! ... I will deliver you into the hands of foreigners, and will execute judgments among you. You shall fall by the sword... and you shall know, understand, and realize – that I am the Lord!” (Ezk. 7:3-4 and 11:9-10) But after getting their attention, showing them His power, bringing down their pride, arrogance and rebellion, He quickly promises that all this shall serve to bring them to redemption and restoration.

“Therefore thus says the Lord God, ‘Whereas I have removed Israel far off among the nations, and have scattered them among the countries... I will gather you from the peoples, and assemble you out of the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give back to you the land of Israel.’ And when they return there they shall take from it all traces of its detestable things and all its abominations. And I will give them one heart – a new heart – and I will put a new spirit within them; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances to do them. Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God.” (Ezk. 11:16-20)

Israel had to be brought to understand and accept God’s superiority and dominion. God could not progress with His ultimate plan for them until His total sovereignty was acknowledged in repentance and humility. Thus the love of God is not violated in His judgment, as it is written, “Whom the Lord loves, He chastens.” (Heb. 12:6)

Paul was not violating God’s love when he pronounced the judgment of blindness upon Elymas the sorcerer. (Acts 13:10-11) The Roman proconsul on the island of Cyprus, Sergius Paulus, would surely testify that God’s judgment of blindness on his servant Elymas, whose sorceries were blocking him from hearing the gospel through Paul, was an expression of God’s love. As a result of this judgment, Sergius Paulus received the gospel. I believe Elymas eventually received the gospel as well, when he was healed – Paul implied as much when he said, “The hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and not see the sun for a time.”

The love of God was not violated when Saul of Tarsus was smitten with blindness on the Damascus Road. His salvation, filling with the Holy Spirit, and powerful apostleship among the Gentiles witnessed that the judgment that fell upon him that day was only one of many judgments of God in love. God has to get our attention! The judgment that the Lord brings is intended to bring every arrogant heart down and every proud heart to humiliation, until God alone is exalted. He alone is worthy of exaltation. In fact, Scripture assures us that “the Lord alone will be exalted in that day.” (Isa. 2:11, 17)

This does not contradict the Scriptures which elevate the sons of God to the glory of God. “... if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him... the glory that is to be revealed in us... the revealing of the sons of God... the freedom of the glory of the sons of God.” (Rom. 8:17-21) Christ alone is still exalted, but all who are in Christ are also exalted in Him (See John 17:22) for they humbled themselves and were crucified and buried with Him. The ultimate purpose of the coming “day of judgment” is the exaltation of the One who deserves to be exalted, that in His exaltation all men everywhere may also be lifted up.

Judgment must come to bring down the thrones of men. It must come to bring down the dominions and kingdoms of men. It must begin from the house of God. We have conformed to man’s ideas, words, plans, and programs for centuries. We have offered our sacrifices, performed our ceremonies and rituals, and established our institutions. We have exalted men by the thousands, idolized the words from their lips, and worshiped at the powerless shrines of their personalities.

God’s day is destined to bring an end to this stupidity and insanity. He will remove these foundations of man’s establishments, and establish for Himself a people on His eternal foundation, the Rock, Christ Jesus. He is abolishing all idols, even “good” church programs and traditions, to establish His saints in the life and reality of His Spirit. Everything will become completely new. Unknown to us, there are still things about us that retain the nasty odor of the old “religious” disorder, but these also will have to go so that the Lord alone may be exalted in our lives and hearts. God is going to make a complete riddance of the flesh, first of all in the house of God, and finally among all nations upon the face of the earth. You can count on it! The “judgment day” is at hand!

Doubtless, God would desire to be exalted and have full rule over our lives without the necessity of judgment. God would like for us to freely give over the reins of our lives to Him, to die out to ourselves, our will, plans, or ambitions, our dominion, without having to be broken in judgment. But He finds man to be a very rebellious and stubborn creature. It would be much easier if we would yield control to Him and rejoice in the leadership of His Spirit. But one way or another, He shall rule! And He is even now bringing a firstfruit company of people to the full experience of His Kingdom, His rule, His will, His dominion. He is setting up His dominion within His chosen elect, and His Kingdom through them shall take dominion over every other kingdom. Thus, ultimately the Kingdom of God shall be the overthrow of all other kingdoms within them and without them, and it shall rule in absolute authority forever and ever.

## **The Ministry of Redemption, Reconciliation, and Restoration**

Judg. 2:11-19; Job 38:4-7; Isa. 11:4-9; 29:13; 52:15; Obad. 21; Zech. 13:1; Mat. 4:17; 6:10; Jn. 3:7; 2 Cor. 7:10; Rom. 8:28-29; Eph. 1:10; Col. 1:19-20; James 4:8; 1 Pet. 4:17; Rev. 1:5-6; 5:9-10; 21:6

The day which God has appointed, in which He shall judge the world, is now at hand. The judges for this day are now in preparation. Yes, you shall judge the world, saints – but you will do it in humility and with a broken heart full of compassion and love. The first aspect of the ministry of the judges in the coming age is judgment. This work, however, shall be swiftly followed by the second ministry of mercy, reconciliation, forgiveness, and restoration, because God's judgments are always given in mercy and love for the purpose of redemption. Let us now consider the processes of this wonderful work of redemption and reconciliation.

Two millennia ago, the hope of Israel's coming Messiah, the promised Deliverer, was the fervent prayer and burning desire of the devout. When Jesus came, God's people Israel were baffled and perplexed, because they had learned to look only for a Messiah who would come to deliver them from their oppressors. The prophecy plainly declared that a deliverer would come out of Zion. Of this they were confident and assured, but their unregenerate hearts and unspiritual minds did not comprehend that the first work of the promised Messiah would be to deliver them from the curse of their own sins and to transform their wicked, self-centered hearts. This spiritual deliverance could only be accomplished by the shedding of His righteous blood in a perfect sacrifice and the regeneration of the Holy Spirit within them.

Israel wanted to be delivered from Rome. In their clouded minds, they could see only the flashing of Roman swords as the source and substance of their bondage. But what value would it have been had the promised Redeemer come only to deliver them from the power of Rome, if there was no change in their wicked and rebellious hearts? It was to discipline their wicked hearts that God sent the Roman legions in the first place! God's Word is full of accounts of His mighty acts of deliverance whenever they forsook their sins and cried out to Him, but it seems no sooner were they delivered from their enemies than they turned right back to their sinful ways.

“And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim; and they forsook the Lord God of their fathers and followed other gods, provoking the Lord to anger. And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and He delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and He sold them into the hands of their enemies so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. Wherever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil. Nevertheless, the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them. When the Lord raised them up judges, He delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge. And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they corrupted themselves more than their fathers; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn ways.” (Judg. 2:11-19)

What a sordid state of affairs! Do you get the picture? Over and over, with each new generation, the cycle goes on and on. "The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord... and the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and He delivered them into the hands of their enemies... and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord... and the Lord raised them up judges... the Lord was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge... and it came to pass, when the judge was dead, they corrupted themselves more than their fathers... and the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord... and the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and He delivered them into the hands of their enemies... the children of Israel cried unto the Lord... and the Lord raised them up judges... " and the cycle repeats again. I counted at least nine such cycles mentioned in the book of Judges.

How unmistakably evident that it was not their enemies from whom they needed deliverance – they needed deliverance from themselves! Their problem was that they continually cried unto the Lord because of the oppression of the king of Mesopotamia, or the Moabites, or the Canaanites, or the Midianites, or the Syrians, or the Philistines; or the Ammonites, but never once did they cry mightily unto God because of their own desperately wicked and rebellious hearts!

Judges is a wonderful book. Over and over again it records the loving kindness and tender mercy of God on the one hand and the incredible corruption of the human heart on the other. You cannot read Judges without sensing the deep longing of God for His chosen ones in spite of their unfaithfulness.

The corruption of the human heart is beyond belief. It would have been useless had God sent His Son to be the Deliverer of His people Israel from Rome, or from any other external circumstance or situation, while leaving their wicked hearts unchanged and their carnal natures not destroyed. As in the days of old, they would no sooner have been delivered from the Roman oppressors than they would have returned to heathen gods and to the lusts of their own flesh.

Is this not what the unregenerate are doing now? Do they not worship mammon, the god of riches, and humanism, the god of self-esteem? Are they not lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God? Do men not bow to the gods of greed and lust? God says, "You draw nigh to Me with your lips, but your heart is far from Me." (Isa. 29:13) "Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded." (James 4:8)

In the approaching age of the Kingdom of God, what good would it be to raise up righteous judges to judge the people, to settle disputes between individuals and nations, to pronounce verdicts and execute judicial decisions, while the heart of man remains deceitful and corrupt and his mind more nearly like the devil than the mind of God?

If ever the world is to be judged and ruled in righteousness, then righteousness must first of all capture the heart of man. The rule of God must move from outside of man into the tables of his heart and mind. There must be a new birth, even a birth from above. The wickedness of man demands it. There must be a conversion, a total change, wherein evil men who once were far from God are transformed by the blood of Christ.

The very wellspring of that conversion must be a birth from above by which a new heart and a new spirit are placed within men of all races and nations. This is why Jesus, when He first appeared on the world scene, came preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God with the words, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!" (Mat. 4:17) "For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death." (2 Cor. 7:10)

The whole problem with Israel as a nation in Bible times was that they were unconverted. While they willingly made covenants with God and swore allegiance and obedience to Him, their hearts remained unchanged. There was no birth from above. All the while they were forcing themselves to do God's bidding, their unregenerate hearts were wandering after Baal, Ashtaroath, or Mammon, because these gods catered to their flesh and to every abomination that is common to the human heart. They did not serve the Lord because their hearts were not attuned to that life of holiness which begins when Jesus comes into the heart.

The same condition still exists all about us in the unregenerate people who warm the pews of our so-called churches every Sunday morning. With their lips they serve the Lord, but their hearts are far from Him! They sing, "Holy, holy, holy," while their unconverted hearts dream of business or pleasure or oft times unholy things. They flippantly sing "Follow, I will follow Jesus," and "All to Jesus I surrender," while planning their own schedule without a thought of seeking the will of God or His Holy Spirit's guidance. Their focus is pleasing self, not serving God.

The world does not yet understand this truth, but the first essential step for anyone entering the Kingdom of God is found in these words, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto you, you must be born again." (Jn. 3:5-7)

If we aspire to belong to that glorious company of God's sons who shall judge and reign over the earth-realm in righteousness and power, then we must learn that "the time is come that judgment must begin from the house of God." (1 Pet. 4:17) That which is born of flesh is flesh. The sooner we learn that the human heart is utterly corrupt, the sooner we will come to the fountain of His precious blood, not merely for mercy and pardon, but for cleansing and deliverance, that through the grace and power of Christ, we might be soundly converted and made an entirely new creation in Him. I say without fear of contradiction that most Christians have come only to know what it means to be "saved in their sins." But the sons of the Most High must now become the firstfruits of them who are "saved from their sins." (Mat. 1:21)

Out of the midst of all the empty form and ritual of man-made religion, out of the violence and war, the cheating and lying, the drugs, heathenish so-called "music," illicit sex and filth of adulterers and homosexuals, and plague of every abominable eastern cult and devilish religion, God shall still bring forth a blessed firstfruit company of people who are undefiled and holy before God. These have repented of sin and every work of the flesh and are "born of the Spirit."

With Christ, their victorious head, they have died to all the desires of the flesh and mind. They are a people who have fixed all their hopes in Christ the Lord. Their hearts cry not for the things of the world, nor yet for the trinkets of popular religion, but their prayer ascends to God day and night, “May Your Kingdom come, in me, in all my loved ones, in every part of creation, and may Your will be done through me, through all my loved ones, and through every creature, in earth as it is in heaven.” (Mat. 6:10) Purged of all pride, self-interest and filthiness of flesh and spirit, these shall be accounted worthy to reign with Christ as kings and judges, a royal priesthood like their Lord.

We have seen that it is utterly useless to deliver men from their external enemies unless first they have been delivered from their own corrupt and wicked hearts. All mankind desperately needs deliverance, and the sons of God, the righteous judges to be raised up unto all nations, shall become the deliverers. Hallelujah! “And saviors shall come up on Mount Zion [the government of God] to judge the mount of Esau [flesh]; and the Kingdom shall be the Lord’s.” (Obad. 1:21) The “mount of Esau” typifies the rule of the flesh in the heart of man. Let all men know that the triumph of the Son of God also begins within the heart. Then and only then, that which is first accomplished in the midst of our own being shall be wrought out in the midst of the earth, and ultimately shall also be fully manifest before the entire universe, for, “He planned for the maturity of the times and the climax of the ages to unify all things and head them up and consummate them in Christ, both things in heaven and things on earth.” (Eph. 1:10, AMP)

The salvation of the nations shall be accomplished through principles and by processes identical to those that are now working in the firstfruit company for our redemption and perfection. The process for us is clear, “Unto Him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father.” (Rev. 1:5-6) And again, “They sang a new song, saying, ‘You are worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood... and have made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth.’” (Rev. 5:9-10) The glorious God of power and holiness who has constituted us “kings and priests” is the One who first of all “washed us from our sins in His own blood.”

Zechariah prophesied of this, saying, “In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.” Isaiah spoke of that fountain of cleansing blood performing its redeeming work upon many nations, “So shall He sprinkle [wash, cleanse, sanctify] many nations. The kings shall shut their mouths at Him, for that which had not been told them shall they see, and that which they had not heard shall they consider.” (Zech. 13:1; Isa. 52:15) John calls the cleansing and life-giving stream of the blood of Christ a “fountain of the water of life.” (Rev. 21:6) The words of the old hymn are so appropriate, “What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. What can make me pure within? Nothing but the blood of Jesus!” Washed by His blood; cleansed and quickened by His life! This is the process for the firstfruit company.

And then in proportion as the sons of God learn, in their own experience, how far-reaching and all-inclusive the effects of the blood are, their hearts long for the ultimate experience of the power of this blood in the world around them. If the blood can so redeem, cleanse, and perfect the firstfruits that they are suitable to be made kings and priests unto God, then surely the power of this blood is also sufficient to cleanse the hearts and lives of sin-blighted creation. It is the bloodwashed priests of God who shall sprinkle the blood of the Lamb upon many nations in the glorious age now dawning!

Yes, the firstfruits company is just that, "... These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb." (Rev. 14:4) But immediately afterwards, the angel is sent out for the remainder of the harvest, "... having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth and to every nation and tongue and people." (vs. 6)

This is the plain teaching of Scripture. "It pleased the Father that in Him should all the fullness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, whether they be things on earth or things in heaven." (Col. 1:19-20) "... And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous; and He is the propitiation [the acceptable sacrifice] for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 Jn. 2:1-2) "... He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

(Isa. 53:5-6) The power of the blood of Christ avails for every creature. The experience of what the blood can accomplish for those who believe will teach them to regard their fellow men – regardless of how wicked they may be – as living under the tender mercy of God and under the same call to salvation and deliverance through the precious blood. It will fill them with desire to consecrate their lives to be blood-sprinkling priests of the Most High, fellow-workers with God for the deliverance of every other creature still bound by sin. Ultimately, the blood of Jesus Christ will accomplish all that God intends.

God assures us that, "I will accomplish all My good pleasure." (Isa. 46:10) So, what is God's expressed perfect will for mankind? "The Lord... is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." (2 Pet. 3:9) He "desires all to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth," for He "gave Himself a ransom for all" and He "is the savior of all men, especially of believers." (1 Tim. 2:4, 6; 4:10)

Here is the plan of God in a nutshell. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Cor. 15:22) "... as by the offence of one came condemnation upon all men, even so by the righteousness of one came upon all men the justification of life." (Rom. 5:18) "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 3:23-24) The seven Spirits from the slain Lamb are sent forth into all the earth. (Rev. 5:6) Thus the seven Spirits are nothing short of the full and complete power of the blood of Christ, the power both sufficient and effective to cleanse every sin of every soul that every lived.

The blood is the life of man; the Spirit is the life of God. "The life is in the blood." (Lev. 17:11) This is why we find in Scripture that what is ascribed to the Spirit in one place, is in another place ascribed to the blood. Life, as well as the work of cleansing and sanctification, are ascribed to both the blood and the Spirit. Our Lord said, "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has everlasting life," adding afterwards, "It is the Spirit that quickens [makes alive]; the flesh profits nothing." (Jn. 6:54, 63) Similarly Paul, having said "You... are made nigh by the blood of Christ," declares a few verses later, "We... have access by one Spirit to the Father." (Eph. 2:13, 18) So also in the epistle to the Hebrews, the despising of the blood and the insulting of the Spirit is treated as one act. We read of those who "counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and have insulted the Spirit of grace." (Heb. 10:29)

Both the blood and the Spirit proceed together from the slain Lamb, for the blood of the Lamb and the seven Spirits of the Lamb are the fullness of the redeeming, cleansing, quickening, and perfecting life of God. And – bless His wonderful name – this stream of eternal life is sent forth into all the earth, a mighty river of life to cleanse and revitalize the whole of creation!

Where does this cleansing take place? What is it that the life-giving blood washes? It is the heart, the deep, hidden, inner life of man, that experiences the effect of the blood. Jesus said, "The Kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:21) Sin has penetrated into the heart. The whole nature of man has become saturated with it and enslaved by it. "The heart is deceitful above all, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9)

Therefore the blood too must penetrate the heart; as deeply as the power of sin has gone, so deeply must the inner being be cleansed by the blood. We know that when some article of clothing is washed, the soapy water with its cleansing power must soak in as deeply as the stain if it is to be removed. Even so must the blood of Jesus penetrate to the deepest roots of our being; our heart, our entire personality must be reached and quickened by His divine life. Where sin has reached, there too must the blood follow it; where sin ruled, there His life must rule: the entire heart must be cleansed by the blood. However great may be the depths of the human heart, however manifold and lively its activities may be, the life of the Lamb is just as wonderful and penetrating. It is into all the earth that the sevenfold fullness of the power of the blood is sent. All the earth? Yes, all this earth of mine, this lump of clay that is my flesh nature. Blessed thought! Blessed deliverance! Blessed hope!

So we read, "And the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge and of the Fear of the Lord... with righteousness shall He judge... the wolf shall dwell with the lamb; the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den... for the whole earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. 11:2-9)

As the sevenfold Spirit of God flows over the earth through the many-membered body of Christ, what peace, what joy, what blessedness will result for the earth-realm! What glorious changes shall be wrought; what improvements of attitudes, restoration of personalities, and transformation of lives! Imagine human characteristics that are here likened to the wolf, the leopard, the lion, the bear, the asp, the cockatrice. While I'm sure that in due time there shall be even a flowing of the peace of God all across the animal kingdom, yet our present application of the type must be to the peace and life of the Kingdom of God on a higher level, where men of the most wicked, corrupt, and fierce dispositions shall have their natures so entirely transformed by the matchless grace of Christ that they shall live in love and righteousness with the meekest of men and those who formerly were an easy prey. Christ came to establish peace in the hearts of men! "But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off are made near by the blood of Christ, for He Himself is our peace, who made both one, and broke down the hostile dividing wall between us." (Eph. 2:14)

Thus the asp (poisonous serpent) and the cockatrice (flying, fire-breathing dragon) shall cease to be venomous, so that little children shall safely play with them. That "generation of vipers" shall be so converted and made a "seed of saints" that the "little ones" of the Kingdom of God shall be committed into their care. And a little child shall lead them – no doubt that humble saint who "received the Kingdom of God as a little child." (Lk. 18:17) Matchless grace! Glorious triumph! Precious blood! "The seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth."

The nations shall indeed be saved. God shall, in His mercy and love, raise up over them judges, deliverers. Thank God! At long last, deliverance shall come to all mankind. This shall not be merely deliverance from Communism, or Nazism, or Fascism; not deliverance from Washington, Moscow, or Peking; not deliverance from taxes, tyranny, or bureaucracy; but deliverance from sin and Satan – a powerful cleansing which strikes at the root of all the multiplied sorrows and tragedies of mankind. It will be deliverance from all that we are, the very nature that we inherited from fallen Adam, that root of sin: selfish, prideful rebellion against our Creator.

And that is just half the story. The blood of Jesus Christ washes away our sin, but He does not leave us empty. With the blood comes life, for the life is in the blood. Jesus came not just as the Savior of the world, but also as the way to God and the truth and life of God. (Jn. 14:6) "I am come that they might have life, and that more abundantly." (Jn. 10:10) He empties us of our self-nature that He may fill us with Himself! True deliverance is always from one thing into something better. He delivers us from what we are into all that He is! He changes us from sons of Adam into sons of God!

That is judgment. That is the work of the seven Spirits of God. That is what God is doing now – first, only within those whom He has chosen to be that firstfruits company of king-priests, that many-membered body of Christ destined to become His Bride. Then, in the age to come, "the Spirit and the Bride say [to the rest of humanity], 'Come.' Let him that hears say, 'Come.' And let him who is thirsty come. And whosoever will, let him freely take the water of life." (Rev. 22:17)

# Chapter 20 – The Seven Spirits in Harmony

## Introduction

Deut. 6:4; Eph. 4:3-6; James 2:10

In the previous nineteen chapters, we have “taken apart” the seven Spirits of God and investigated each one, looking at the nature, the function, and the relationship of each one to our lives. This is edifying and instructive, but it cannot give us a complete picture of the seven Spirits of God. It is like inspecting individual trees but never seeing the forest. To see the forest, we need to step back a bit and look at all the trees together.

