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BEGOTTEN AND BEGOTTEN AGAIN

NO. 208

FILLING UP THE CUP

When Paul introduced himself to the church, he had no hesitation concerning his calling; *"I Paul, am made a minister who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church: Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to the saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory..."* (Col.1: 23b-27)

Paul reveals so much in these few verses. First, he tells us that as a minister (servant) of the Lord, he is filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ. I am sure that most Christians have not thought that there were still afflictions to fill up for the sake of Christ. We may believe that the sufferings that Jesus received both before and in His crucifixion had filled up the cup, and indeed it was for Jesus the Head of the body. But the cup of His sufferings for His body, the church, still needed to be filled.

Those who follow Jesus, from the first apostles to the least of the saints today, have had and still have their part in filling up the cup of His sufferings. In each generation, saints of God have heard the voice of the Son of God and have come forth in new life. Their faith and the stand that they took has often caused persecution and sometimes even death. Through their faith they have been able to shine more and more light in the dark places of the soul. It is because of all these who have gone before us that we are able to hear and comprehend the word of the last trump that we are hearing today.

They are the many witnesses who are waiting for us to fill up the cup of His suffering and close the door on the age of darkness and death. The body of Christ has been working together from the time of Jesus until now and is being built up as His perfect temple or body.

It would be a mistake to look at the visible church in the world, or even at the various groups that are formed in His name, and judge the body of Christ from what we see in these places. The body of Christ is not visible; it is a mystical body that is very much in operation on both sides of the veil. All who are a part of this wonderful mystery are followers of the same Spirit. They are hearing the same word and have the same vision. They are bound together with cords that cannot be broken.

This is why Paul said that he was called according to the dispensation that was given to him. So are each of us called to develop upon the word that has been given to us so that we might fill up the word of God that we are called to fill up. This is why it is so important that we do not strive to copy each other and become one in a doctrine. This, in essence is denominationalism. The word of the Lord is heard

in the "Many Waters," and is therefore varied; it needs to be given free flow.

I want to repeat here that if it were not for all the saints who suffered because they were faithful to the Word that was given to them, we would not be able to hear the Word that we are hearing today.

Dear ones, there are sufferings attached to the Word we must fulfill. The one common affliction is that our loved ones and brethren in the Lord will turn from us and often persecute us. We will be labeled "deceived" and even be looked upon as the enemy of the flock. But when we know in our hearts that we have heard from God, we know that we cannot turn back to please anyone else but Him.

STILL A MYSTERY

Paul wrote that the word he was fulfilling was the "mystery" which had been hid from ages and generations. Paul was preaching this mystery in hope that those who hear would grow into maturity in Christ Jesus. Those whom God has chosen from the foundation of the world must hear this word as a witness to their calling, so He sends them His apostles, preachers and teachers. However, the complete maturity or perfection of every man cannot come until the time is fulfilled and the cup is filled full.

So we come to our time today. We know that all the signs are in place and that the creation is awaiting with baited breath what most call the "second coming of the Lord." Among Christians who take the word of God literally and are not able to discern in the Spirit, it is believed that Jesus Christ Himself will come as He left and plant His feet on the Mount of Olives in literal Jerusalem. This indeed is the picture that is painted to explain to us the reality of His appearing and it is understandable.

But for those who are indwelled by the Mystery and have been fulfilling the word of God, it is as a woman in labor, ready to be delivered of her child. For the Christ that is about to appear in the world, is the same Christ that has been perfected within each one who have followed hard after Him. The Christ that is about to appear is none other than the entire body of Christ, Jesus the Head and all those who are His glorious body.

We have built mental images of the body of Christ after the pattern of the churches that are in the world. We have identified the body by its doctrines rather than by its Head. When a corpse needs to be identified, it is the head that gives the identity. Otherwise, it may be identified by its clothing or some scar on its flesh, but the true identity comes from the head. We have had many calling themselves the body of Christ, but the head was anything but Christ Jesus.

If the Christ within is hid within us, then the body of Christ is also a mystery. Indeed, the body of Christ has never been seen in a visible assembly; it is a mystical body that will be revealed when He appears fully. It has been made known that there is a mystery within, but until the child is born, it still remains a mystery. The Christ who