“Hear O Israel! Jehovah is our God; Jehovah is one!” (Deut. 6:4) We can all agree that we do not have seven Gods, or three Gods, but only one God. But can we all agree that this one God is one? God is one!

The implications of this are staggering. Though God is so big, so awesome, so incomprehensible that in order to even begin to know Him, we must “break Him apart” into the three persons of the Trinity or into the seven Spirits of God, yet God is One. The most perfect human organization in the world still has departments that bicker amongst themselves, or some that duplicate each other’s efforts, or leaders who try to reap the glory that their followers deserve, or situations in which each one thought the other was bringing the dessert, or whatever. But God is One! He is Unity personified. He is in perfect harmony with Himself. “There is... one Spirit... one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all, through all, and in all.” (Eph. 4:4-6)

Consider a famous symphony orchestra performing Beethoven’s *Emperor Concerto*. Every eye in the orchestra is intent as the maestro’s baton falls. Listening with thrills going up and down your spine, you feel that never has music been played so well! Every instrument is in perfect tune, the musicians are precisely on the beat, and the surpassing excellence of the performance is more than you can stand! You think to yourself, “It is as if the entire orchestra were one organism with the maestro!” If only you knew! The french horn player has a terrible hangover from the party last night. The third violinist is bitterly jealous of the lead and is doing his best to destroy her reputation. The second violinist sitting between them has her mind on a dinner date planned for that evening. The second oboe is angry with the maestro for not recognizing her talents and giving her the lead part. The flutist has a sick crush on the cellist and is working to break up his marriage. The first viola has a cold and is trying desperately not to sneeze during the performance. The percussionist is daydreaming about his vacation in the Swiss Alps. And the proud pianist thinks the maestro is an arrogant stuffed shirt, and hates his guts.

I’m sorry. That is just about the best the old human nature can attain when it comes to unity. “... man looks on the outward appearance but the Lord looks on the heart.” (1 Sam. 16:7) In even the most harmonious situation, if we could only see as God sees, all sorts of yucky garbage would come up.

But God is One! The Son never comes pleading with the Father to have more mercy and compassion. The Holy Spirit has no contention with the Son over who gets the glory. The Father is not upset with the Son for fraternizing with sinners, seeming to compromise His holiness. God is One! His mercy is in perfect harmony with His justice; His grace is in perfect harmony with His holiness; His compassion is in total harmony with His wrath and righteous vengeance; His awesome creative power is in perfect harmony with His incomprehensible peace, rest, and sustaining power; His love of even a vile sinner is in perfect harmony with His hatred of sin; God is ONE! Sin, vengeance, justice, and judgment are not a problem to His eternal holiness, grace, and love.

What about the seven Spirits of God? There is only one Spirit. Does that surprise you? "... preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all." (Eph. 4:3-6)

In chapter 14, we discussed the golden lampstand from the Jewish tabernacle. How many lamps were on it? Seven. Yet it was still one lampstand. Seven in one, a picture of the seven Spirits of God.

Why is this important? Because you can't receive the Spirit of Understanding if you are compromising the Spirit of Wisdom. You can't love the Spirit of Might but ignore the Spirit of Counsel. You can't have the Spirit of Knowledge if you reject the Spirit of the Fear of the Lord. In fact, if you are out of fellowship with any of the seven Spirits of God, you don't have the Spirit of Jehovah.

It is the same as with God's law. "For whoever keeps the whole law, yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all." (James 2:10) God's law is one, reflecting His own inherent unity. In the same way, the seven Spirits of God are one Spirit, in perfect harmony with each other and with every other aspect of God's nature and character.

I know you long to be more like Jesus. I know you yearn for His Spirit to shine ever brighter with His nature and character through you to brighten a dark world. How can that take place? Here is the way: You (and I) must be filled with the seven-fold fullness of the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, with each of the seven Spirits of God harmoniously balanced, complementing and supporting each other, totally in agreement with each other, and perfectly unified in purpose and motivation.

## **The Spirit of Jehovah**

1 Cor. 13:2; Jn. 1:4, 9; 8:12; 17:3

The golden lampstand from the Jewish tabernacle presents a beautiful picture of the seven Spirits of God. (Refer to the drawing at the end of this chapter, page 304.) The central shaft of the seven-arm lampstand represents the Spirit of Jehovah. This shaft supports the other six lamps, three on each side. The base is filled with oil, which feeds up to the wick in each of the seven branches. All of the oil has to go through the lower section of this central shaft. Just as it is the base stem or root of a plant which gives life to all the branches, so the Spirit of Jehovah is the life of the seven Spirits of God. If you recall chapter 5, the Spirit of Jehovah is the "I Am," the life, the life-giving Spirit, the embodiment of the self-existent life within.

The Spirit of Jehovah is the Spirit of Inexhaustible Life. God intends for His seven-fold Spirit to dwell within us and manifest His nature and character through us, but if we have in fullness the other six Spirits, yet are missing the Spirit of Jehovah, we have no life within us, and it is all vain works.

“All vain works? Preposterous! Why, I have the Spirit of Knowledge, and understand all mysteries! And I have the Spirit of Wisdom and Counsel so that I can solve all problems! And I have the Spirit of Faith...”

Sorry, my friend. It is all vain works, if you do not have the Spirit of Jehovah. “And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.” (1 Cor. 13:2)

God is love. The Spirit of Jehovah is love. It is the foundation of everything God is. It is at the heart of all our motivations, the source of our actions and reactions. The Spirit of Jehovah is light. That light is the light of men. That light is the light of the whole world. Without the Spirit of Jehovah the world lies in gross darkness. “... I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” (Jn. 8:12) “There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.” (Jn. 1:9) Only with the Spirit of Jehovah is our daily walk, our minute by minute choices, illumined by God’s truth and wisdom and grace and knowledge and understanding and counsel and might and reverential awesomeness. “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.” (Jn. 1:4) The Spirit of Jehovah is life! Do you see how light and love are related to life? In the spirit realm it all emanates from God’s life.

That life is light and love and all of the nature and character of God springing up within us a well of life unto life everlasting. Without the Spirit of Jehovah, the well runs dry, the light dims, the love turns cold. But with the Spirit of Jehovah, the well cannot run dry no matter what troubles or situations we face, for it is in fact the inexhaustible life of the infinite God flowing forth through us.

Did it excite you to read in the previous chapters about the Spirits of Wisdom and Understanding? About the Spirit of Council or the Spirit of Might? Then seek first to be filled with the Spirit of Jehovah. Only His own life, only the very essence of His own nature, only His own “life-form” can even begin to contain His seven-fold Spirit.

Yes, Jehovah is a higher life-form than fallen humanity. Did you think that eternal life was merely living forever in heaven with Jesus someday? “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” (Jn. 17:3) This is not knowing about God or having a casual acquaintance with Him. It is knowing Him intimately, becoming one with Him in His nature and character, living by His life, by His Holy Spirit within me – literally His inexhaustible life living in and through me. God is the highest life-form of all; as high above fallen human life as human life is above fish life or worm life. Tell me, how would you explain your human wisdom or knowledge to a worm? The best effect it would have on it is nothing, and the worst effect would kill it. It is simply the wrong kind of life-form. So why do we think that we can express the nature and character of the highest life-form of all, the very Spirit of the Most High, through this fallen, third-rate,

human life-form? We can't, and never will be able to. The very best we can do in the power of the flesh – trying to live God's character through our own human life-form – results only in vain works. It is His life-form in us and only His life-form in us who expresses His nature and character through us. That is life. That is the Spirit of Jehovah.

### **The Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding**

Prov. 4:7; Gen. 3:1-7; 15:6; 22 ff; 2 Cor. 5; Col. 2:3; 1 Kings 3:12 ff and 11:6 ff; Rom. 6; Heb. 10 and 11

The first pair of lamps branching out from the central shaft represents the Spirit of Wisdom on the left and the Spirit of Understanding on the right. Though we discussed these separately in chapters 6 and 7, it is instructive to recognize that they are a pair, branching out together from the central trunk which represents the Spirit of Jehovah.

As I said before, God is too big for us to comprehend. We cannot even begin to know Him until we “take Him apart” and look separately at the various aspects of His nature and character, like studying each individual facet of a diamond to comprehend the whole. But in a way, we do God a great disservice to dissect Him so. God is One!

Even so, the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding is one Spirit. I call this the Spirit of Strategic Discernment, which is as high above human discernment as the Spirit of Wisdom is above human wisdom. In fact, even if you have the Spirit of Wisdom but respond with your human understanding, you have only human discernment. Only the true Spirit of Wisdom coupled with the true Spirit of Understanding results in the true Spirit of Strategic Discernment.

An example might help to make the difference clear. Let's say you are walking near a city park at night. You suddenly notice the street light ahead is out. You glance around and spot some movement in the bushes just ahead, then see a glint as from a button, or belt buckle, or – a knife. At the same time, you have this tingling sensation on the back of your neck which brings a chill of terror. What do you do? Run? Scream? Or just stand there frozen in fear? You have just experienced human discernment, and it may or may not have occurred in time to be of any value. And that is precisely the problem with human discernment: it may help you, but it may also mislead you, or be too late to help, or even cause you harm, because it is based upon purely human perception.

But the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, which I call the Spirit of Strategic Discernment, is very different. It starts with God's wisdom from above, founded on the principles woven into the universe at the foundation of all creation, and couples it with the understanding of the mind of Christ within us through the Holy Spirit, so that the resulting discernment is always precisely appropriate, correct and timely. Thus the Spirit of Strategic Discernment is not based on human perception or experience. It is spiritual discernment, based upon spiritual perception, and therefore always appropriate for the precise moment and situation at hand. That is why I call it “strategic,” which is defined as, “Of or relating to strategy. Important or essential in relation to a plan of action.” This is walking with God, moment by moment, seeing as He is seeing and doing what He is doing. It is the eternal “I Am” living His life through me in every action.

The psalmist prophesied of Jesus, “Behold, I have come... to do Your will, O God.” (Ps. 40:7; Heb. 10:7) We who are chosen to be conformed to His image say the same, “We are here to do Your will, O God, Your plan of the ages, Your strategy for working out Your eternal purposes in and through Your saints.” We cannot even begin to do this with human discernment. This requires the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Strategic Discernment.

In our little example above, the saint with the Spirit of Strategic Discernment sees the same outward things that the sinner sees, but his reactions may be quite different. I cannot tell you what he would do. The Spirit has an infinite number of ways to solve any “problem” for in fact there are no problems with our sovereign and infinite God. But three possibilities come to mind. The Spirit of Strategic Discernment may simply lead the saint by a different path, and he may never know by his human mind why. Or the saint may be led to continue on, perhaps whistling or singing a hymn to demonstrate his lack of fear (since the powers of evil feed on fear and are repelled by courage). Or the saint may even be led to stop beside those dark bushes and preach the good news of freedom in Christ from the bondage of sin, which could result in the erstwhile muggers fleeing in revulsion, with perhaps one or two of them even coming forward and bowing the knee to the Savior. Who can predict what would happen? Only God knows, and only that saint who is led by the Spirit of Strategic Discernment is able, moment by moment, to implement the strategies of the Almighty as He is “... in Christ reconciling the world to Himself...” (2 Cor. 5:19)

Clearly, wisdom and understanding are a pair. In fact, they seem so similar that it is sometimes difficult to discern between them. “Wisdom is the principle thing; therefore get wisdom, and with all your getting, get understanding.” (Prov. 4:7) Yet though they are so similar, they are really quite distinct. In worldly terms, we would say that we have to understand a thing first, and once we understand it, then we can get wisdom from it. The first time we experience something, it may hit us unprepared, and we may react badly. But after we have lived through it and finally understood what was going on, we (hopefully) will learn wisdom, so the next time we encounter that experience, we will perhaps be more careful.

But the Kingdom of God, as usual, is opposite to the way of the flesh. God puts His Spirit of Wisdom first, before His Spirit of Understanding. Why? It is because in Christ Jesus are “... hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge [understanding].” (See Col. 2:3) If we try to understand with our minds first and then learn the wisdom from our understanding, it will be human wisdom and we shall surely miss the wisdom of God. On the other hand, if we receive first His wisdom from His Spirit of Wisdom, with open hearts drinking deeply without regard to our human understanding (indeed, often in spite of, or in opposition to, our human understanding) by the light of His truth (for He is truth), then “our” minds will receive the fruits of His Spirit of Understanding.

You see, understanding is a “mind” thing. Human understanding is done by the human mind, the brain. The understanding of the Kingdom is also by the mind – the mind of Christ which we have by faith.

But wisdom goes beyond the mind to the very nature, the essence. Even a bug uses wisdom in storing food or building its home – we call that “instinct,” a part of its nature. Human wisdom is gained from the “school of hard knocks.” When we understand that all we do has consequences, it matures our human nature. God does it the other way around. He first transforms our nature with divine wisdom: His nature and the basic principles of life upon which He founded the universe. Then He reveals His ways to our understanding by the mind of Christ so we can avoid “doing wrong” in the first place. This is His Spirit of Strategic Discernment. This is the difference between those who are walking by the Spirit of God and those who “try to do good” by to their own knowledge (human understanding) of good and evil.

The religious Jews of the first century are a good example of this. “For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. For not knowing about God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the goal of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.” (Rom. 10:2-4) They had the wisdom of God, written out for them in the law and the prophets, and they were very zealous for it. But it was all a mental exercise. They did not have the Spirit of Understanding! They had it reasoned out with their human minds, instead. Therefore, they failed to recognize the goal of the law Himself: Jesus the Christ.

Have you ever known a Christian who is so filled with zeal for God’s wisdom he lashes out against anyone not walking in line with his human understanding of that

wisdom? Does he not seem to be dogmatic, harsh, without love or compassion, and even arrogant, self-righteous, or “pharisaic”?

Eve fell to the serpent’s temptation for the same reason. Rather than rely on the Spirit of Strategic Discernment, which may have led her to simply avoid all foolish talk which even begins to question God’s Word, she listened and then began to reason it out with her mind. “That fruit sure looks good. It doesn’t seem deadly. It’s beautiful, and it smells so sweet! Surely it must be good for food. Just a taste won’t hurt. And the snake says it will give me more knowledge – make me more like God – and that must be true because God called it the tree of knowledge. God wants me to have more knowledge! And why would God ever want to keep me from eating it anyway? He hasn’t prohibited anything else in the garden. He said that everything is very good!” (See Gen. 3:1-7) So she rationalized her way into the first sin, from which mankind has suffered ever since.

Before you criticize her too harshly, remember that the art of rationalizing whatever perverse, rebellious, self-centered thing we want to do is highly developed and well practiced in each of us by nature. It never ceases to amaze the new nature in me how quick the old nature is to try to rationalize! Why, that deceptive old satanic nature will even search desperately for Scriptures to try to justify some damnable thing that my spirit (by the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding within me) discerns perfectly well is wrong.

What should my response be? Should I listen to that satanic spirit so I can reason with it or point it to the Scriptures? Not in the Kingdom of God! In God’s Kingdom, the Spirit of Wisdom comes first to my

spirit, and then the Spirit of Understanding reveals it to the “mind of Christ” in me. That is the Spirit of Strategic Discernment, who shows me what to do, and when, and how, even if my human understanding is still in the dark. When that satanic spirit comes to tempt (and yes even the best of Christians do get tempted at times), by the grace of God and His Spirit of Wisdom in me, I simply refuse to listen, reckon that old flesh nature dead and buried with Christ at Golgotha, and reject anything that comes to question the Word of God. (See Rom. 6) In other words, I simply “wait on the Lord” in faith and trust that my sovereign God knows what He’s doing, knowing that when it’s time to act, He will show me by His Spirit of Understanding what He wants me to do.

Remember that His Spirit of Strategic Discernment is always for “now.” When it is necessary to act, He will show me what to do, and it will be “right” (in accord with His righteousness). The Spirit of Wisdom comes first, to realign us with God’s nature, but it is (eventually, in God’s perfect time) always paired with the Spirit of Understanding, for they are one Spirit. It is only when they are paired together that the saint acts. That is doing the will of God. That is being led by the Spirit of God. (Rom. 8:14) And that is the Spirit of Strategic Discernment.

As an added benefit, He often (not always) opens up my human understanding on the matter, so that I will know the truth, recognize the calamity from which I was spared by hearkening first to His Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, and bow in grateful worship. But that is another story, relating to the Spirit of Knowledge and the Fear of the Lord. The point here is that we

don’t act based upon a “word of wisdom” or a “word of knowledge from God” without stopping to pray, “What would You have me do about this, Lord?” and waiting for strategic discernment from Him.

I believe C. S. Lewis understood that principle. I am reminded of *Perilandra*, the second book of his classic science fiction trilogy (which I read as a child and recently re-read to my children). All through the temptation, the woman representing Eve wrestled with her human understanding (which she called getting older) yet refused to act upon it until it was in agreement with the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding within her. After the tempter was finally vanquished, she finally understood with her mind what she had discerned in her spirit all along. Then she was made the rightful queen of that sinless paradise, in one of the most poignantly beautiful scenes in all of English literature. If you have not read it as a child, perhaps it might be profitable to put aside some of that stuffy adulthood, curl up in your easy chair near the fire with *Out of the Silent Planet* (the first book of the trilogy), and enter the Kingdom of God as a child once again. When you finish the set with *That Hideous Strength*, you will have a better understanding of the wisdom of God and a better discernment of how futilely Satan is raging against the saints in these end times.

But you don’t have to read C. S. Lewis to see the close relationship between wisdom and understanding. Read the Proverbs by King Solomon. He first based his life on the Wisdom of God and prospered beyond any man that ever lived. But later in life, he began to depend on all of his accumulated human knowledge and understanding (not

to mention his power, wealth, and prestige). Can you guess what happened to Solomon when he abandoned his humble dependence on God and His wisdom? He first became proud and self-reliant, then immoral and rebellious, and finally found himself and his whole family under God's judgment. This ultimately resulted in the nation of Israel splitting in two and falling into immorality and idolatry. (See 1 Kings 3:12 ff and 11:6 ff)

Or read about Abraham, who simply believed and obeyed the word of the Lord (and that is wisdom and understanding), even though he never did fully understand (humanly speaking) how God would fulfill His promises. God promised to make of him a great nation, and though he never saw the fulfillment of that, yet he believed, and God counted that to him for righteousness. (Gen. 15:6, and Heb. 11) God really tested Abraham's faith, too: first by giving him no children at all until long after his wife was passed child-bearing age, then by allowing Ishmael to be born before Isaac, and third by commanding that he slay and offer up his only son, Isaac, as a burnt offering. Abraham simply obeyed, "considering that God is able to raise even from the dead..." (Heb. 11:19)

Talk about strategic discernment being contrary to human understanding! For three days, Abraham had to wrestle with it, as he trudged to Mount Moriah knowing his son would be the sacrifice. And when Abraham raised his knife to slay his only son, he did not know that God had prepared a substitute sacrifice. Abraham did not know he was paving the way under the law for another sacrifice, 2000 years later, when God would offer His only Son, Jesus Christ, upon that same summit as a substitute sacrifice for us.

Modern day Jews hold Mount Moriah as sacred because of father Abraham, never realizing that God sanctified that mountain before Abraham, because He knew what would happen there 2000 years later. No one knows for sure if Jesus was crucified on the exact spot of Abraham's sacrifice, but knowing our sovereign Lord, I wouldn't be a bit surprised. Look at all the other parallels too close for coincidence, even to the three days journey during which Abraham had to reckon Isaac dead before discovering the substitute ram caught in the thicket. (Gen. 22)

By faith, we saints are God's fulfillment of His promise to make of Abraham a great nation. Just as the offering of Isaac was only a type or shadow of the true offering of Jesus Christ, so the Jewish nation is only a type or shadow of the great nation of the sons of the Kingdom of God in Christ Jesus. Praise God for His awesome plan of the ages!

Our Lord Jesus is the best example of living by the Spirit of Strategic Discernment. During His earthly ministry, He consistently refused to act according to what his eyes saw or his ears heard or his own (human) mind thought. Instead, He continually looked to the Spirit of Jehovah for life and strength, and He only did and said what the Father, by the Holy Spirit of Wisdom, was doing and saying. Consequently, by the Holy Spirit of Understanding, He knew in advance just what mankind would do to Him (and this is discernment). It's easy to see in Jesus how these three work together, as He was led by the Holy Spirit so perfectly. Thus the Spirit of Jehovah was His life, constantly bringing Him strategic discernment by the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding – bringing Him the fullness of the seven Spirits of God.

Thus we have one Spirit: the Spirit of Jehovah, bringing the life of God in Christ Jesus to our Spirits, resulting in wisdom and understanding (discernment) in our spirits, and concluding with His knowledge and understanding in our minds, which is the mind of Christ in us. One Spirit, yet three, distinct in function and precise in order and purpose. How awesome is our God!

### **The Spirit of Council and Might**

1 Sam. 3:19; Isa. 55:10-11; Mat. 20:25-28; 22:15-46; Mk. 1:21-28; 16:17; Jn. 17:22-23; 18:4-6 ; Acts 4:31; 6:8-10; Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 14; 2 Cor. 5; Eph. 4:11-13; Phil. 2:7-9 ; Col. 1; Heb. 4:12; Rev. 19:10

Also branching up out of the Spirit of Jehovah is the second pair of lamps: the Spirit of Council on the left and the Spirit of Strength on the right. Again, though they are two, yet they are one, called in Isaiah 11:2 the Spirit of Council and Might. I call this the Spirit of Irresistible Council. It was exemplified by the apostles when they were "... all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak the Word of God with boldness." (Acts 4:31) And by Stephen, "... full of grace and power;" when some men "... rose up and argued with Stephen... they were unable to cope with the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking." (Acts 6:8-10) And by Paul, who was "... not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation..." (Rom. 1:16). These first-century Christians, even though for the most part "ignorant and unlearned men" (Acts 4:13) went out in the Spirit of Irresistible Council and "... turned the world upside down..." (Acts 17:6) How could they do that without going to seminary? Only by the life of the Spirit of Jehovah working through them.

How different they are from many modern-day missionaries who must labor for years to see but a few converts who really remain with the faith. You see, I may have the truth in wisdom and understanding; but if I try to communicate it to someone who is dead to the Spirit, bound in sin, and blind to spiritual truth, I am simply wasting my time if I have not the Spirit of Irresistible Council.

But again, let us go to our Example, the Lord Jesus Christ. Hallelujah! Take off your shoes, O saints, for here we tread on holy ground! Filled with the fullness of the seven Spirits of God without measure, He was, is, and ever shall be the Spirit of Irresistible Council personified. Many glib speakers of worldly wisdom fill long sermons with fine sounding but empty words, like a lengthy freight train of empty box cars. But every word of Jesus was packed with truth, filled with life, freighted with power from on high, for He is the truth, the life, and the power from on high! His were no idle words for Him to have to render account in the day of judgment, (Mat. 12:36) for indeed, He is the day of judgment, and every word from His lips came forth with the Spirit of Irresistible Council, freeing and quickening the humble sinners, while at the same time confronting and exposing the proud and hard-hearted.

"The Pharisees counseled together how they might trap Him in what He said... But Jesus perceived their malice, and answered, 'Why are you testing Me, you hypocrites? ... render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.'" and later, "... But Jesus answered and said to them, 'you are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures, nor the power of God... God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.'

And when the multitudes heard this, they were astonished at His teaching. But when the Pharisees heard that He had put the Sadducees to silence, they gathered themselves together. One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, 'Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?' And He said to them, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart... and a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend the whole law and the prophets.'" The end result was that, "... no one was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone dare to ask Him another question from that day on." (from Mat. 22:15, 18, 21, 29, 32-40, 46)

This is the Spirit of Irresistible Council. His words were and ever will be irresistible. None could stand against Him. From the beginning of His earthly ministry – "... and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and began to teach. And they were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the scribes... And they were all amazed, so that they debated among themselves, saying, 'What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the demons, and they obey Him!' And the news about Him went out everywhere into all the surrounding district of Galilee." (Mk. 1:21-28) Even to His death – "Jesus therefore, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth, and said to them, 'Whom do you seek?' They answered Him, 'Jesus the Nazarene.' He said to them, 'I AM.' ... and they drew back and fell to the ground." (Jn. 18:4-6) Jesus' words were like a sword in His mouth, spoken in power and authority. That is the Spirit of Irresistible Council.

Truly was it spoken of Jesus through the prophet Isaiah, "As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth... so shall My Word be which goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me empty [void, spent, wasted, useless, futile], without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it." (Isa. 55:10-11)

Two quick points here that we dare not miss. First, the same Spirit of Irresistible Council which filled our Lord is available to every saint who is dead to self and through whom the life of the Spirit of Jehovah flows. Jesus is not only our Savior, He is also our Example, that we may be transformed into His very nature and likeness by the power of His life within. His greatest desire and His heartfelt prayer is "... that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that You did send Me. And the glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know that You did send Me and that You love them, even just as You love me." (Jn. 17:22-23) God is one, and He wants us to be one with Him! We too can be as Samuel, "Thus Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground." (1 Sam. 3:19)

But the second point is a caution! It may sound enticing to put irresistible power and authority in your words, but it would be the greatest of tragedies if all that power were motivated from a human nature still ruled, even in part, by sinful flesh.

Don't be so set on seeking the Spirit of Irresistible Council that you miss the Spirit of Jehovah and the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding. God is one! You cannot "have" His Spirit of Irresistible Council – or any of His Spirit, for that matter. Either He will flow forth through you His Spirit of Jehovah, and Wisdom and Understanding, and Council and Might by His own life within you, or you will be merely striving in the flesh and will wind up with only some "reasonable facsimile" that may look good but will be fruitless, for there is no life there.

Know therefore of a surety that God's council is irresistible, full of authority and power, only by God's Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding in you, and that it flows through you only by the flow of His life in you, and that is the Spirit of Jehovah. God is one. There is only one Spirit. But do you see the progression in the way the Spirit moves? It must start with the Spirit of Jehovah, the inexhaustible life of God in Christ Jesus as my life. This results in His Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding welling up within my Spirit and giving me the Spirit of Strategic Discernment. This in turn expresses itself as the Spirit of Council and Might, the Spirit of Irresistible Council, through me. Each in His perfect order, working together as one.

Once again, the human nature wants to reverse the order. Yes, my old flesh nature wants to put that might before the council. If only I could first see the mighty power of God clearly in my life, then I would be bold to speak the good news of His gospel to all those around me. After all (says the puny human mind), I'm not Samuel! How do I know that God won't let my words fall to the ground? I gotta see it first to believe it.

But again I must say by the inspiration of God's Spirit within me, "Get behind me Satan! You are a stumbling-block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's." (Mat. 16:23) It is either done God's way, or it is not done at all. And God's way is the Spirit of Council followed by the Spirit of Might. God never promised, "After I show you what will happen to My Word through you, then you might feel comfortable in speaking it." God knows we'd never speak His Word if we knew all the division it might cause, the judgment, stirring, quickening, and confronting, for "The Word of God is living and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit ... and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart." (Heb. 4:12)

No, for just as understanding follows wisdom in the Kingdom, so might follows council in the Kingdom. Here then is the Spirit of Irresistible Council: God gives you a word to speak. He gives you the time and place to say it and the one(s) to say it to. You have learned to walk with God by His life within (the Spirit of Jehovah), and you discern His voice clearly and unmistakably within that word (the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding). You don't know how (or if) it will help; indeed, you don't even know what all the problems are that need to be addressed. You only know that you have a word of the Lord, and that now is the time, the place, the person – all the lights are green and all of heaven waits breathlessly while you gather your courage. Then in faith, in quiet trust, in gentleness, love, peace, and earnest sincerity, you open your mouth and the Lord speaks His word through you.

Maybe nothing seems to happen. Maybe the word is resisted. Maybe the word is thrown back at you to make you look like a fool. It matters not. You turn quietly and just walk on with God. He is responsible to defend His word. The Spirit of Council precedes the Spirit of Might! You may never see it. You may be tempted to think, "You see, Lord, I opened my big mouth and stuck my foot in, and nothing happened! Why didn't you heal him? Why didn't you deliver him? Why...?" But by faith you reject that temptation, knowing that "Let God be true, though every man be found a liar." (Rom. 3:4) The Spirit of Council and the Spirit of Might is one: the Spirit of Irresistible Council. If God flows through you with His Spirit of Council, then you can rest assured that His Spirit of Might is close behind. That word will burn in the heart of the one for whom it was sent until it accomplishes everything for which it was sent.

Yes, you may never see the results. God wants you to walk by faith, not by sight. God never said, "these signs will precede those who believe..." He said, "these signs [attesting miracles] will follow those who Believe." (Mark 16:17) I capitalize Believe because this is not just a mental assent; it is the Spirit of Irresistible Council. If signs are following me, I may or may not see them, but regardless, my focus is not on miracles, not on the power, not on God's mighty acts. My focus is on the Lord Himself, knowing Him, loving Him, and serving Him with all my being as His life flows through me.

It's fine with me if the mightiest power in the universe wants to flow through me to accomplish His sovereign purpose, but what is that to me? Something to take pride in? To

boast about? God forbid! God knows that we frail humans are so quick to want the glory, to sit proudly as His sons at His right hand and at His left in the splendor of His Kingdom, and that is why He gives us His Spirit of Council and then Might, rather than His Spirit of Might and then Council.

Learn quickly, dear saint, that greatest principle of the Kingdom: it is the servant who has the highest calling in the Kingdom. "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, though He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant... Therefore also God highly exalted Him..." (Phil. 2:7-9) When James and John asked to sit on either side of Jesus in His Kingdom, the others were indignant. So "Jesus called them to Himself and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their mighty men exercise authority over them. It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.'" (Mat. 20:25-28)

Do you want to be a son in the Kingdom? Then become the servant of the King. Just do His will and love Him with all your heart. His Spirit of Irresistible Council will flow through you, and He will accomplish His awesome plan of the ages through you, and you may not even know all that He has done, as you walk humbly on with God. "...and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God." (Mic. 6:8)

Now, there are those who say that the Word of God is complete in the sixty-six books which comprise the canon of the Old and New Testaments, and that there is now no more prophecy, speaking the word of the Lord, or any thing else other than merely reading and expounding Scripture. I beg to differ. On the one hand, I concur that "Every word of God is tested... Do not add to His words lest He reprove you, and you be proved a liar." (Prov. 30:5-6) Those sixty-six books of the Holy Bible have been tested and proven; we know they are inspired of God, and we dare not add nor subtract from them with our puny human faculties. We can rest on them, put our full weight on them, knowing that they are God's true words. We use them as a basis for judging anything and everything else that is done or said, for God is always consistent with Himself. If God is the One saying it or doing it, it will always be consistent with what He has already told us in the Holy Scriptures.

But on the other hand, we cannot afford to say God became mute after He inspired the book of Revelation. Many Scriptures say otherwise, and not one Scripture says that the canon is closed. That is an old Roman Catholic doctrine which takes Rev. 22:18-19 out of context and tries to apply it to their entire canon of Scripture. Under that "logic" you could take Deut. 4:2 or 12:32 and use it to negate the entire rest of the Bible. And look how much they "added" after Prov. 30:5-6!

But my Bible says, "... desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy... for you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and be exhorted... my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues."

(1 Cor. 14:1, 31, 39) "And He gave some as... prophets... for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the full measure of perfection found in Christ." (Eph. 4:11-13) "Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God... so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever." (1 Pet. 4:11)

I certainly don't want to belabor the point, because that could be another whole book. But if the Spirit of Prophecy is dead, then we may as well fold up and go home, because then the Spirit of Council and Might is dead, too, for they are one and the same. And if the Spirit of Council and Might is dead, then all the seven Spirits of God (which are also one Spirit) are dead, and we are left without life or hope, with nothing but the letter of the law to slay us in our sins.

Again I say, God forbid! Rather I say (prophecy) to you O saint, "... hold fast the testimony of Jesus; worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy." (Rev. 19:10) What is the testimony of Jesus? It is the word on His lips, the word of council that goes forth with authority and might, the Spirit of Irresistible Council. Hold it fast, dear saint, don't allow the world's religious systems to rob you of your inheritance in Christ. And lest they come to you and say, "Yes, the Spirit of Irresistible Council is alive in Christ, but who are you? Whatever gave you the idea that you could ever speak His words of authority and power?" merely suggest they review Col. 1:9-29 and 2 Cor. 5:17-21, and humbly walk on with God.

You don't have to argue with them; His Word will do its work. May I quote some of that here just to help put it into perspective? "For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him [Jesus Christ], and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach... The mystery which has been hidden from the ages and generations... has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known the riches of the glory of this mystery... which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete [lit. Gk. perfect] in Christ." (Col. 1:19-22, 27, 28) "Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away, behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself... and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating you through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." (2 Cor. 5:17-20) "... our sufficiency is of God, who has made us able ministers of the new testament, not of the letter, but of the spirit, for the letter kills, but the spirit gives life." (2 Cor. 3:5-6)

Call it the word of reconciliation. Call it the Spirit of Prophecy. Call it the Spirit of Irresistible Council. Call it the testimony of Jesus. Call it exhortation, or witnessing, or just call it giving your testimony, if you like. But do it! Do it in the Spirit of Jehovah by His life flowing through you. Do it by His Spirit of true Wisdom and Understanding in your heart and on the mind of Christ in you. Do it by the Spirit of Council and Might through you. Then walk humbly on with God, knowing that in His infinite sovereign irresistible power, He is busy reconciling the world to Himself both through Christ and in Christ through you and me. And finally, be grateful that you, His servant-son in Christ, have had a part, however minute, in this His awesome plan of the ages. Hallelujah!

### **The Spirit of Knowledge and The Fear of the Lord**

Isa. 55:8-9 ; Ps 90:1; 91:1; Mat. 7:22-23; Jn. 5; 14-17; 2 Cor. 3:18; Phil. 3:3, 8-10; 1 Jn. 4:18

The final pair of lamps branching out of the central shaft representing the Spirit of Jehovah is the Spirit of Knowledge on the left and the Spirit of the Fear of the Lord on the right. Again, this is one Spirit, for God is One, but again, we must receive it in perfect sequence as it is given, since to get it out of order is to invite a counterfeit, a hypocrisy.

Allow me to reiterate this order from the beginning. The inexhaustible life of the Spirit of Jehovah revives us with the Spirit of Wisdom, awakening the mind of Christ in us to the Spirit of Understanding as the Spirit of Strategic Discernment whereby we receive the Spirit of Council thereby becoming conduits of the Spirit of Might flowing through us as the Spirit of Irresistible Council.

Then and only then are we really able to receive the Spirit of Intimate Knowledge of the Holy One, resulting in the Spirit of the reverential Fear of the Lord, which is pure worship in Spirit and in truth. Do you see the progression? It cannot be any other way. You can't start with the knowledge of God (as young converts are often encouraged to do) without the life of the Spirit of Jehovah bringing forth wisdom and understanding, followed by experiencing the irresistible council of God. To start with knowledge of God without the life of the Spirit of Jehovah results in a dry, dead "performance-oriented Christian" who never grows up in the Holy Spirit because he is too busy trying to please God according to his head knowledge. Nor can you start with the worshipful, reverential fear of the Lord without the intimate and experiential knowledge of God. No, flesh can't produce anything but flesh. Physical man's efforts will never produce a spiritual man. It's got to be God's way, or not at all.

From glory into glory, we are changed into the image and likeness of the divine nature. Do not think that you must receive the fullness of the Spirit of Jehovah before you can even begin to receive of the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding! Rather always be seeking more of the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding by the ever increasing life of the Spirit of Jehovah within, as the Spirit of Council and Might, and Knowledge and the Fear of the Lord are also increasing within. So, though the Spirit of Knowledge and the Fear of the Lord is last in the progression, it comes to us in growing waves of worship, as an ever upward spiral, filling us anew each day with the fullness of the seven-fold Holy Spirit as our capacity is enlarged.

Though it comes to us in a progression, yet never forget that the Spirit of God is one. If God's Spirit has awakened you, He will finish the job; you can count on it. "... He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus." (Phil. 1:6) The life of the Spirit of Jehovah brings wisdom and understanding to work through us His irresistible council giving deeper knowledge and reverential fear of His majesty which results in more life of the Spirit of Jehovah bringing us ever more strategic discernment enlarging our hearts to greater usefulness as a channel of His irresistible council bringing us deeper knowledge and reverential fear of His majesty, and so on and on and on, as we "... are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory..." (2 Cor. 3:18)

But let's look a little closer at the Spirit of Knowledge and the Fear of the Lord. As we covered in chapters 10 - 13, the Spirit of Knowledge has nothing to do with the knowledge of good and evil, nor the knowledge of anything or anyone except only that intimate "knowing" relationship with God Himself. Chapters 14 and 15 remind us that the Spirit of the Fear of the Lord has nothing to do with fright or fearfulness, but rather is that holy awe and reverence with gratitude and appreciation of all that God is and does. Now, how can the flesh nature get that backwards? It seems impossible! Of course you must get to know Him before you can stand in His presence in holy awe and reverence with gratitude, appreciation, and worshipful, holy respect. But alas, the human (fleshly) "... heart is deceitful above all else, and desperately wicked; who can understand it?" (Jer. 17:8) It is possible to get it backwards. Indeed, it is quite common.

Have you ever been in a meeting where the leaders tried to work people up into a “spirit of worship” by their up-beat songs and pious religious pep talks? Did you see all the sheep standing there with their arms upraised with words of deepest reverence and praise on their lips even though their hearts were far, far from Him? Then, when the “worship” was over, did you all sit down to hear a sermon on “knowing God”? Yes, I’ve been there, too, but in my early years, I would come away without knowing God, for knowing about Him and singing songs about Him are quite different from knowing Him experientially and singing my love to Him. “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.” (Isa. 55:8-9) I don’t criticize or condemn, for that is all they know, and in fact God did use those meetings to develop in me a hunger and thirst to really know Him.

The Spirit of Jehovah is the Spirit of Knowledge and the Fear of the Lord. He is there; sometimes weeping at the coldness and hardness of our hearts, but He is there. Even in the most superficially religious and hypocritical of “worship” services, He is there, ready and waiting for those who will seek Him with a whole heart. Neither does He condemn, for He is the Good Shepherd, come to seek and to save those who are lost. Who could be more lost than the religious world, secure in their knowledge that their fire insurance is paid up as members in good standing in their church, and all they need to do is obey their church traditions and rituals, and they will make to heaven after they die.

If you are there now, I challenge you: the Good Shepherd is not particularly interested in getting you to heaven after you die. That famous “mansions in the sky” passage in John 14 is not even talking about heaven someday. He wants a relationship with you right now! He wants you to know Him even as He knows you and to love Him as He loves you. The Spirit of Knowledge and the Fear of the Lord wants your loving worship in awe and reverence based on your intimate knowledge of Him in all His surpassing beauty and glory, for it cannot be otherwise. You cannot truly worship that which you do not know. You can fear to come into His presence or fear to open your heart to the intimacy He desires with you – but only if you do not know Him. For when you know Him by the Spirit of Knowledge, know Him intimately in the reality of His beauty and grace, His infinite love and compassion, His surpassing justice and mercy, His awesome power, yet tenderness and kindness – when you really know Him, then you will worship Him in the Spirit of the Fear of the Lord.

There joy and peace flow like a river. There are delights and pleasures evermore. The best of human experiences pale and feel trite by comparison. Yes, even the marriage experience, though a picture of the reality of intimacy with God, dims before the ecstasy of finding Him whom my soul loves, the One for whom I was created a dwelling place. And when I find Him, meet with Him, commune with Him, touch Him, then and only then may I fall in worship at His feet in awe and reverence and godly fear. That is the Spirit of Knowledge and the Fear of the Lord. That is what I call the Spirit of Pure Worship in Spirit and Truth.

Is this important, or am I just making a big deal of nothing? Jesus must have felt it was important. Near the end of His famous Sermon on the Mount (Mat. 7:22-23), He said, "Many will say to Me on that [judgment] day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me you who do iniquity.'" Now, these are obviously very religious people, since they have been busy prophesying, casting out demons, and performing miracles in Jesus' name. But Jesus does not accept them. Why? He lists two things. The first is that they "do iniquity." Iniquity is simply willfulness, making my own choices for myself based on my own knowledge of good and evil and refusing to wholeheartedly submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. That does describe a lot of very religious people, and I understand why Jesus would have a problem with them.

But the other thing Jesus says is, I feel, most significant, "I never knew you." Why doesn't He know them? They seem to know Him. He is talking here about more than a superficial "knowing about" Him. Satan and his demons "know about" Jesus, and they tremble because they know their time is short and their doom is sealed. (James 2:19) No, but the Spirit of Knowledge and the Spirit of the Fear of the Lord is one Spirit: the Spirit of Pure Worship. The demons know about Jesus and are terrified of Him, like some "Christians" who know about Jesus and are afraid of His soon returning in great power and glory, for fear that He will catch them doing something for which they are ashamed. There is no worship there.

But the true saint knows the Good Shepherd and Savior of our souls and lives minute by minute in awe and worship with great longing for His triumphant return. There is no fear there (in the sense of fright), for His perfect love casts out fear. (1 Jn. 4:18) Our love relationship with our Lord Jesus delivers us from the fear of judgment and creates in us that longing to see Him face to face. This is the Spirit of Knowledge and the Fear of the Lord. This is the Spirit of Pure Worship in Spirit and Truth.

And what about John 14 and those "mansions in the sky by and by"? Look at it again, and may the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding enlighten your spirit. "Jesus answered [Peter], 'Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a cock shall not crow until you deny me three times. Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, now believe also in Me. In My Father's house [temple] are many dwelling places [that's us, His many-membered body. Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit]; if it were not so, I would have told you; for now I go to prepare a place [that is a place of authority for the overcomer in Christ] for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am [right now], there you may be also... I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me... And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper [Comforter, Intercessor], that He may be with you forever; that is, the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans;

I will come to you... In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you... If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make our abode [dwelling place] with him... Abide [dwell continually] in Me, and I in you..." (Jn. 13:38-14:3, 6, 16-18, 20, 23; 15:4)

Do you see what He is talking about? Certainly not mansions in the sky by and by! He wants a relationship of Spirit with us (for God is Spirit), but as long as He remained on earth in physical form, all He could have was human relationships. That is why He insisted, "I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you, but when I go, I will send Him to you." (Jn. 16:7) Now, you know who the Helper is: the Holy Spirit, right? Well, yes, but let's get personal here. The Holy Spirit is Jesus Himself; "... you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you." (Jn. 14:17-18) He went away, physically, so that He could come back in the reality of His Spirit (for God is Spirit) and dwell in us.

Do you begin to get the picture? This whole passage (Jn. 14 – 17) is talking about the intimacy of relationship that our Lord Jesus Christ wants with us, and for which we were created. I have no argument with heaven by and by, but that was not His focus nor is it mine. My focus, in fact my life, is set on knowing Jesus Christ my Lord and Savior, that I may worship Him aright in awe and reverent fear. "... I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and

count them but dung in order that I may gain Christ... that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings..." (Phil. 3:8-10) "For we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God, glory in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh." (Phil. 3:3) That is the Spirit of Knowledge and the Fear of the Lord. And that is the Spirit of Pure Worship in Spirit and Truth.

David knew this intimacy with God. "Preserve me, O God, for I take refuge in You. I said to the Lord, 'You are my Lord; I have no good besides You... You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.'" (Ps. 16:1, 11)

Moses knew it, too. "Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations." (Ps. 90:1) "He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High [communion with Him in the most intimate relationship], will abide in the shadow [the protection, the covering] of the Almighty." (Ps. 91:1)

They both had a love relationship with God which the natural man can only begin to fathom. Study other famous people from Scripture, like Enoch, Job, Noah, Abraham, and Samuel – without their relationship with God, their knowing Him in reverent worship and obedience, would there even have been anything in their lives worth remembering?

But those examples pale in comparison with our Example, the Lord Jesus Himself. Did He know the Father? Did He know the Father! He said, "The Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son also does in the same way. For the Father loves the Son and shows Him all that

He Himself is doing... I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge. My judgment is just; because I do not seek My own will but the will of Him who sent Me.” (Jn. 5:19, 20, 30) That is the fullness of the Spirit of Knowledge and the Fear of the Lord! Observe, even in this brief statement, the intimacy and total knowing, the close communion, the oneness in heart and in purpose, and the perfect love, as well as the reverent submission, willing obedience, and total dedication. That is pure worship. It’s all shared between the Father and the Son. Shall we who are His sons settle for any less?

## **The Seven Spirits in Harmony**

Isa. 11:2; Prov. 10:22; Mat. 5:6; 6:31-33; 7:7-12; 13:44-46; Luke 11:9-13; Rom. 14:17; 2 Pet. 2:4

We have seen in this chapter how the seven Spirits of God are really one Spirit, totally unified in nature and purpose, each aspect working together with every other aspect in perfect harmony. We have also seen how the order in which they are given is significant, as is the pairing given by the prophet Isaiah, “And the Spirit of the Lord [Jehovah] shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge and of the Fear of the Lord.” (Isa. 11:2)

One step remains for us to complete this harmony: how can you and I receive the seven Spirits of God? Of what value is any of this if it is just a “Bible lesson”? How can you and I actually become “partakers of the divine nature...” (2 Pet. 1:4) How can we be one in Jesus even as He is One with the Father? (Jn. 17:21-23) How can we likewise be filled with that same Holy Spirit who rested in full measure upon the man Jesus?

Jesus Himself answers, “Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it shall be opened. Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?” (Luke 11:9-13)

Firstly, note that this was told in the context of a parable on persistence, and the asking, seeking, and knocking is all given in a unique Greek tense which implies that it is continuous determined, persevering action, “ask and keep on asking, seek and keep on seeking, knock and keep on knocking.” And secondly, note that this is talking specifically about the heavenly Father granting the Holy Spirit to those who are persistently asking, while the parallel passage (Mat. 7:7-11) merely talks about the Father giving “good things” to those who persistently ask. Both of those are significant; God did not make a mistake here. We will try to address both of these points, starting with the latter.

God’s definition of “good” is not the same as yours or mine might be, humanly speaking. For example, we might say of a crude piece of scribbled artwork done by a three year old, “Wow! That’s really good!” when it is actually atrocious. Or we might say of a piece of devil’s food cake with thick sugar frosting, “Mmm! That was good!” knowing all the time the disastrous effect it was having on our health (or lack thereof).

But when God says “good” I assure you, He means truly “good,” and not just good relative to other things which could be worse, and not just good for the moment but harmful later on. It reminds me of a Proverb, “It is the blessing of the Lord that makes rich, and He adds no sorrow to it.” (Prov. 10:22) Now, that’s good! There is a kind of riches which do not make their possessor anxious, or fearful, or greedy, or arrogant, or manipulative, or jealous, or lazy, or wasteful and thoughtless, or overweight and sickly, or self-centered and spoiled, or calloused and hard-hearted, or cruel and overbearing, or anything at all that could be considered to bring sorrow with it. Think of it! He adds no sorrow to it! What kind of riches could that possibly be with no sorrows attached?

Obviously, no earthly wealth could quite fit the bill, although material goods could be a natural byproduct of it. Do you see it now? These promised riches are the wealth of the Holy Spirit, in all His seven-fold manifestations. Praise God from whom all blessings flow! He adds no sorrow to the riches which flow through His Holy Spirit, because there is no sorrow in the Kingdom of God! How can I be anxious about my wealth when I know it doesn’t belong to me, it all belongs to the King? Or how can I be fearful of losing it when I know it is in the capable hands of the almighty Master of the Universe?! How can I be greedy for more if I am filled with gratefulness and contentment for all that He has given? Or how can I be arrogant about what I’ve accumulated when I know it was all given to me by the mercy, grace, and goodness of my Creator, the One who provides me life and breath? How can I be manipulative, jealous, lazy, or any of

those other things which would bring sorrow into my life and the lives of my loved ones? How could I? I can’t... when I have received that one priceless treasure which is beyond all valuation, that pearl of great price – the Holy Spirit in the fullness of the seven Spirits of God – for which I give up all that I have.

Remember the parables Jesus told of the treasure hid in the field and the pearl of great price? (Mat. 13:44-46) Did you think the main point was that the poor merchant had to sell all that he had to buy it? No, the main point really is, “The Kingdom of Heaven is like... The Kingdom of Heaven is like...” Do you think that the old merchant cared that he had to sell everything to get that pearl? No, I tell you, he didn’t need to think twice about it! If he had owned ten times as much or even a hundred times as much, he would have given it all up in an instant to obtain that pearl.

Do you see it now? The pearl represents of the Kingdom of Heaven. This is wealth with no sorrow added to it! All the wealth in the world accumulated over all the ages of time cannot compare to it. “For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?” (Mk. 8:36) Not one whit. All the world’s wealth has sorrow added to it. Even for a man with the best of intentions, if nothing else, there is always the burden of responsibility caring for it and distributing it. But the true riches of the Kingdom have no sorrow added! Our sovereign, omnipotent King bears all the responsibility, while we His stewards merely obey the promptings of His Holy Spirit moment by moment, trusting the King to properly manage all of His affairs through us. There truly is no sorrow there, only joy, peace, and love in the Holy Spirit.

So, did we answer the question of why the Matthew account says the Father gives “good things” to those who ask while the Luke passage says the Father gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask? I hope by now the answers is clear: giving us the Holy Spirit is the “good thing” from whom all good things flow. Only God is completely, totally good. (Lk. 18:19) Without the Holy Spirit, nothing, no matter how “good” from our human perspective, can ever be truly “good,” since it always has sorrow added to it somewhere.

That relates back to the first point on persistent asking. Since all true wealth, all “Kingdom riches,” all “good with no sorrow added” comes from God, just how much of the Holy Spirit will we need to be wealthy?

Ah ha! Got you, didn’t I! Go on, try to answer. How much of God’s Spirit do we need to be truly wealthy with the riches of the Kingdom? That may sound like a simple question, but I warn you, it’s a sleeper!

In fact, the question can’t be answered, any more than the question which was once asked a very (worldly) wealthy man, “How much wealth does it take to make a person happy?” His answer was at the same time very profound and very sad. He responded, “Just a little bit more.” In other words, worldly riches never make you truly happy no matter how much you accumulate. So even though our question of Kingdom riches can’t be answered either, at least we can get a glimpse of the answer here. As usual, take every worldly principle (of Satan’s kingdom) and turn it upside down or inside out, and you have the corresponding principle of the Kingdom of God. In the Kingdom, the very first tiny taste of the Spirit (at salvation) brings overwhelming and lasting joy.

But as I warned you, it’s not nearly as simple as that. You can’t just come to God and say, “Lord Jesus, please come into my heart” once and be forever full to overflowing with His Holy Spirit. Yes, that first taste is satisfying and the newborn saint may feel full as after a great feast, but is that it? Does the baby saint now possess everything there is in the Kingdom of God?

That may seem like an obvious point, but there are some who teach just that. They claim that salvation is a one time thing, and that once you have received the Lord Jesus into your heart and accepted by faith His substitutionary death on the cross for your sins, that’s all of His Holy Spirit that you will get until you “get to heaven.” Others similarly teach that once you have prayed for and received the “baptism of the Holy Ghost” and speak in “tongues,” that is all of the Holy Spirit you will ever get – until the “Kingdom comes,” of course.

Come to think of it, they may be right, except they are thinking of the Kingdom as a future event, while Jesus said the Kingdom is “at hand”; “within you”; and “is come” (Mk. 1:15; Lk. 17:21; Mat. 12:28), something to be sought after with the highest priority, as opposed to just waiting until it “comes.” (Mat. 6:33) If the Kingdom of God has not “come” in your own heart and life yet, if you have not yet accepted Jesus your Savior as also your sovereign Lord and Master, the King of your life, and submitted willingly to His Lordship and His discipline, then yes, that is about all of the Holy Spirit you will ever have until the “Kingdom comes.” And I dare say it isn’t much, and I even suggest that you haven’t a clue what I’m saying when I speak of the seven Spirits of God.

But if you have submitted your life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ (and I can't imagine, dear saint, that you could read this far without taking that crucial life-changing step) then welcome, brother or sister; you are now walking in the Kingdom of God.

I didn't say that there is now no more temptation, or no possibility of stumbling, or that you now have perfection in character or completion of maturity in all the attributes of the divine nature. I simply said you are now walking in the Kingdom. If I had said that the Lord Jesus Christ is walking in the Kingdom in and through you, would that have helped? That is precisely correct when I reckon my sinful flesh nature as, "crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me." (Gal. 2:20)

Now, what is the primary characteristic of one who is walking in the Kingdom? Again, to find the answer, just reverse the corresponding worldly principle: what is the primary characteristic of a worldly person? He is always pursuing food, pleasure, self-gratification, worldly things; always wanting more; always hungry! In God's Kingdom the principle is the same except turned right-side up. A Kingdom dweller is also hungry, but not for self, rather for the increase of the Kingdom and the benefit of the King. "The Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." (Rom. 14:17) The Kingdom dweller is hungry for all the things of God and for the increase of His nature in them. "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness..." (Mat. 5:6)

It's a matter of focus. The worldly focus is always self; "What's in it for me?" The Kingdom dweller's focus is on the King and His Kingdom. "What's in it for my King? How does this benefit His Kingdom?" "Do not be anxious then, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'With what shall we clothe ourselves?' All these things the heathen eagerly seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." (Mat. 6:31-33) That is the true Kingdom dweller. So, did you have the idea that this spiritual hunger and getting filled up is a one-time thing? Not on your life! Not any more than a big teenage boy can stuff himself at a feast and not return three hours later to polish off the leftovers.

Yes, one primary characteristic of the Kingdom dweller is that he's always hungry. Hungry for the good things of the Kingdom! What are the good things of the Kingdom? The Holy Spirit! The very Spirit of the living God Himself embodies all the "good things" of the Kingdom. All of His divine nature and character, all of His love, joy, peace, righteousness, justice, mercy and grace, His truth, His wisdom, His... His... yes indeed, all the fullness of the seven Spirits of God. That is what we who are the saints of the Kingdom are hungry and thirsty for.

Yes, our first taste of the Holy Spirit makes us full, satisfied, as if we've just eaten a great feast. It is the opposite of the worldly riches that can never satisfy, that are "never quite enough." Walking in the Kingdom, all we children of the King are always joyfully content. Even so, God knows what babes we are, and He wants us to grow up!

Now we come back to that first point about persistence that we postponed at the beginning of the section. We serve a very big God, far bigger than we can contain. Yet He wants to fill us with Himself. The tiny bit of Him we have so far fills us full – yet it is not enough. So God gives us that hunger. He wants to stretch us way beyond our capacity. He wants to fill us with, “... all the fullness of God... to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” (Eph. 3:19; 4:13) “Fear not, little flock; it is the Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.” (Lk. 12:32)

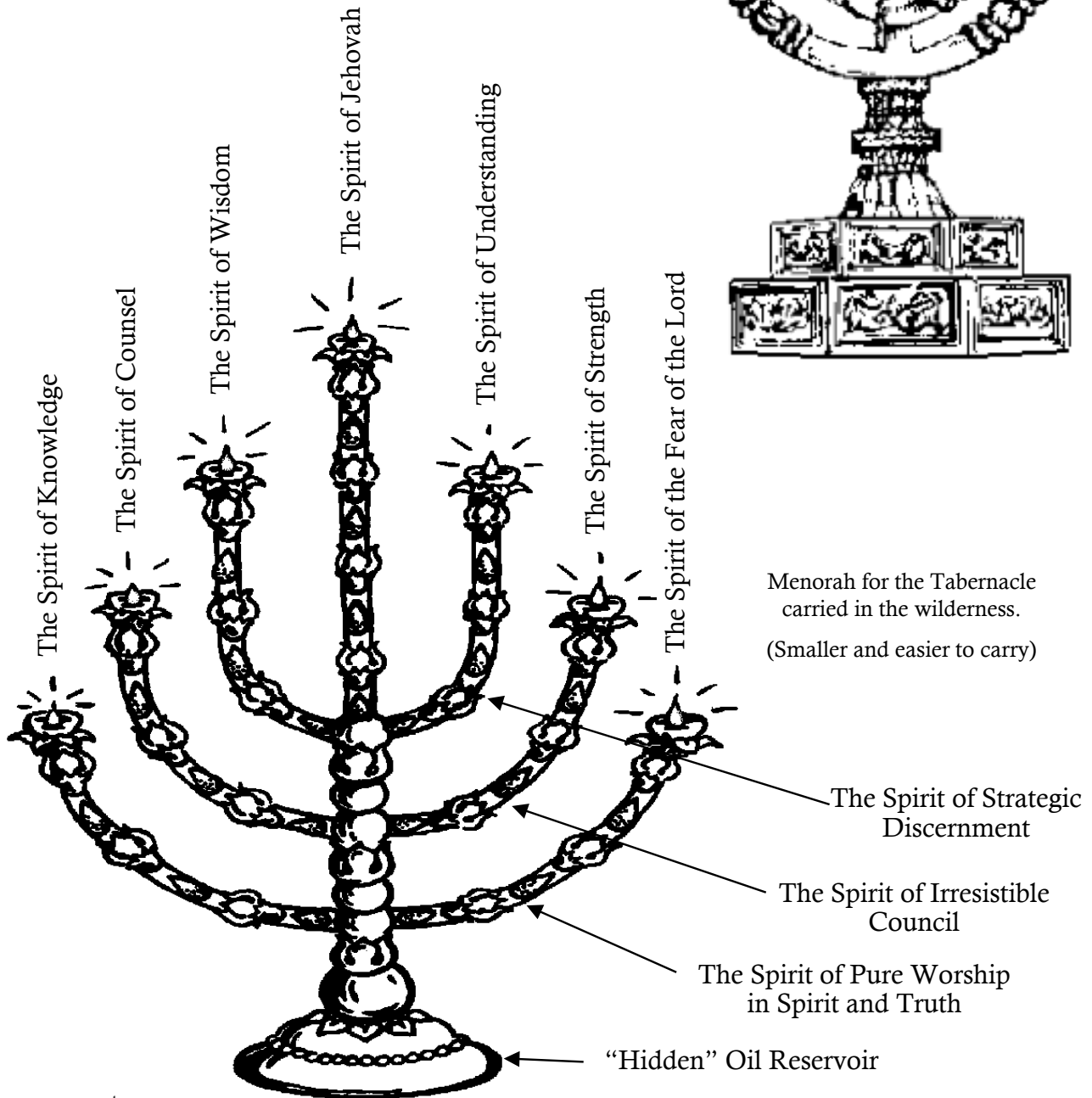
So now we know how we can receive the seven Spirits of God. “Ask [persistently], and [He] shall be given to you; seek [and keep on seeking], and you shall find [Him]; knock [and keep knocking], and [the fullness of the seven Spirits of God] shall be opened to you. For... If you then, being evil, now how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”

“My son, [all you sons of the King] if you will receive my sayings and treasure my commandments within you; if you make your ear attentive to wisdom, and incline your heart to understanding; if you cry for discernment, and lift your voice for understanding; if you seek for her as for silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will discern the [Spirit of the] Fear of the Lord, and discover the [Spirit of the] Knowledge of God. For the Lord [the Spirit of Jehovah] gives [the Spirit of] Wisdom, and from His mouth comes [the Spirits of] Knowledge and Understanding ... Then you will discern righteousness and justice and equity and every good course [which is the Spirit of Strategic Discernment].” (Prov. 2:1-9)

“The path of the righteous [Your path, you saints of the Kingdom] is like the light of dawn, that shines brighter and brighter until the full day [the full manifestation of the Kingdom of God on earth].” (Prov. 4:18) “Those who have insight [strategic discernment] will shine brightly, like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness [will shine] like the stars forever and ever.” (Dan. 12:3) “As for Me, this is My covenant with them, declares the Lord, My Spirit which is upon you and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your offspring, nor from the mouth of your offspring’s offspring, says the Lord, from now on and forever. Arise, shine! [you saints of the Kingdom] for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold, darkness will cover the earth, and deep darkness the peoples; But the Lord will rise upon you [by His seven-fold Spirit], and His glory will appear upon you. And nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.” (Isa. 59:21-60:3) “The Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come!’ And let every one who hears say, ‘Come!’ And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.” (Rev. 22:17)

Even so, come, Lord Jesus! Come in the seven-fold fullness of your Spirit! Arise and shine in and through us, as we, your Bride in oneness with your Spirit, say to any who can hear, “Come! Take the water of life freely from the giver of life! Drink deeply, you who hunger and thirst for righteousness, that He may also become within you an artesian well of living water springing up unto joyous, abundant, everlasting life!”

Menorah for King Solomon's Temple  
 (Much bigger, heavier, with a larger oil reservoir. In three dimensions forming a star of David looking down from the top.)



Menorah for the Tabernacle  
 carried in the wilderness.  
 (Smaller and easier to carry)

## Hebrew Menorah (seven-branched olive oil lamp)

# Chapter 21 – The Seven Spirits in the Kingdom

## Introduction

Ps. 10:16, 146:10; Isa. 9:6-7; 1 Cor. 15:20-28

In twenty chapters and three hundred pages, we have merely introduced the seven Spirits of God. We have just begun to know Him who surpasses knowledge. We are like babies climbing out of the crib for the first time; like fledgling eagles who have finally spread our wings and discovered that we could fly – yet with the whole wide world still awaiting our eager exploration. This book must come to an end. That is the way it is with all things locked into this space-time continuum. But our eternal and infinite God does not come to an end. We could spend all of the ages of time seeking out the wisdom and knowledge of the Almighty and never know Him fully. In truth, we will not know Him even as we are known (See 1 Cor. 13:9-12) until we fully enter into His eternity and become one with Him in that final great “age of the ages” (See Heb. 1:8) in which He has promised us to become “all and in all” (See 1 Cor. 15:20-28)

So what about the Kingdom of God? Does God wait until that “age of the ages” to manifest His sovereignty? Is the Kingdom of Heaven “on hold” until the end of time so “eternity” can “begin”? Does any king wait until every last corner of his kingdom is fully subject to him before declaring himself king? Not on your life! He declares himself king first; then with the full power and authority of his kingdom behind him, he subdues every enemy and gains full control of his kingdom.

Even so in the Kingdom of Heaven, “But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep [dead]. For since by a man came death, by a Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ, the firstfruits, after that those who are Christ’s at his appearing, then comes the end, when He delivers up the Kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and authority and power. [Did you hear that? The end of time does not come until after God has abolished all rule and authority and power. That is not when the Kingdom of Heaven begins; it is when it ends! At the end of time, no human kingdoms will remain – only the Kingdom of God.] For He [Jesus] must reign [that’s the Kingdom of Heaven] until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death... When all things are subjected to Him [Jesus] then the Son Himself also will be subject to the One who subjected all things to Him [the Father], that God may be all in all.” (1 Cor. 15:20-28)

So how long must Jesus reign? Everyone who has ever heard Handel’s *Messiah* knows the answer to that one, “For He must reign forever and ever.” (Ps. 10:16; 146:10; Ex. 15:18; Heb. 1:8-12) “For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over His Kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore [to the vanishing point of time, time out of mind, to the end of time]. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.” (Isa. 9:6-7)

Of course the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ is forever and ever. So why does 1 Corinthians 15 say that when Jesus has put every enemy under His feet, He abolishes all rule and authority and power, and hands the Kingdom over to the Father? That is not a contradiction – there are no contradictions in God’s Word, only in our limited perception of what the Holy Spirit is saying through Scripture. In fact, mostly due to a lot of old Roman Catholic/Babylonish doctrines and traditions from which they’ve never totally broken free, many Christians are confused between time and eternity; between the world and the earth; between heaven and hell; between saints and sinners; between the Kingdom of God; the Kingdom of Heaven, the kingdoms of this world, and the kingdom of Satan; and between the sons of God, the firstfruits, the Bride of Christ, the church, the body of Christ, His brethren, His servants, the nations, and the heathen.

To fully cover all these misconceptions is the subject of another whole book (such as *The Savior of the World* series through J. Preston Eby, *Man’s Failure or God’s Success; Which Will Stand?* through Lee Salisbury, and *The Gospel of the Kingdom* and *The Feasts of Israel, God’s Plan of the Ages* through Paul Lindberg). But I made a rather bold statement in the previous chapter which many may not yet be ready to receive, namely,

“Welcome, brother or sister; you are now walking in the Kingdom of God!” Those who have been taught that the Kingdom can’t come until time ends may have trouble with that, along with those who have been taught that walking in the Kingdom depends upon their own personal perfection.

So I feel compelled to conclude this book with a quick primer on the Kingdom – an introduction, shall we say, into the great truths into which the seven Spirits of God are now leading you as you walk with Him in His Kingdom. I believe the Spirit Himself will teach you His Kingdom principles. But perhaps He will use this chapter to help redefine the terms, so your past conditioning and traditions don’t hinder your understanding of what the Spirit is saying to you.

## **Eternity and the Ages of Time**

Ex. 3:14; Ps. 103:14; 145:10-13; Isa. 9:6; 45:21-25; 49:1-6; 57:15; 60; Zech. 14; Mal. 3:6; Mat. 25:46; Mark 16:17-18; Jn. 1:18; 3:5-17; 1 Cor. 3:12-15; 15:20-28; 2 Cor. 6:1-2; Rom. 6; 9-11; Eph. 1-3; Phil. 1:6; 2:5-7; Col. 1:13-28; 2:6-23; 3:11; Heb. 12:25-29; James 1:17; 1 Pet. 1:23; 2 Pet. 3; Rev. 7, 13-14, 19-22

“I Am” is the eternal name of God. “God said to Moses, ‘I Am who I Am,’ and He said, ‘Thus shall you say to the sons of Israel, “I Am has sent Me to you.”’” (Ex. 3:14) This is derived from a Hebrew verb “to be” pronounced HawYAH. YAH” is the One who Is, the Self Existent One. YHWH, the Hebrew name of God (with the vowels removed to protect the holiness of “The Name” from profane lips), could be spelled YAH O YAH (transliterated Jehovah in English), which literally means, “I Am who I Am.” The correct pronunciation of this His most holy name was lost in antiquity, so

most modern translations of Scripture avoid the problem by simply translating it LORD (all caps), in contrast with the Hebrew word for Master (Adonai), which is rendered “Lord” (lower case). I believe that knowing His name helps us know Him; for example, “I Am who I Am; I do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.” (Mal. 3:6) God is eternal. He does not change. He is beyond time. His name is not “I Will Be” or “I Was,” but “I AM.” I know it is difficult for us time-based mortals to grasp that, but by the Spirit of God through the mind of Christ in you, you must (and do) comprehend it. No one cannot truly, wholeheartedly place their trust in a God who merely was, or in a God who merely claims He will be, because we only live in the now.

Now turn your attention to that awesome name of Jesus, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.” (Rev. 22:13; 21:6; 1:8; and Isa. 41:4) Of what is He the beginning and the end? Of the cosmos? Of creation? *Or of time?* Could this be saying that Jesus is the God of all time? I believe that is precisely correct.

Who is Jesus? According to Jesus Himself, He is God’s “only begotten Son.” (Jn. 3:16) Well, right there we have a seeming contradiction, because our conception of “begotten” requires a time before he was begotten, while Jesus said of Himself “... before Abraham was, I AM.” (Jn. 8:58)

When Jesus applied the eternal name of God, “I AM,” to Himself, He was revealing a profound truth. We do not worship three Gods as some Jews claim. Jesus said, “I and the Father are one” and “He who has seen me has seen the Father.” (Jn. 10:30, 14:9, 17:11, 21, 22) Jesus is the eternal Father! (Isa. 9:6)

Jesus is the fullest possible expression of eternal, almighty, infinite God “poured out” into our limited, time-based realm. That is what “begotten” means. “No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son who is in the bosom [intimate presence] of the Father, He has explained [Greek: exegeomai – rehearsed, unfolded, declared, revealed] Him.” (Jn. 1:18) The infinite, eternal, unchangeable God limited Himself so that, as Jesus, He could enter the space-time realm to establish a relationship with us who are locked within time. Praise God that He did! In Jesus (and only in Jesus) we time-dwellers can get to know the Father in eternity.

I think many of us (including most Bible translators) have confused eternity and eternal life with heaven and the age (or ages) to come. They are similar, but the difference is crucial. “For thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is holy, I dwell on a high and holy place, and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit, in order to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.” (Isa 57:15) Heaven is not some future far-away place where we will all sit on clouds with harps worshipping God for all eternity! Heaven is being in the presence of the eternal God. Eternal life is His kind of life, which He gives to all who will receive it. Eternity and changelessness is His life-form, just as time, change, growth, and decay is our life-form. Two completely different life-forms, farther apart than a human life-form is from that of an ant. Yet He wants a relationship with us who are humble, contrite and lowly of spirit. How could He do it? Well, if you want a relationship with ants, you must become an ant. He expressed Himself into our life-form.

“Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, [that’s God’s “eternity” life-form] did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, [that’s our time-based life-form] and being made [begotten] in the likeness of men...” (Phil. 2:5-7) Jesus bridged the gap between His eternal life-form and our time-based life-form, in the beginning of time for all time. He doesn’t just give eternal life, He is life. He doesn’t just reveal the truth, He is truth. He doesn’t just show the way to the Father, He is the way to the Father. (See Jn. 14:6)

Do you spot the difference? We cannot just believe in Jesus so we can get eternal life in heaven someday. We must receive Jesus as our eternal life right now; then, moment by moment, we live with Him in His heaven as we develop that love relationship which He has always wanted with us. “But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus.” (Eph. 2:4-6) Even as our love relationship is developing, even as we are being transformed into His image from glory to glory, He is working through us to also reconcile others to Himself. (2 Cor. 3:18; 5:19)

That is walking in His Kingdom! Jesus is the King. His Kingdom is forever and ever, from everlasting until everlasting, from the beginning of time through the end of time, for He is indeed the God of all time. The only question remains, will we accept His invitation to join Him in His Kingdom?

We do not have to wait until some future “kingdom come” to receive His righteousness, to bear His image, to be filled with His Spirit; indeed we dare not wait, for He is the “I AM” and not the “I Will Be.” All the promises of God are now fulfilled in Christ and are ours inasmuch as we are in Christ. “For as many as may be the promises of God, in Him [Christ] they are ‘Yes!’ and by Him [Christ] is our ‘Amen!’ to the glory of God through us.” (2 Cor. 1:20) “And working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain; for He says, ‘At the acceptable time I listened to you, and on the day of salvation I helped you.’ Behold now is ‘the acceptable time,’ now is ‘the day of salvation...’” (2 Cor. 6:1-2)

The Kingdom of God is always now. It was now for Adam and Eve in the garden. It was now for everyone before Christ who obeyed God and believed in His promise of the coming Redeemer. It was (is) now for everyone since Christ who accepts by faith the substitutionary death and resurrection life of Jesus on their behalf. And it continues to be now for each of us as we walk in His resurrection life through the darkness of great tribulation and on into the dawning of the millennial rest, when God’s firstfruits will rule for a thousand years in and through Christ. And that is merely the beginning! “All Your works shall give thanks to You, O Lord, and Your godly ones shall bless You. They shall tell of the glory of Your Kingdom and speak of Your power, to make known to the sons of men Your mighty acts and the glory of the majesty of Your Kingdom. Your Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations.” (Ps. 145:10-13)

The Kingdom of Heaven began with the beginning of time, when "... God created the heavens and the earth..." (Gen. 1:1) It continues throughout all the ages of time (literally throughout all generations), and it will conclude after that final great age of the ages when every enemy is in submission, everything in all creation is reconciled back to the Creator, death and all the works of Satan are destroyed, every knee bows to acknowledge that Jesus alone is worthy to receive all glory and honor and praise and worship, all rule and authority and power are abolished, and Jesus Christ the head with His body, the many-membered son, delivers up the Kingdom to the God and Father, that God may become all and in all. (See 1 Cor. 15:20-28) And all during this vast and incomprehensible span of time, there are those who are entering into His eternity, living by His eternal life, willfully submitting themselves to His government, and being used by Him to in turn reconcile others to His Lordship. For "of the increase of His government there shall be no end." (Isa. 9:7)

For those who were told that "the age of grace" ends when Jesus returns for His Bride, I have good news. God's grace never ends, because it is a part of His own eternal character. What were you told we would be doing after the "age of grace" ended, sitting on a cloud and playing the harp? I expect we'll be much too busy to go cloud camping, because Scripture tells me that in the ages to come, Jesus Christ will be displaying in us the surpassing riches of His grace, shown by His kindness toward us. (Eph. 2:7) Displaying it to whom? Who else? To those who have not yet received His grace! To rulers and powers, to the world-forces of this present

darkness, and to principalities of wickedness in the heavenlies (Eph. 6:12), as well as to all of the visible creation. This is God's "eternal purpose," literally His "purpose of the ages," that we saints be given grace "to preach to the Gentiles [the heathen] the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God... in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and authorities [angels and demons] in the heavenlies." (Eph. 3:8-10)

Actually, the book of Revelation makes it rather clear what the saints will be doing in the ages to come. First, at the end of this age (with apologies to those of you who were taught to believe the modern doctrine of a pre-tribulation rapture), the saints will be persecuted and overcome by the beast of antichrist during the great tribulation, and many if not most will be killed. (Rev. 13:7 ff) Next, Jesus comes for His Bride, (the 144,000 "firstfruits to the Lamb" – Rev. 14:1-5 – who have been purified, not harmed, in the fire of tribulation – Rev. 7:1-8; also Isa. 30:18-26) and the wedding takes place. (Rev. 19:7 ff) Then the beast and his cronies are tossed into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20 ff) and the devil is bound by a great chain and imprisoned in the Abyss for a thousand years. (Rev. 20:2 ff) The saints who had been killed by the beast during the tribulation (may I call these the "second-fruits"?) are then raised to rule with Christ and His Bride over the nations for the thousand years while Satan is bound. This is commonly termed the "millennial rest," as it is a rest from the downward pull of sin, even though it may be "labor" ruling the nations who don't yet know the Lord. (Zech. 14:16 ff)

At the end of the thousand years, Satan is released; he immediately goes out to deceive those who don't yet know the Lord and puts together a great army to attack the camp of the saints and their beloved city. (Rev. 20:9 ff) Fire from heaven wipes them out and Satan is summarily thrown into the lake of fire. Then comes the second resurrection and the Great White Throne Judgment in which all those who were dead are judged according to their deeds and those who are not found in the Lamb's Book of Life are also cast into the lake of fire (the second death – Rev. 20:15) So far, pretty straightforward, eh?

But then comes the “new heaven and new earth” (renewed, cleansed by fire just as the first earth was cleansed by water. Ref. Rev. 20:11-21:1; 2 Pet. 3:5-7, 12-13) and the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, the Bride, the wife of the Lamb, comes out of heaven from God (Rev. 21:9-11) to rule the earth “forever and ever” (literally “to the ages of the ages.” Rev. 22:5) No problems yet? Then tell me, who does the Bride rule over during these ages of ages?

Ha. Got you, didn't I. The traditional interpretation has no answer, because by then everyone is supposed to be either in eternal heaven or eternal hell. But Scripture has an answer. “The [New Jerusalem] has no need of the sun or moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. And the nations shall walk by its light, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it. In the daytime (for there shall be no night there) its gates shall never be closed; and they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. Nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in

the Lamb's Book of Life.” (Rev. 21:23-27) “Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates of the city. Outside are all the dogs, the sorcerers, the adulterers, the murderers, the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying... And the Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.” (Rev. 22:14-17)

Who are those to whom the Spirit and the Bride are saying “Come”? Obviously all those still outside the city, those adulterers, murderers, idolaters, and people who love and practice lying. So what are they doing in the “new heavens and the new earth”? That is the question which cannot be answered by those who confuse eternity and heaven with the ages to come. But I believe the answer becomes obvious when you realize that God's awesome plan of the ages is to display through us the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us, so that the heathen will finally be able to see and accept the unfathomable riches of Christ, in order that the manifold wisdom of God might finally be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies, so that, ultimately, that fantastic ancient prophesy through Isaiah will be fulfilled, “Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God... I have sworn by Myself; the Word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness and will not turn back, that to Me every knee shall bow, every tongue will swear allegiance. They will say of Me, ‘Only in the Lord are righteousness and strength.’” (See Isa. 45:21-25)

Israel never fulfilled the purpose for which God called them to be His people and made them a powerful nation. They were supposed to become “a light to the nations.” (Isa. 42:6) But though it may seem that God has failed with Israel, I assure you that God does not fail; He simply “takes His time.” Many Scriptures prophesy of the restoration of Israel to fulfill their created destiny. Isaiah says of the Messiah, “It is too small a thing that You should [merely] be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; but I will also make You a light to the nations, so that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth.” (Isa. 49:6) And again, “After these things I will return, and I will rebuild the tabernacle of David which has fallen, and I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it, in order that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by My name, says the Lord, who makes these things known from of old.” (Acts 15:16-18) “Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold, darkness will cover the earth, and deep darkness the peoples. But the Lord will rise upon you, and His glory will appear upon you. And nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising... the abundance of the sea will be turned to you; the wealth of the nations will come to you... They will bring gold and frankincense, and will bear good news of the praises of the Lord... And foreigners will build your walls, and their kings will minister to you; for in My wrath I struck you, then in My favor I have had compassion on you. And your gates will be open continually; they will not be closed day or night, so that men may

bring to you the wealth of the nations, with their kings led in procession. For the nation and the kingdom which will not serve you will perish... And the sons of those who afflicted you will come bowing to you, and all those who despised you will bow themselves at the soles of your feet; and they will call you the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.” (Isa. 60 – compare Rev. 21) “For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery... that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; thus all Israel will be saved... for the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable.” (Rom. 11:25-29)

Let’s get this straight, once and for all. God is all-knowing, all-powerful, and all-wise. He does whatever He pleases. He does not fail in His plans and purposes. He is the Master Potter, and we are the clay. (Isa. 41:4; 43:10-13; 45:5-9; 46:8-11; 64:8)

It sure seems to us a great tragedy when Adam and Eve fell, resulting in the vast majority of their offspring following the old serpent into that fiery place of torment. But I assure you that every work of Satan will be destroyed. “The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil.” (1 Jn. 3:8) And in the end, everyone will bow to confess Jesus as their Lord (Phil. 2:10-11; Rom. 10:9) that everything and everyone in creation will be reconciled to God and restored to his/her/its original created purpose. God is not up there in heaven wringing His hands in despair at all the multitudes He’s loosing to Satan. He allowed sin and its awful consequences as a tool to help mature His Bride. (Isa. 54:16; 45:7) Ultimately, when God’s plan of the ages is complete, every little lost lamb will be found.

Yes, yes, I do believe in hell as a place of torment for those who choose to follow Satan and his ways. That is very scriptural. But once you understand the difference between God's unchanging eternal life-form, and the ages of time which He has given us to grow, mature, receive discipline, and be changed into His image, you will realize that hell, too, is temporal (limited to the realm of time). Only that which comes from God and returns to Him is eternal. "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things." J.B. Phillips puts it, "For everything began with Him, continues its existence because of Him, and ends in Him." (Rom. 11:36) Everything Satan has fathered will be destroyed, and everything God has fathered will some day reach maturity in perfect accord with God's created design and purpose, so that at the end of time, God will be "all and in all." (1 Cor. 15:28; Eph. 1:10-23; Col. 1:20; 3:11; Rom. 11:36) That is God's plan for the ages of time.

I know that goes against the traditional doctrines which have been taught ever since the dark ages. "Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites... 'This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men.' Neglecting the commandment of God you hold to the tradition of men." (Mk. 7:6-8) "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head, over all rule and authority." (Col. 2:8-10; see also vs. 16-23.)

I have to believe God's Word rather than the traditional doctrine of eternal hell. If I didn't, then my Bible would be so full of contradictions that I wouldn't be able to believe it at all. Let's start with some Old Testament examples; in each case I am re-translating the Hebrew word for "forever" (a time word) into "eternal" (beyond time), to show you how foolish this quickly becomes.

God commanded the slave who loved his master to get his ear pierced with an awl, "... and then he shall serve him for eternity." (Ex. 21:6) Solomon built his temple of stone to be "a place for Your dwelling for eternity." (1 Kings 8:13) God agreed by "... putting My name there for eternity." (9:3) Isaiah warns Jerusalem that "... The palace has been abandoned, the populated city forsaken, hill and watch-tower have become caves for eternity, a delight for wild donkeys and a pasture for flocks; until the Spirit is poured out upon us from on high." (Isa. 32:14-15) "... Their anointing shall qualify them for an eternal priesthood..." (Ex. 40:15; compare to Heb. 7:11-12, which says the Levitical priesthood is changed.) The Sabbath incense offering and all its associated sacrifices was to be an "eternal covenant for the sons of Israel" (Lev. 24:8) yet that entire covenant was found to be obsolete and was replaced by a second better covenant. (Heb. 8:6-13) "He established the earth upon its foundations, so that it will not totter for eternity," (Ps. 104:5) and "A generation comes and a generation goes, but the earth remains for eternity," (Eccl. 1:4) but Jesus Himself said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away." (Mat. 24:35) It should be obvious from the above verses that if those words actually meant "eternal" we would have some serious conflicts within Scripture.

Similarly in the New Testament, we have the Greek word “aion,” from which we get our word “eon,” which is clearly a time word. Sadly, that word also has been mis-translated “eternal” in some places as well. Again, I will give some obvious examples, re-translating “aion” or its derivatives into eternal or eternity to show you how foolish this can be: “... in the eternities to come...” (Eph. 2:7) “... the mystery which has been hidden from the eternities and generations; but now has been manifested to the saints ...” (Col. 1:26) “... you walked according to the eternity of this world...” (Eph. 2:2) “... by whom also He made the eternities.” (Heb. 1:2) “By faith we understand that the eternities were formed by the Word of God.” (Heb. 11:3) “... whoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this eternity, or in the one to come.” (Mat. 12:32) “... be not conformed to this eternity.” (Rom. 12:2) “Deliver us from this present evil eternity.” (Gal. 1:4) “Since the beginning of eternity it has never been heard...” (Jn. 9:32) “In the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before times eternal.” (Titus 1:2) “... the end of eternity...” (Heb. 9:26)

There are many others, but I think you get the point. It would be absurd to translate the Greek “aion” into “eternity” in the above verses, and indeed most translations do not. The better translations will render it “age” or “epoch,” although the King James often uses “world” (which is misleading). Many New Testament concordances and Greek dictionaries therefore present several meanings for “aion,” such as “an age, an indefinite period of time, in perpetuity, the world, a Messianic period, course, eternal, (for) ever, world without end” and so on.

Now, it is obvious that there is a basic difference between an age, which has a beginning and an end, and eternity, which has no beginning or end, and even forever, which may have a beginning but has no end (within time). Unfortunately, if you really have several different meanings for a word, then you get to pick and choose which meaning you will use based on your own understanding (bias) of the biblical context. Of course, translators have done just that to passages which refer to the punishment of the wicked, such as “... these shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” (Mat. 25:46) “tormented day and night, forever and ever” (Rev. 20:10) and “... tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; and they have no rest day and night...” (Rev. 14:10-11)

Now aside from the obvious questions of why God would want the tormented ones in His presence forever and ever and why it insists on “day and night” when we know there will be no night in the presence of the Lamb (see Rev. 21:22-25 and 22:5), there is a more serious problem. God is not a sadist. He derives no pleasure in the suffering and death of the wicked. (Ezk. 18:23) Yes, He is a God of absolute and awesome holiness who has most assuredly arranged in His great plan of the ages for the full and righteous punishment for every sin – never minimize that! Please do not accuse me of making light of hell and the terrible consequences of sin. I spent four chapters on God’s awesome judgments! But it runs contrary to His nature to say that His judgment is totally without grace, without hope, without love.

God is ONE. He cannot manifest any aspect of His character to the exclusion of any other aspect. His holiness demands His righteous hatred, wrath, and judgment against sin, but the very same holiness demands that He love the sinner. He expects that of you; would He expect of you what He is unable to be Himself? It is unthinkable that God should be accused of applying an infinite punishment (for any suffering at all for an infinite period of time is by definition an infinite punishment) for the crime of being born in sin, living in bondage (yes, utter captivity) to sin, dead in sin before ever having had a chance to live, and completely unable to hear or understand the gospel. That would accuse God of being cruel and vindictive, and would certainly justify those who refuse to believe in God because He allows so much suffering in His creation.

It is more consistent with all we know about God and His “righteous judgments” (Ps. 119:7, 62, 75, 106, 137, 164; Isa. 26:8-9) to say that the wicked will suffer the “punishment [discipline] of the ages,” while the righteous are given the “life of the ages.” Both of these are within time, going on until that great “age of the ages” when every enemy has become subject to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, every knee bows, and every tongue is finally willing to confess that He really is Lord, to the glory of the Father. (Phil. 2:10-11) Thus, everyone is ultimately “saved” for, “... if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.” (Rom. 10:9-10)

If we translate “aionios” (the adjective derived from “aion”) as “eternal,” then we must have eternal punishment as well as eternal life in Matthew 25:46, since the same word is used in both places. Indeed, that is one reason why many Bible scholars insist on eternal punishment (in spite of the fact that the word used for punishment there, “kolasis,” means corrective discipline), since they have also misunderstood the concept of “eternal life,” in reality the life of the ages.

True eternal life is God’s unchanging, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent life-form. It involves neither learning, nor maturing or growth. If God were to learn something today, then He could not be God, for it would prove that yesterday He was not omniscient. If God were to change, then He could not be God, for that would mean that yesterday He was incomplete or imperfect. He dwells in eternity and there can be no change in eternity. Change – growth and maturing – requires time; the very concept of change demands a time when you are one thing, and another time after you have changed. But God Himself declares, “I am YHWH, I change not.” (Mal. 3:6) and the apostle James says of the Father, “... there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” (James 1:17) God is the “I AM,” the ever present-tense, self-existent One.

But the “life of the ages” is given us within the ages of time for us to change: to grow and mature into His wisdom, nature, and character. Similarly, that “punishment of the ages” falls “with fire and brimstone” upon the wicked (ignorant, rebellious, hard hearted, proudly stubborn, self-focused – Eph. 4:18; Rom. 2:5-6) in strict accordance with their deeds (Mat. 25:41-45; Rev. 2:23; Jer. 17:10)

as an object lesson to all creation of the consequences of unforgiven, un-atoned for sin. "And they will be tormented day and night unto the age of the ages" (Rev. 20:10) in the "unquenchable fire" (Isa. 66:24; Mk. 9:43-48), for our God is a consuming fire. (Heb. 12:29)

Does it bother you that the fire of God is unquenchable? The fire that burned Edom (Isa. 34:10) and Jerusalem (Jer. 17:27) were also unquenchable, as is, I believe, this fire: "Now if any man build upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test each man's work. If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved – yet so as through fire." (1 Cor. 3:12-15) After all, it is God's fire, sent to consume anything and everything that does not meet His righteous standard. So who would dare think that they could quench it? But that doesn't mean that the fire remains burning after all the "wood, hay, and straw" has been consumed! "... 'Yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but also the heaven.' And this... denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, in order that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude... for our God is a consuming fire." (Heb. 12:26-29) Yes, God will indeed shake everything in our lives. His unquenchable fire shall burn up everything that can burn, but only so all that cannot burn, all our gold, silver, and precious stones, may remain.

"The wicked are reserved for the day of destruction; they shall be brought to the day of wrath." (Job 21:30) "The Lord has made everything for its own purpose, even the wicked for the day of evil." (Prov. 16:4) "The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment." (2 Pet. 2:9) "Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! For He told Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and will have compassion on whom I have compassion.' ... So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires." "Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sands of the sea, it is [only] the remnant that will be saved." (Rom. 9:13-27)

If we were to stop there, and if we did not understand God's purpose of the ages, we would think that there is indeed injustice with God. For those He chooses, He shows grace and mercy, but the rest, He hardens.

Fortunately, the apostle Paul did not stop there. "... There has come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice... That which Israel is seeking for, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened; as it is written, 'God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes to see not and ears to hear not, down to this very day.' ... they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them [the Jews] jealous... For if their rejection be the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? ... thus all Israel will be saved." (Rom. 11:5-15, 26)

You see, death and hell are no problem for our God. “The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.” (1 Cor. 15:26) “I am the living One, and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of hell.” (Rev. 1:18) That is what the ages of time are for: it is God’s purpose of the ages to systematically destroy all the works of Satan, up to and including death itself, and to ultimately bring every enemy to bow in submission and worship before the Savior, to the glory of God the Father.

Thus God’s awesome plan of the ages is fulfilled step by step, person by person, atom by atom, through the work of the seven Spirits of God. And though the unfolding of His plan is infinitely varied, the pattern is always the same. The Spirit of Jehovah quickens one who is dead in sin, opens the eyes of one who is blind to truth, softens one who is hard of heart, shines the light of truth and understanding to one who is lost in darkness and deception, and looses the chains that have bound him in sin. He then looks up and for the first time is able to see the glory of God in Christ Jesus.

But alas, the beauty of His holiness is more than he can bear, for it exposes by contrast the desperate wickedness and wretched filthiness and shame of his own life. Thence commences the struggle, the battle between light and darkness, between righteousness and wickedness, between the good and evil, between the rightful Lordship of Jesus Christ and the deceptive, deadly lordship of Satan masquerading as self. From our perspective, this battle takes many forms, sometimes even taking us to hell and back, and may seem to last a lifetime. But from God’s viewpoint, the pattern again is always the same.

This battle was won at Golgotha once for all time and for all creation. The master deceiver works as hard to obscure that fact as he does to hide his own involvement. He prefers that you think you are freely making your own choices and your only concern is learning to choose good rather than evil. (“Here, buddy, have some more fruit from the tree...”) But God patiently, gently, and lovingly allows you to fail until you finally see that there is something stronger than yourself at work in you.

At this point, many become anxious, even frantic. They have learned to hate their sin and see no hope of deliverance. Others give up and become discouraged, cynical, or complacent, and some even give up trying to “be holy, even as He is holy.” Others develop a philosophy of tolerance of sin in their lives, or a theology of constant warfare against it with no hope of victory short of death, always together with the reassurance that their sins are covered by the blood of Christ, His righteousness is imputed to them in spite of their continued sin, and they will make it to heaven someday by their faith, even though their works do not match their faith. There are even a few who try to justify their own failure to measure up to biblical standards by preaching vigorously that God’s holy standards are too high, that the scriptural norm for the Christian life (as clearly demonstrated by the first generation church walking in the power and purity of the Spirit with miraculous signs following, Mark 16:17-18) is unattainable by anyone today, and that no one can obey God’s command to be holy short of “heaven someday.” They insist that salvation is all by faith, so to actually “do it” would be “works salvation.”

They “forget” that “heaven someday” is “here and now” in God’s “eternity” frame of reference. They forget that God in us can and does meet His holy standards when we relinquish our lives to His Lordship to obey His Spirit. Those who are filled with and led by the Spirit of God, who abide “in Christ,” who dwell in the secret place of the Most High, are “temples” where the Holy Spirit lives. He “does it” through us.

However, as long as we are trying in our own strength to meet the demands of the gospel, God graciously and mercifully allows us to continue to fail, for God is patient and longsuffering, “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” (2 Pet. 3:9) He created us; “He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are but dust.” (Ps. 103:14)

Why does He allow us to fail? Because He is not interested in trying to perfect our own third-rate life-form; He wants a cleansed vessel for His life-form to dwell in! So finally, by His awesome grace and mercy, in His own perfect time and way (unique to each individual), He opens our eyes, takes us by the hand, and leads us back to Golgotha. There we enter into Christ Himself in His death and burial (symbolized by going under the waters of baptism) and His resurrection (symbolized by coming up out of the water – Rom. 6:4 ff), and we become truly “born again,” for “unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.” (Jn. 3:5-6) “For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding Word of God.” (1 Pet. 1:23)

So now we say with the apostle Paul, “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and delivered Himself up for me.” (Gal. 2:20) Yes, this old flesh nature still has its faults; God knows it does! Yet I reckon all that as dead, crucified and buried in Christ, and myself alive to God in Christ Jesus in obedience to God’s command. (Rom. 6:11) “For he who has died is freed from sin.” (Rom. 6:7)

Did you hear it? That is the gospel! And He did it all for us! The only thing we did was to prove His Word is true by failing in our attempts to keep His law in our own strength. And if you are still there, my friend, I encourage you: He has not led you this far for nothing. “He who has begun a good work in you shall perfect it unto the day of Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 1:6)

## **Heaven and Hell; the Earth and the World; Angels and Demons**

Deut. 32:39; 1 Sam. 2:6; Eccl. 3:11; Isa. 11; 65:17-25; 66:22-23; Hos. 2:18; Zech. 14; Rom. 11:36; Eph. 3-4; Col. 1:16; Heb. 10:30-31; 11:29; 1 Jn. 3:8; Rev. 21-22

In the previous section, I discussed the temporal nature of hell, as a tool of the Lord to chastise those who will not believe, whose hearts are hard, to prepare them for that great day when they, too, will be able to acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus Christ. That is actually greatly simplified. Scripture speaks of multiple “hells”: Sheol, Hades, Tartarus, Gehenna, the lake of fire, and the Abyss (bottomless pit). Scripture also speaks of at least three “heavens” – the apostle Paul was caught up to the third heaven where he “heard inexpressible words.” (2 Cor. 12:2-4)

I don't intend to go into detail about the differences – that is another whole book. But I do want to make one clear distinction: heaven and hell (in the sense of locations), angels, the earth and the world, and yes, even Satan the adversary, are all created by God into our space-time realm and are all therefore based within time – all temporal.

Note carefully: I differentiate between the concept of heaven and hell as locations, and my own preferred usage of heaven as “in Christ” (a relationship, not a location), and hell as anywhere else, outside of Christ. In Christ we have a link with the eternal Father that is beyond our comprehension. Many times Jesus spoke of His (and our) Father “who is in heaven” (Mat. 5:16, 45; 6:1, 9; 7:11, 21; 10:32-33; 15:20; 16:17; 18:10...), but in every case I believe He was not talking about some distant location, but rather a distance of life-form and relationship, and He was working to bridge that gap even as He spoke.

Our Father is not hiding from us! He is here right now, fully omnipresent as well as omniscient and omnipotent. Though we are yet temporal and the life He gives to us now is the life of the ages, His life-form of which we partake is an eternal life-form! At the end of all the ages of time, we will find to our great joy and delight that we will have entered fully into His eternal life, where He is (now) “all and in all.” (1 Cor. 15:28) Then there will be no more need for time. Only that sense of heaven, dwelling in intimate relationship with the Father, is eternal. In eternity, there is no “outside of Christ,” for He “fills all in all.” (Eph. 1:23; see also Col. 1:19) But all space-time-based heavens and hells are temporal. Change, growth, discipline, and gaining wisdom all require time.

Everything God created is temporal. The only things which are eternal are those aspects of God Himself, which proceed forth from Him and shall return unto Him, that is, His eternal Word, His eternal nature and character (righteousness, grace, love, mercy, truth, justice, wisdom, knowledge...), and His eternal Spirit (which He breathed into us to make us eternal beings like Himself. “There is an appointed time for everything... and He has made every [temporal] thing beautiful in its time. He has also set [His] eternity in their heart, without which man would not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end... I know that everything God does will remain forever [for all time]; there is nothing to add to it and there is nothing to take from it, for God has so worked that men should be in awe before Him.” (Ecccl. 3:11-14)

Heaven and hell, the angels, the created universe, the earth and the world, the devils and Satan, and of course we ourselves are all temporal. Only His eternal Spirit (whom He has set in our hearts) is eternal. (see Eph. 4:4-6)

We will take each of these and discuss it briefly. But first, are you clear on the meaning of the word “temporal”? It refers to anything which had a beginning and which has ever existed within this space-time realm. Anything which changes is temporal, as it demands time in which to make the change. Since time itself will have an end someday, everything within time will also have an end (unless it is “transformed” out of the time realm into the eternal realm – the realm of God's eternal Spirit). We can know that just as positively as we know that everything within time had a beginning and can be no older than the beginning of time.

All that could exist before time is the infinite, eternal, incomprehensible God. All that can exist after time ends is the infinite, eternal, God in His many-membered body. So did God change as a result of time? No. Scripture affirms that God does not change. From God's eternal perspective, we came out of Him perfect (though immature) at the beginning and shall return into Him perfect (matured in all His nature and character) at the end with no change in Him. We are the only ones who changed. "And He [Jesus] is the [visible] image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For in Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible – all things have been created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things and in Him all things hold together." (Col. 1:15-17) "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever." (Rom. 11:36) In other words, in Him everything began, from Him everything comes, through Him everything exists, and in Him everything achieves its ultimate conclusion.

This is a paradox, I know, which our time-based comprehension cannot fathom. But it gets worse. Even the infinite, eternal God humbled Himself into our space-time realm and "although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered." (Heb. 5:8) Yes, everything within this time-based realm, even Jesus Christ Himself, changes, grows, matures, suffers discipline, and learns, (though Jesus had to temporarily lay aside His infinite, eternal nature to do it). Only when that is absolutely clear, can we proceed with our discussion of the temporal nature of heaven, hell, angels / demons, people, the earth, and the world.

The earth is merely the planet itself. The world, however, usually refers to the civilizations and cultures of men who array themselves against the authority of God. Sometimes this distinction is important, for "the earth is the Lord's," but "the god of this world" usurped (wrongfully seized and enslaved) its inhabitants. But when we are speaking only of their temporal nature, we can talk of them together. They are created, (Gen. 1) destroyed by water (Gen. 7), destroyed by fire (2 Pet. 3:12; Rev. 20:11), and renewed in righteousness (2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1). Clearly they change; therefore they are temporal.

This helps us understand the scriptural use of the terms "forever" and "everlasting." "He established the earth on its foundations, so that it will not totter forever and ever." (Ps. 104:5) "A generation comes and a generation goes, but the earth remains forever." (Eccl. 1:4) "... unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills." (Gen. 49:26) "The righteous shall inherit the land to dwell in it forever." (Ps. 37:29) These are not speaking of eternity. "Forever" and "everlasting" are time words, meaning literally "to the vanishing point in time" from our limited perspective. So there is no conflict with the words of Jesus, who said at least twice that "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall never pass away." (Mat. 5:18; 24:35; also Heb. 1:10 ff) Habakkuk prophesies of the end times that "... the everlasting mountains were shattered and the ancient hills collapsed." (Hab. 3:6) John saw "... a great earthquake... and every island fled away, and the mountains were not found." (Rev. 16:18-20) And Peter says, "... the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the elements will melt... the earth and its works will all be burned up." (2 Pet. 3:10)

How about people? We all know that this physical body is just temporal, but what about our “resurrection body”? (Rom. 8:23) “... so also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body... and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this... mortal must put on immortality.” (1 Cor. 15:42 ff) It sounds like resurrection bodies are eternal, doesn’t it? Other Scriptures reinforce that thought, such as, “... the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; thus we shall always be with the Lord.” (1 Thes. 4:16-17)

However, I believe that our own understanding of “always,” “imperishable,” and “immortal” has hindered our hearing what the Holy Spirit is trying to communicate. If these resurrection bodies were truly eternal, it would force serious conflicts in Scripture. First, it would require that God change (in “eternity past” He has no body at all, while in “eternity future” Jesus has a resurrection body), but we know (Mal.3:6) that God cannot change. Second, it would conflict with a lot of Scripture which talks about us learning and growing, building and planting, making friends with animals, working, eating and drinking, playing, gathering the dispersed, ruling over others, traveling to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles, getting rained on, and even dying, (all of which require time) after the time when we receive our resurrection bodies. (Isa. 11; 65:17-25; 66:22-23; Hos. 2:18; Zech. 14; Rev. 21 and 22; and others)

I don’t believe there are any conflicts in Scripture. Therefore, I must conclude that even our resurrection bodies are temporal, “within the realm of time,” even though they are designed to last “forever and ever” and be “imperishable” in the sense of being impervious to aging and disease (like Adam and Eve before the Fall). Note that those who are resurrected from the tribulation will rule over this earth for a thousand years. That’s time, not eternity. (Rev. 20:4 ff) “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth... No longer will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his days... For as the lifetime of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, and My chosen ones shall wear out the work of their hands.” (Isa. 65:17-22) So I believe that though our resurrection bodies will be imperishable, they will not be eternal.

What about our souls? We have heard a lot about the “eternal soul” and “saving souls from eternal death unto eternal life.” But those are not scriptural terms. The term “eternal death” grates on me, as God is very clear in telling us that death is an enemy which will be destroyed, since Jesus won the keys of death and hell and “abolished death” at Golgotha. (1 Cor. 15:26; 2 Tim. 1:10; Rev. 20:14; 21:4) Jesus told His disciples to “fear not those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul, but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Mat. 10:28) “For what shall it profit a man if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul?” (Mat. 16:26) Jesus also said that the greatest commandment in the law is to “... love the Lord your God with all your... soul...” (Mat. 22:37) implying that the soul is capable of increasing in love toward God.

Yes, the human soul is very much able to change, grow, and mature, or be lost or destroyed, and thus is indeed very temporal. In fact, the purpose of the soul is simply to be a vessel, a container, of spirit for each physical person, filled with either the Spirit of God (the Spirit of Life) or the spirit of the evil one (the spirit of death). A Christian is anyone whose soul has been “made alive” to the Spirit of God, but a new Christian has a very limited capacity for the fullness of the Spirit. Why? Because his soul needs to grow – be stretched, enlarged, matured. A baby Christian may be “filled with the Spirit and speak in ecstatic tongues” and yet still be exceedingly limited and immature in comparison with the fullness of the seven Spirits of God. Was he not Spirit-filled? Oh, he was full all right, up to the brim and bubbling over; but his capacity was simply very small.

Now, here is the miracle. God takes this limited, finite, temporal soul and “sets eternity” into it. He develops, within time, His own eternal nature and character right there within our temporal souls, enlarging our souls in the process. Because He Himself is of the realm of eternity, whatever He develops of Himself within us is also eternal!

But at least we all know that we who are born of God have an eternal spirit, right? Well, almost. God is eternal Spirit, and from His eternity perspective, there is only “one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.” (Eph. 4:4-6) This is one of the most misunderstood passages in Scripture, since it shows how God sees things, while human perception is limited to the temporal realms.

But allow me to paraphrase that entire passage. “I bow my knees before the Father of the nations and pray that He would enlarge, strengthen, and fill your soul by the power of His Spirit so that Christ may dwell there through faith. Once you are well-rooted and grounded in His love, your soul will mature in time to the point when you will begin to comprehend the awesomeness of the Spirit of Jehovah – to intimately know His love (though it surpasses knowledge) and to receive His Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, Council and Might, Knowledge and Reverential Fear – thus ultimately to be filled up to all the fullness of God. Yes, I know that boggles your mind, but He is able to do exceedingly and abundantly more than we can even ask or think, according to the power of His Spirit within our souls. To Him is all the glory in you, His “called-out ones” and in Christ Jesus to all generations of the age of the ages. Therefore, I entreat you to walk within this veil of time in a manner worthy of this high and holy calling, in humility, gentleness, patience, deference, and love toward each other, being diligent to peacefully preserve the unity of the Spirit. From God’s perspective, you are not many, competing with each other, but rather one body in Christ. You all have one and the same Spirit within, His Spirit, just as you all have one and the same hope of your calling, to be united with Him. For there is only one Lord, Jesus Christ; one true faith, in Him; and one baptism, into His death that we be raised into His resurrection life. All this because there is only one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all, working out His sovereign will in / through everyone and everything.” (Eph. 3:14 - 4:6)

So, is our spirit eternal? I believe from this and other Scriptures that we have no independent spirit of our own, but rather only partake of His Spirit, which He breathed into our souls as the “breath of life.” “Then Jehovah God formed man of the dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” (Gen. 2:7) “The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.” (Job 33:4) From this I conclude that our spirits are not temporal, but eternal, by virtue of the fact that they are “of His eternal Spirit” and shall ultimately return in perfect unity with His eternal Spirit, that God may be all and in all.

Before the foundation of the cosmos, we were “in Christ” (Eph. 1:4) and will return to Him, inescapably, whenever He chooses to share His life-form with us. (Rom. 11:32-36) This is in harmony with my statement that the only things that are eternal (we are) are the things which proceed from God (we did) and shall return unto Him (we shall).

I do not wish at this point to elaborate on the distinction between biological life and spiritual life nor on the differences between plant life, animal life, and human life – that could be another whole book. But it is important to see that the Lord Jesus Christ is the life, all life; both biological and spiritual – in Him were all things created; all things continue living by the word of His power; and all things shall find their fulfillment and conclusion in Him. (Col. 1:16-20) If God’s Word could be annulled or withdrawn, all things would simply cease to exist. Even the sparrow is born because Jesus tells it to be born; it lives as He gives it the breath of life, and it dies when He withdraws His breath.

Even in the inanimate realm – the rock falls not because of some natural law called gravity – that is the godless scientist’s way of explaining what he cannot understand. Rather the rock falls because Jesus tells it to. There is no such thing as “natural” law; the universe is governed by Jesus, who is the Word of the almighty God. When something happens consistently, men are so quick to pin the label “natural law” on it, never stopping to think that the only reason it is consistent is that God’s Word is consistent.

We have an unchanging God, who is absolutely faithful to His Word (which is only to say that He is consistent within His own nature and character – He cannot lie, and He cannot go back on His Word). God cannot be capricious – to tell the rock to fall down one time and up the next. The reason we see “miracles” (for example the iron axe-head that floated – 2 Kings 6:6) is that there are higher laws of spirit which supersede the lower laws of the physical realm. But that does not mean God’s physical law is inconsistent; it simply means we need to learn His higher laws as well, so that we can walk in all the fullness for which He created us.

We are the pinnacle of God’s creation, called to rule over all that He has made. We must learn to recognize and acknowledge the Source of all law, rule, authority, and – life! Jesus Christ is the life! He is the “life” of the rock as well as the life of the human! I speak of life in a broader sense than usual – rocks exist, perfectly fulfilling the word of the Lord to them; we call them “inanimate,” yet they bring glory to God by being and doing exactly what He told them to be and do. They are thus the lowest form of “life,” perfect slaves to the Word of God.

The plants, insects, fish, birds, animals, and humans are progressively higher forms of life, each with its own unique “glory.” (See 1 Cor. 15:39 ff) But though they are substantively different, qualitatively they are all the same: all derive their existence from the Word of God within this space-time realm. All are thus temporal, with one exception: we humans are unique in all His creation in that, “... He has also set eternity in their heart, without which man would not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end.” (Eccl. 3:11) Along with His breath of “biological” life from which we “became a living soul,” God gave us something unique in all creation: a taste, a glimpse, a breathtaking, invigorating whiff of His eternal life-form! That is substantively and qualitatively different from animal or plant life, yes, even from the life of the ages.

That is what “died” in the day Adam and Eve sinned, and what is missing in all those who are “dead in trespasses and sins.” (Eph. 2:1) No, God’s Spirit in them did not die; He is eternal! But He cannot dwell with sin. Sinners have lost that “taste of eternity,” leaving a “God-shaped vacuum” in their hearts. They cannot receive or comprehend the things of God until He “awakens” His eternal life-form within them. Yes, Jesus Christ is the life; but now we see that He is at least four kinds of life. (1) As the Word of God, He is the “existence” of His creation (even of rocks). (2) He is the biological life of the species. (3) He is the “life of the ages,” the “everlasting” resurrection life which He gives to all who receive Him. And (4) He is also the eternal life, the life of the Spirit, of which we are invited to partake as we “eat His body and drink His blood.” (Jn. 6:54 ff)

Though these four are from the same Source, they are not the same kind of life! It is confusion between these four which has wrought much havoc among Christians today. Our goal is not mere existence, nor are we just highly developed animals – you know that. But we dare not stop with His “everlasting, resurrection life,” the life of the ages, abundant and joyful though it may be, for it is all still temporal! No, but He gives us everlasting life only so we might have time to come to know Him who is infinite eternal Spirit. How can we be content with anything less when we are created to possess all four kinds of life? That is the fullness of the life of the Spirit of God in Christ Jesus!

This of course brings up some questions: What about angels and demons? And what about Satan himself? Are they not also spirit beings? If so, are they not also eternal? Well, firstly we know that angels and demons are merely created beings, “... in Him [Jesus] all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities [this includes angelic powers and demonic principalities] – all things have been created through Him and for Him.” (Col. 1:16) Secondly, we know that they learn, change, and are ultimately to be judged, “... things which now have been announced to you... things into which the angels long to investigate.” (1 Pet. 1:12) “... to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things; in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and authorities [angels and demons] in the heavenlies.” (Eph. 3:9, 10) “Do you not know that we shall

judge angels? How much more, matters of this life?” (1 Cor. 6:3) “... and angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in everlasting bonds under darkness awaiting a great day of judgement.” (Jude 6) Thirdly, we know that an evil spirit (demon) is not the same as the Spirit of God, and cannot dwell in one’s soul concurrently with God’s Spirit. “Now the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord terrorized him.” (1 Sam. 16:14) “... what fellowship has light with darkness?” (2 Cor. 6:14) We also know from this that the demons are sent or commissioned by God to do His will, and cannot go beyond His explicit command. (See Job 1 & 2) I conclude therefore that angels and demons also are temporal, based (locked) within time, though I cannot deny that as spirits created in and by the Holy Spirit, whatever part of them which returns perfect, pure, and holy unto God must be eternal.

What about the devil, Satan himself? “The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil.” (1 Jn. 3:8) What was the very first work of the devil? He raised himself up in pride and rebellion and said, “I will be like the Most High.” (Isa. 14:14 ff; see also Ezk. 28:13-19) Then he convinced a third of the angels to follow him in his rebellion. (implied from Rev. 12:4) Jesus said that he is the “father of lies.” (Jn. 8:44) By implication, he is the father of all that is evil, since every evil starts with the lie, “You shall be as gods [independent from God], knowing good and evil [making your own choices].” So to actually destroy all his works would also involve the destruction or correction of all that he “fathered” – all evil.

Now, there are only two possibilities. Either Jesus will fail in His purpose of destroying all the works of the devil (God forbid!), or He will succeed. I happen to believe that He has already succeeded, and that it only remains to be manifest in this space-time realm. Satan of course, being the father of deception, is deceived, and does not yet realize that he has already lost.

What are the implications of destroying all the works of the devil? Simply this: everything the devil has ever done since his first proud thoughts of rebellion will be totally annulled, including every deception and “conversion” to his cause he has ever made and every bit of distress, damage, and death he has ever caused. All will be restored and corrected, “reconciled,” and every being (angel or man) whom he has ever deceived will brought back into harmony with God’s created purpose, making God all and in all.

God did not make a tragic mistake when He created Lucifer, the “star of the morning, the son of the dawn,” (Isa. 14:12) “the anointed cherub who covers.” (Ezk. 28:14) God does not make mistakes! He is not up in heaven wringing His hands and trying to figure out how to recover as many people as He can from the calamity, nor will God be content with saving a small minority of humanity while leaving Satan gloating in his conquest over the vast majority for all eternity. Do you expect to spend eternity in regret that you didn’t “try a little harder,” or “witness more,” or “dig a little deeper”? If there is eternal torment, there will also be eternal remorse; “if only I had witnessed to him,” and eternal blame; “he’s lost because you didn’t care enough.” But I don’t believe heaven will be filled with remorse or blame.

God was not caught by surprise when Lucifer first rebelled. This was all part of His awesome plan of the ages, which was perfect and fully mature in God's mind from the first instant of created time, and Lucifer-now-Satan is (unwittingly) fulfilling his part of the plan quite well, thank you. And he shall receive the just recompense of his deeds, as a faithful demonstration of the consequences of evil. (Heb. 2:2, 10:26-31, Rev. 14:9-11, 19:20, 20:11-15 and many others)

Therefore I must conclude that Lucifer, though a spirit being, is still temporal, time-based, "locked within time," like all demons and angels. Lucifer-now-Satan is an evil spirit, totally separate and opposite from the Spirit of God, the one true Spirit; as such, Satan (and all spirits who follow after him – the demons) are the false spirit, the lying, deceptive spirit, literally "the lie." They and any humans who have received the lie into themselves shall be tormented, chastised, purged and purified "forever" with "unquenchable fire," which simply means until that lie (along with all the other works of Satan) is totally destroyed.

That is hell in the ultimate sense, and I urge you with the sternest warning: do not take that judgment lightly! "For our God is a consuming fire!" (Heb. 12:29) "The Lord will judge His people. It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God!" (Heb. 10:30-31) "See now that I, I am He, and there is no God besides Me; it is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded, and it is I who heal; and there is no one who can deliver from My hand." (Deut. 32:39) "The Lord kills and makes alive; He brings down to Sheol [hell] and raises up." (1 Sam. 2:6)

But that is not eternity.

## Saints and Sinners

Hos. 4:6; Rom. 8 and 9; Eph. 2:8-10; Heb. 9:28;  
1 Pet. 3:18; 1 Jn. 3:5-6

Why have I spent so much time describing the difference between time and eternity? Because until we understand them we cannot understand this "eternal life" we have been given. We have been so misled on this point by doctrinal traditions that we have been unable to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Sinners can't enter the Kingdom of Heaven! Only saints enter the Kingdom.

There is no sin in Christ – neither His (for He never had any) nor ours (for He took them all to the cross and disposed of them once for all time – see 1 Pet. 3:18 and Heb. 9:28). Christ is perfectly pure, holy, and righteous, and we cannot dwell in Him and He in us if we are yet in our sins. I didn't just make that up. God said it! "... in Him [Jesus] there is no sin. No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him." (1 Jn. 3:5-6) Traditional Roman Catholic / Babylonian doctrine maintains that we are and will continue to be enslaved to sin throughout our lifetimes, though if our sin is "covered by the blood of Jesus" during this "age of grace," we will instantly be perfected when we die, go to heaven, and receive our gift of eternal life with God; but if we are not "covered by the blood" when we die, we will receive our just punishment of eternal torment ("eternal death") in hell. This crude doctrine is based upon a misunderstanding of God's purpose of the ages of time, as well as an ignorance of the meaning of the word "saint." What is worse, it bypasses entirely the Kingdom of Heaven, at least while we're alive and could benefit from it, and prevents any who long for it from actually entering in.

We'll get into the Kingdom of Heaven in the next section (I can hardly wait!) But first we must gain a clearer understanding of the difference between a sinner and a saint.

Do you remember the old "revival chorus," *When the Roll is Called up Yonder*? It is a good example of this false doctrine. "When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound and time shall be no more, and the morning breaks eternal, bright, and fair; When the saved of earth shall gather over on the other shore, and the roll is called up yonder I'll be there." It says (read between the lines, please) that when Jesus returns at the end of this age, time will end and eternity will begin; therefore, there will be no more time to repent, no more time to grow and mature, no more time to do anything except just enjoy the reward He prepared for us. The obvious conclusion is twofold, both deadly. First, all "saints by faith though sinners by practice" will be zapped into instant sinless perfection (skipping the discipline process God promised in Hebrews 12); and second, "sinners by faith and practice" will simply not make it to heaven, ever. In other words, the firstfruits will be gathered in, but the majority of the harvest will be eternally lost.

What is the difference between a sinner and a saint? Both were born in sin; both grew up blinded and deceived by sin, slaves to their sin nature, "dead in trespasses and sins." Those who preach this false doctrine would have you believe the difference is that the saint is the one who "opens up his heart to let Jesus come in," but I assure you that one who is "dead" cannot open up his heart to Jesus. Jesus has to do a mighty work of "bringing life from the dead" before we can make the slightest response toward Him.

So really the only difference between a sinner and a saint is God's sovereign choice. "So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires." (Rom. 9:18) But is the saint any different at the moment of God's choosing? Obviously not; "He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world..." (Greek: kosmos, our cosmos or universe – Eph. 1:4) So what does it take to make the saint any different from the sinner?

Time, my friend, time! It takes the Spirit of Jehovah working through time, guiding the young saint toward maturity by allowing him to try and fail, teaching and encouraging him, applying discipline when he stumbles, broadening his spiritual vision with revelation and inspiration, restoring and filling his soul, then expanding it to fill it again... All that and more is required to result in what we would call a saint.

But God dwells in eternity. He sees the end from the beginning. He sees Jacob and Esau in Rebekah's womb and says, "Jacob, you are a saint, and even now I have begun working on you toward that end. But Esau, you are a sinner, and even now I have begun hardening your heart against Me." (Rom. 9) That is the main difference between a sinner and a saint. "For though the twins were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose according to His choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls..." (Rom. 9:11) "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in." (Eph. 2:8-10)

Do you see why the “just a poor sinner, saved by grace” theology doesn’t work? He chose us in Christ even before we were born, and there is no sin in Christ! Everything that has happened to us since then, good or bad, has been “His workmanship,” maturing us into what He had in mind all along. Do we criticize a painter because his painting isn’t finished yet? Do we condemn a potter when his prize pot takes so much longer than his common pots? Do we punish a baby who stumbles and falls while learning to walk? Yet we are so quick to condemn the young saint when he stumbles and falls, ready to crucify him, not realizing that we are really attacking God, His methods, His wisdom. He chose us in Christ to be a saint, so we are a saint, regardless of what it looks like now.

Never mind those whom He chose to be sinners now, they are only doing what God created them for at this point in time. You’ve got to expect sinners to be sinful – they are only acting according to their nature, and they really have little choice in the matter. But if you have been chosen in Christ to be a saint, then you are (from God’s perspective, which is really the only right way to look at things) a saint, right now, though perhaps still a baby, a young, immature rosebud. You don’t have to wait ’til Jesus returns to zap you into perfection. And it’s OK for you to kick and fuss in the womb if you don’t like the way God is doing things – He will bring you to birth as His son anyway, for He never fails in all His plans and purposes. We will walk in those “... good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in,” whether we like it or not. We can take the low road, kicking and struggling and being disciplined all the

way, or we can take the high road of total submission and faith, but we will go His way regardless. This is the true definition of a saint, and it has nothing to do with how many sins we have done. “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, for the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.” (Rom. 8:1-2)

The sinner is outside of Christ Jesus. He cannot help but sin, for only Jesus “saves His people from their sins.” The saint is in Christ Jesus. He has no condemnation, not because of what he has or has not done, nor because he has achieved a certain level of spiritual maturity, but because he has been set free from the law of sin and death by the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus. Light dispels darkness. Life dispels death. Jesus is Life. Because I am in Him and He is in me, then I am free from sin and death.

Do you hear it? Sinners have to sin, but saints don’t have to sin! Sinners cannot enter the Kingdom of God, but saints can (and do). But immature saints don’t know this, because they are taught that they are “just poor, fallible sinners covered by the blood, and trying to hang on ’til Jesus comes.”

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...” (Hos. 4:6) If you don’t know you are a saint, how can you learn to act like one? As long as you think of yourself as a sinner, Satan has you right where he wants you, and he can trip you up anytime he wants; your only hope is to be zapped into instant holiness when Jesus returns. But when I finally realize that I am a saint, and that the weak and sinful life I see in the flesh is dead and buried in Christ, and that the life I now live, I live “in Christ” – big difference!

Now when Satan comes to tempt, I don't have to give in! Instead, I can just refer him to my in-dwelling Boss and assure him that he will be "properly taken care of." Furthermore, now I can pursue the Kingdom of God with the full hope of actually entering in! What good was it for Jesus to tell me to "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness..." when as a sinner, I had no hope of entering in short of "heaven someday"? I was helpless and hopeless.

But now I have hope! Saints can and do enter the Kingdom of God. All it takes is persistent asking, seeking, knocking – and delighting with awe and wonder as I see Christ working within me His own nature and character step by step, day by day, and area by area, with no condemnation for those areas in which He is not finished with me yet. Praise God! He is doing it all! All I needed to do was to get rid of the "sinner" label so I could receive the faith for what He is doing in me – as a saint "in Christ."

### **The Kingdom of God; The Kingdom of Heaven; The Kingdoms of This World**

Isa. 9:7; Mat. 13; Lk. 9:62; 2 Cor. 5:20-6:2; Eph. 2:7

"Where there is no vision, the people perish..." "Where there is no revelation, the people are unrestrained [lawless, wandering aimlessly]..." (Prov. 29:18a, KJV/NASB) The vision is, what is God really doing on the earth? He is reconciling / restoring all things in and through His saints! So now that we have caught the vision, we are finally ready to start on my favorite subject: the Kingdom.

In this chapter's introduction I asked, "Is the Kingdom of Heaven 'on hold' until the end of time so 'eternity' can begin?"

I trust by now you know the answer: the Kingdom of Heaven itself is "temporal," in and of the realm of time. God created time itself for the purpose of "giving us time" to enter into His Kingdom. That is the whole purpose I spent so much "time" talking about the difference between time and eternity. If the Kingdom were only "eternal," then we might have to wait until the end of time to enter in. But the Kingdom of Heaven is temporal. We must enter into it within time. What is the "acceptable time" from God's perspective? Now, of course! "... we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God... Now is the acceptable time... Now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. 5:20-6:2)

So don't just sit there, enter in! What are you waiting for? Ahh... would that it were that easy! It's not like going on a quick trip; pack what you might need and leave the rest behind for your return. There is no return from the Kingdom! "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God." (Lk. 9:62) If God had made it like leaving on a trip, the Kingdom would be full of regrets, "If only I had listened... If only I had brought this... or left this behind... If only I had obeyed..." No, no, no! There are no regrets in the Kingdom of God! Instead, the Kingdom is like the treasure hid in the field, or the pearl of great price. The merchant gladly sells everything he has in order to obtain it. To enter the Kingdom, you enter as a tiny child, helpless, utterly dependent, with no possessions of your own. But even that is hard to understand in practical terms, "What must I do, just leave it all behind, my wife, my family, my home and possessions, and walk off naked into the sunset?"

Some have done that, and lived to regret it, too. I think the best parables of the Kingdom of Heaven are those of the sower and the soils, and the wheat and the tares. (Mat. 13:11-30) In both parables, the Kingdom is presented as living, growing plants, sometimes with difficulty (the rocky, thorny, or hard soils), sometimes with enemies (the tares) all around, but always with the goal of growing, maturing within time, and finally producing fruit, a bountiful harvest. If the Kingdom were eternal bliss with all the wicked in eternal torment, those parables would be nonsense. But a Kingdom within time is a different story! Here in the realm of time there is time to grow and mature; there are difficulties and disciplines and enemies all around, and there is much fruit needing to be harvested for the Kingdom. (Jn. 4:34-36)

This then is the purpose of the Kingdom of Heaven: time to grow and mature, time to receive discipline and be purified and perfected, and time to bear fruit for the Kingdom. Yes, fellow saint, we enter into the Kingdom within time, moment by moment, as the Holy Spirit of Jesus works within us to perfect His nature and character in each area of our lives. Just like a growing plant, the Master Gardener carefully waters and fertilizes us, lets His Son shine upon us, prunes away our dead or diseased branches, cultivates our roots, and enjoys our growth.

What is the result? We bear fruit. A plant under the care of the Master Gardener can't help but bear fruit. And what is that fruit? Well, what are we, anyway? Apple seeds can only bear apples; wheat seeds can only bear wheat. We are saints! Saint seeds can only bear saints! We are busy bearing (harvesting) saints for the Kingdom of God.

And where do these saints come from, "... some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty." (Mat. 13:23) I assure you, that is not talking about our natural children! Those are the souls who are transformed from being Satan indwelt to being Holy Spirit indwelt because of the ministry of the Lord through us. And if the Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom (and it is) and if "There will be no end to the increase of His government..." (and there won't – Isa. 9:7) then it must be true that "in the ages to come He [will] show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:7) to each part of His creation that has yet to receive His grace.

This then is the ultimate purpose of the Kingdom of Heaven: to bring glory to God by showing the riches of His grace to everything and everyone who has never before received it (the ministry of reconciliation – 2 Cor. 5:18 ff); thus bringing everything in all creation back into harmony with Him, until "every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. 2:11) This is why we need the ages of time. This is why we cannot simply zip from this age directly into eternity. As long as one atom of the universe is out of harmony with the Creator of the universe, or one created being is not in wholehearted agreement that Jesus Christ truly is fully deserving of all the glory and honor as the Creator and King of the universe, then we need more time.

The age now passing is dedicated to bringing forth the firstfruits: Christ and His Bride. The next age will see Jesus and His Bride ruling the nations with a rod of iron as the children of God are matured into sons of God, the many-membered body of Christ.

Those thousand years are called the Millennium, or the Sabbath Rest; but it is actually the “honeymoon” of Jesus and His Bride. After it is over, the real work begins. Satan is released and immediately goes out to deceive the nations over which Jesus and His Bride have so faithfully ruled. All who are deceived are devoured by fire from heaven when they try to make war against the saints. The second resurrection and the Great White Throne Judgment follow, in which all the dead are “judged according to their deeds,” and those who blasphemed the Holy Spirit and therefore cannot be forgiven (Mat. 12:31-32; Heb. 10:26-27) are cast into the lake of fire, the “second death.” (Rev. 20:12-15)

The age after the Millennium will see a bountiful harvest for the Kingdom. All those from ages past will be instructed by the sons of God to believe and receive Jesus Christ, the only Door to the Kingdom of Heaven, for even a Moses (Deut. 32:52) or a John the Baptist (Lk. 7:28) cannot enter the Kingdom until they know and bow before the King.

Of the ages beyond that we know little, except that finally shall come that great age of the ages, when our task within time shall be complete, everything in heaven and earth shall be completely and perfectly reconciled unto the Father, and the awesome success of God’s great plan of the ages will be totally manifest for all the universe to see and know the absolute righteousness and beauty of God’s ways without the slightest question or possibility of doubt. “Score: God – all in all; Satan – nothing.” Then all creation will praise and worship the Father who never gave up on His prodigal son, and the Great Shepherd who never stopped seeking until He had found His very last little lost lamb.

## What is the Kingdom of God?

Eccl. 3; Isa. 11:6-9; Dan. 2:28-48; 4:3; Mat. 4:23; 6:33; 13; 19:24-26; 21:31, 43; Mk. 1:15; 4:11; Lk. 7:28; 17:21; Rom. 8:19-21; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; 15:20-28; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 4:6; 5:5-11; 1 Thes. 1:5; Heb. 8:11; James 2:19-26; 2 Pet. 1:10-11; Rev. 11:15; 12:10

To this point, I have spoken of the Kingdom of God in general terms, but I believe that understanding the terms is exceedingly important. How can you live like a saint if you don’t know what “saint” means? How can you enter the Kingdom of God if you don’t know what the Kingdom of God is? In this regard, it is very helpful to simply take a concordance and look up all the usages of a word in Scripture. Such a word study on “saint(s)” could be profitable and joyful. Other beneficial word studies may include “righteousness,” “wisdom,” “fear of the Lord,” “sons of God,” “children of God,” “iniquity,” “fool, -s, -ish, -ishly,” “folly,” “heart(s),” “forgive, -n, -th, -ness,” “all,” “grace,” and so on. But the word study I am proposing is on “Kingdom(s),” “Kingdom of God,” and “Kingdom of Heaven.” I’m not going to do it all for you and rob you of one of the spiritual highlights of your life, but I’d like to skim through a few of my favorites.

“And the seventh angel sounded; and there arose loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdom of this world has become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.’” (This is at the rapture – Rev. 11:15) “And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, ‘Now the salvation, and the power, and the Kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night.’” (Rev. 12:10)

“How great are His signs, and how mighty are His wonders! His Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and His dominion is from generation to generation.” (Dan. 4:3) “The head of that statue was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay, and crushed them... But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.” Daniel then interprets the dream: the gold is Nebuchadnezzar’s empire, the silver is the Medo-Persian Empire, the bronze is the Macedonian Greece Empire, and the iron is the Roman Empire. “And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a Kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that Kingdom will not be passed on to another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.” (Dan. 2:28-48)

“Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you [saints]; for as long as you practice these things [faith, moral virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, kindness, and love] you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal [age-enduring] Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.” (2 Pet. 1:10-11)

“... Jesus said to them, ‘Truly I say to you that the tax gatherers and harlots will get into the Kingdom of God before you... Therefore I say to you, the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruit...’ (Mat. 21:31, 43)

“I say to you, among those born of women, there is no one greater than John [the Baptist]; yet he who is least in the Kingdom of God is greater than he.” (Luke 7:28) “‘Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God.’ And when the disciples heard this, they were very astonished and said, ‘Then who can be saved?’ And looking on them Jesus said to them, ‘With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’” (Mat. 19:24-26)

“Jesus was going about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.” (Mat. 4:23)

What is the Kingdom of God? How does it differ from the Kingdom of Heaven and the kingdoms of this world? These are delightful questions which we cannot yet fully answer, though we can gain insight and wisdom into them by the word study which I proposed and began for you above.

I believe that the Kingdom of God is scriptural terminology for the overriding sovereign authority and dominion of the eternal God over everything within this space-time realm. Everything was once in the Kingdom of God; Satan, the demons, and mankind came out of the Kingdom of God when we rebelled against His sovereign rule, and we once again enter the Kingdom of God when we are fully, wholeheartedly submitted to His sovereign rule. I believe that the Kingdom of God is eternal, or at least from eternity, in contrast to the Kingdom of Heaven, which is certainly temporal. I described this in the introduction to this chapter. (1 Cor. 15:20-28. See pg 305.)

I know, many people equate the Kingdom of God with the Kingdom of Heaven, and they may be right. But consider this. The Kingdom of God was infinite and all-inclusive at the beginning of time, and it will again be infinite and all-inclusive at the end of time, for it is the sovereignty, the infinite and all-powerful authority, of the eternal God Himself. This is a bit of a paradox, I know, because it does seem to change within time; the righteous certainly enter it within time. I think that is a mystery on par with the mystery of God's "repenting" (Gen. 6:6 or 1 Sam. 15:35) and God "changing His mind." (Ex. 32:14, Ps. 106:45) We know that from His eternal perspective, neither his mind nor His Kingdom changes, though from within this bubble of time, both seem to change. But in reality, it is we who do the changing as time unfolds. When the ages of time reach their end and we "know fully even as we are known," I believe we will discover that God never changed His mind – His plan was always perfect and all-inclusive from the very beginning. Then we will realize that His Kingdom never changed – it was always "over all, through all, and in all." (Eph. 4:6)

As you go through the word study I suggested, you will find that the Scripture addresses that paradox by often speaking of the Kingdom of Heaven rather than the Kingdom of God whenever the subject is its change or growth within time. For example, in the parables Jesus gives of the sower, the tares, the mustard seed, the leaven, treasure, and the pearl of great price, He repeats, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like..." (Mat. 13) So the Kingdom of Heaven is simply that portion of the Kingdom of God which is incomplete, still growing and maturing.

Thus the Kingdom of Heaven is within our realm of time, temporal, in which Jesus and all His angels still dwell throughout this veil of time and into which the saints are now returning as time unfolds. In this realm, Jesus, God of all time, rules with authority and power through His saints over all that is not yet totally submitted to Him. Thus the Kingdom of Heaven grows like leaven, or like a mustard seed, or like the rock cut out of the mountain, to fill the earth; while in contrast, the Kingdom of God "is" at hand, (Mk. 1:15) and "is" within you. (Lk. 17:21)

However, that distinction is slight, for at the beginning of time, the Kingdom of Heaven was born out of the Kingdom of God, and thence it shall return at the end of time when every atom of creation is returned to full willing submission to the infinite and eternal King, after Jesus has "abolished all rule and authority and power" and hands the Kingdom back to God the Father that He may be all and in all. (1 Cor. 15:20-28)

You see, during the ages of time, the Kingdom of Heaven is at war against the powers of darkness, the kingdoms of this world. But once they are fully dealt with, sin shall not arise a second time! There will be no need for "rule and authority and power" in the Kingdom of God, for all of creation will be filled with, in joyful submission to, and gratefully internally governed by, His Spirit. "... they shall not teach every one his neighbor and every one his brother saying, 'Know the Lord!', for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their iniquities and I will remember their sins no more." (Heb. 8:11-12) Only then will the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven be identical.

When we obey Jesus' command to "Seek first the Kingdom of God," (Mat. 6:33) we are seeking for that fullness, that ultimate all-inclusive completeness of God's eternal Kingdom, which we do not now see within this veil of time. But from God's perspective, the veil of time has already been lifted and "it is finished." That is not to say we don't seek to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, for we still live and grow within time and spend our lifetimes entering in. Yet our ultimate goal, our "seek first," is God's eternal Kingdom, absolutely perfect and all-inclusive.

The kingdoms of the world were once within the Kingdom of God, but are not now. In fact, Satan, the "god of this world," owns them. "The devil took Him [Jesus] to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory; and he said to Him, 'All these things will I give You, if You just fall down and worship me.'" (Mat. 4:8-9) Now, Jesus could have said, "You fool, the kingdoms of the world are not yours to give; they belong to My Father!" But He didn't; for in fact, though everything in all creation is indeed subject to the Kingdom of God, all is not yet submitted to the Kingdom of God. Big difference! The wind and waves (the inanimate kingdom) obey Him when He commands, but they still are under the control of the god of this world (hence the earthquakes, storms, and other destructive tragedies). The ground, the plant kingdom, the insect kingdom, the animal kingdom, are all under the curse. (Gen. 3:17) All still rust and decay, all are still filled with violence and bloodshed, all are groaning and travailing in eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God, and all of creation is still subject to vanity and futility. (Rom. 8:19-21)

But soon the seventh angel will sound his trumpet, and loud voices in heaven will shout, "... the kingdoms of this world have become the Kingdom of our Lord [K. of G.] and of His Christ [K. of H.]; and He will reign forever and ever." The curse will be broken, Satan will be bound for a thousand years, and "the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the kid... and a little boy will lead them... and the lion will eat straw like the ox, and the nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den. They will not hurt nor destroy in all My Holy Mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. 11:6-9)

I expect that promise to be fulfilled within this generation. That is the right way for Christians to live – in eager anticipation of the full manifestation of the Kingdom of God on this earth – and that is the way true Christians have lived since the time of Jesus on earth. However, we must be neither impatient nor presumptuous in this, for "with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance." (2 Pet. 3:8-9)

In the meantime, to what kingdom do we belong? Satan would love for us to believe that we are only a part of the animal kingdom, evolved from the monkeys, for that is part of his realm. Satan is the god of this world, and he has blinded the minds of those who put their faith in him. "... the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not." (2 Cor. 4:4)

All those whose faith is so low are under his control, and he takes delight that his great deceptions of “natural evolution” and “survival of the fittest” are not only taught as fact in all the public schools of America, but also even believed by many “Christians” as “theistic evolution” (which says, “Yes, we evolved from monkeys, but only under the guiding hand of God.”)

Do you believe that? Do you even for a moment believe that the God of compassion used the horror of “survival of the fittest by preying on the least fit” to bring forth His marvel of creation? If you do, then Satan has you right where he wants you, because you have already turned the truth of God into fables and the Word of God into allegories and fairy tales. God’s Word says that the wages of sin is death, but the evolutionist claims that there were millions of years of survival of the fittest before man (and thus the first sin) came on the scene. Evolution thus makes death out to be good rather than an enemy. Evolution is inherently racist; it was originally intended to oppress Blacks and other “less evolved” races. It logically leads to support for abortion (especially of Blacks), infanticide, euthanasia, eugenics, killing the disabled or retarded, and killing anyone “unfit” for the new world order.

God’s Word says that we were formed from the dust of the ground, and that we became a living soul when He breathed into our nostrils His Breath of life, the very Breath of His Spirit; thus we were His own special creation, created in His own image, vastly different from animals and infinitely precious in His sight. But the evolutionist says that we were formed from the lower forms of life, and our life came from theirs.

Thus in their eyes, we are really no more important than animals, and if it comes to a choice between saving whales or saving pre-born human babies, they choose the whales, or desert rats, or spotted owls, or whatever.

In the depths of Solomon’s despair, he laments over the common fate in death of animals and man. Still he acknowledges that “... All came from the dust and all return to the dust. Who knows that the breath (spirit) of man ascends upward and the breath of the beast descends downward to the earth?” (Eccl. 3:21) In Solomon’s depression, Satan almost had him convinced that he was no better than a beast and that everything under the sun was only vanity and futility, yet even after he had given himself to the lusts of the flesh, he never forgot the Spirit of Wisdom with whom he had walked in his youth.

A king in Europe once visited a grade school, where children were learning how to subdivide the natural realm into the three kingdoms: animal, plant, or mineral. He was quizzing a young girl by holding up objects and asking what they were and to which kingdom they belonged. She answered well, until the monarch concluded, “Now tell me, my dear, to what kingdom do I belong?”

She paused, knowing the answer which he expected, yet having too high a reverence of him to place him in the animal kingdom alongside dumb beasts. Her eyes filled with tears. Hearing the tittering laughter of her classmates, her face flamed with embarrassment as he repeated the question, “To what kingdom do I belong?” “You belong to the Kingdom of God, Sir!” she blurted out. The king bowed his head, pricked to the heart, and responded, “My dear, pray that I may be worthy of that Kingdom, and of God.”

“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...’ And God created man in His own image; in the likeness of God He created them...” (Gen. 1:26-27) “He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things; and He made from one blood every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, that they should seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and have our being, even as some of your own poets have said, ‘For we also are His offspring.’ Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the divine nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man. Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now commanding all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness...” (Acts 17:24-31) Yes, we belong to the Kingdom of God, therefore we must “walk no longer just as the heathen also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life [Kingdom] of God because of the ignorance that is in them because of the hardness of their heart...” (Eph. 4:17-18)

“You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.” (Jn. 8:32) Once we know to which kingdom we belong, we need no longer submit to the “prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.” (Eph. 2:2) We are not under his authority. We do not belong to the kingdoms of this world. We are unique in all creation. We belong to the Kingdom of God.

But though we belong there, we do not automatically live there. “... you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness.” (Rom. 6:16) Entry into the Kingdom of God must be sought after (Mat. 6:33) and even suffered for (1 Thes. 1:5) for it is a mystery. (Mk. 4:11) Sinners do not enter the Kingdom of God, but saints do. (1 Cor. 6:9-10, Gal. 5:19-21) “For this we know with certainty that no immoral or impure person, or greedy [covetous] person (who is an idolater) has any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ [K. of H.] and God [K. of G.]. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them; for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light; for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth, trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.” (Eph. 5:5-10) The one who tells you that your sins don’t matter, as long as you are “covered by the blood of Jesus” is trying to deceive you with empty words. Judgment is always according to your deeds. (Rev. 2:23, 20:12-13) If you believe you belong to the Kingdom of God yet walk as if you belonged to the kingdoms of this world, you will not be able to enter the Kingdom of God. “You adulteresses. Do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” (James 4:4)

Enough said. May the Holy Spirit pinpoint in your own heart whatever deceptions or ignorance might be keeping you from walking freely, fully in the Kingdom of God.

## **The Seven Spirits of God in the Kingdom!**

This section is for saints only. Sinners can not and will not read it, for those who have been chosen by God to demonstrate to the universe the terrible consequences of iniquity – willful, self-centered, defiant rebellion against their Creator – will be offended and throw this book aside long before they get here. So, all you saints, let's have a brief fellowship here in the Kingdom of Heaven! Join with me as we worship the majesty of our awesome Father God, the King of kings and Lord of lords, the omnipotent Creator and all-sufficient Sustainer of the universe, our Guide, Provider, Encourager, Helper, Comforter, and loving Friend. Come with me; here, take my hand, my brother and my sister. We'll walk together in the splendor of His Kingdom as little children, with our eyes newly opened to the glory and joy all around us. It is delightful beyond belief! I am glad that you are here with me in the Spirit, for I might be overwhelmed if it were just me and God. Words fail; it is more glorious than I can even comprehend, much less articulate. So let us just stand together in silence for a bit, in the presence of the King, delighting our hearts in Him and pouring out our love in worship to Him...

Ahh... sweet fellowship of life! Sweet joy of true love! ...coming to us from the Source of life and love, flowing into us and becoming a part of us, flowing through us to all around, and finally returning to the One who is life and love. Father, we meditate on You and upon Your perfect law of love. We cast ourselves wholeheartedly upon Your infinite grace and mercy. We know and trust

that Your sovereign plans for our lives are perfect, lacking nothing for our everlasting joy and fulfillment and for Your glory. We acknowledge that the false, deceiving, sinful spirit was in us and had control of our lives at one time, but we reckon it now dead and buried with Christ at Golgotha. Now we rejoice that the only Spirit which indwells us, fills us, motivates us, guides us, and gives us life is the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ, by whom we are given the right to be called the sons of God and to receive the promised inheritance of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself – the Kingdom of Heaven.

As we receive Your Kingdom by faith, eternal Father, so may we walk in it by faith, step by step, ever further up and further in. Even though all is not yet manifest to our time-limited vision, our spirit (in oneness with Your Spirit) sees and receives it all right now, as You have commanded.

Father of time, look now through our time-limited eyes and see that all is not yet reconciled – not yet lined up perfectly with Your created design and intent from the beginning of time. We seem to have so far to go, and there seems to be so much sin and suffering, weakness and ignorance, rebellion and hardness of heart all around. Yet even now as we stand in Your holy presence, our heart-cry goes up, "Here am I; send me!" Everything else, our day-to-day making a living, our personal pleasures and ambitions, even our personal sense of good and evil, fades before this one great desire which You have placed in our hearts: to know You, to become like You, and to display Your glory to Your creation. Thus we choose to become Your ambassadors to reconcile all of Your creation back to Yourself. (2 Cor. 5:20)

Father, we see this hunk of flesh, this temporal tent, born in sin, raised in gross selfishness, weakness, and ignorance, and displaying all the foolishness of a lifetime of walking contrary to our created design. Now, Father, in Your Kingdom and by the awesome power of Your life-giving Spirit, the Spirit of Jehovah, transform even these earthly bodies by the renewing of our minds. Wash us with Your Word of truth. Change us from sons of Adam under the power of the law of sin and death, to sons of God set free by the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, bound by nothing other than love for Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.

Step by step, let Your Spirit of Jehovah bring life to these mortal bodies; start with the thinking, the motivations and desires of our hearts, and then proceed through every aspect of our mental and physical beings until all the works of Satan within us are destroyed, and we are brought into perfect harmony with Your life. Your infinite power can do more than we can even ask or think. By that same power of Your eternal life, may these mortal bodies reflect Your image, and may this human nature reflect the likeness of Your own perfect nature and character as You live Your life in and through us.

We rejoice – we glory – in the cross of Christ and in His precious blood shed for the sins of the world, by which we are dead to this world and alive to You. By submitting to Your Spirit of Jehovah, we leave the kingdoms of the world to enter, step by step, back into the Kingdom of God from which we came and to which we belong. From this moment forth forever, O eternal King, we commit ourselves to be vessels, containers, even channels, of Your inexhaustible life.

One step closer, now, by Your grace, we see our unthinkable poverty of Spirit without You, and our total dependence upon You. As little children, we climb up into Your lap, and with a fervent hug, we gaze up into Your face, O loving Father! We ask that we never be permitted to grow into independence or self-sufficiency. Instead, grant that we might live only by Your Spirit of Wisdom within us. Deliver us from the conditionings of the worldly wisdom within which we've been immersed all our lives and allow our spirits to become intimately acquainted with those principles of wisdom upon which You founded the universe and the ages by Your true Spirit of Wisdom.

As You transform our spirits to be in tune with Your Spirit of Wisdom, we ask that You rebuild our deepest instincts, thought patterns, and motivations to be in harmony with Your Spirit of Understanding, so that all our thoughts, decisions, and desires are only those of the mind of Christ within us. With joy and delight, we submit our minds to Your infinite and eternal mind, for You are our head – take joy and delight also in us as members of Your body.

Here, O Lord our King, are our actions and reactions – we pour humbly at Your feet all our deeds and misdeeds; may they no longer be patterned after human habits or motivations, but rather in direct response to Your Holy Spirit. We choose from this time on, to be led only by the Spirit of God – to do only the will of God – as You reveal it to us and empower us to fulfill it. We desire to go Your Kingdom way, to do what is right in Your sight, at the right time and in the right way, by the guidance and enablement of Your Spirit of Strategic Discernment.

One more step in Your Kingdom, O eternal Father, by Your great love for us, we perceive the unloveliness of our human nature and the woeful inadequacy of our human love and compassion for our fellow man. Please exchange it for Your divine love. Let Your pure love in us reflect Your awesome glory, beauty, and loveliness to our fellow man. Then as we do Your will by Your Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, fill us with Your Spirit of Council – precisely the right word at the right time with the right attitudes of love and compassion reaching out with Your word of reconciliation to all those whom You send our way. We trust You, God our Lord! Do whatever You need to do and say whatever You need to say through us. We are willing to be despised, misunderstood, persecuted, hated, and rejected for Your name's sake, knowing that You will accomplish all Your good pleasure through us, and that Your Word through us will never return to You empty.

Grant that Your Spirit of Might follow behind us, keeping us from falling to the temptation of pride, yet bringing great glory and honor to Your mighty name which we bear. Thus shall Your Spirit of Irresistible Council bear much fruit for Your Kingdom, a multitude of saints maturing into Your own precious treasure, jewels for Your crown, Your own inheritance, sons for Your everlasting delight, O eternal Father!

One more step in Your Kingdom, O Father, in our time-limited vision we see that our relationship with You has much growing to do. We do love You with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind, as much as is within us. Yet You are worthy of ever-greater love, worship, praise and adoration.

We do trust You, all-powerful Father, to provide every resource necessary for our growth. Please fill us with Your Spirit of Knowledge, that we may relate to You with a new and fervent intimacy; that we may truly know You in an ever-growing and strengthening relationship of love.

Even as we pray, we bow in awe and wonder, for Your Spirit of the Reverential Fear of the Lord is here, opening the eyes of our spirits to the glory of Your sovereign majesty. Thank You, Father! Once again, words fail us – we simply bow in the Spirit of Pure Worship, in Spirit and in truth.

All power and glory and wisdom and might be unto You, O Lord Jesus Christ, even now and unto the final age of the ages. We worship Your majesty! We stand in Your holy presence and drink in deeply of the eternal life of Your Spirit of Jehovah. For You have invited us to come; You have invited us to drink of You; You have invited us to be filled to the uttermost with all the fullness of the divine nature, all the fullness of the seven Spirits of God; You have invited us to walk with You into Your Kingdom and on into the fulfillment of Your Sabbath Rest. We dare not settle for any less than all that You have desired for us, all that You have created us for, and all that You have invited us into. Hallelujah!

Therefore, Lord God, we come. And may Your seven Spirits in and through us be useful to You, O King of the universe, for the everlasting increase of Your Kingdom. Thus we join with the Spirit and the Bride to repeat, “‘Come.’ Let the one who hears say, ‘Come.’ Let the one who is thirsty come. And let every one who wishes take the water of life without cost.” (Rev. 22:17)

THE END – of this book  
but barely THE BEGINNING  
of the Kingdom of God  
coming forth within His saints.

§ Endnote from page 209. This song is credited to Bob and Charlotte Torango, PO box 0519, Dickson, TN, 37056-0519, copyright 1992. It comes from their songbook entitled *The House of the Lord presents God's Message in Song*. It is published on their website [www.theHouseoftheLord.com](http://www.theHouseoftheLord.com).



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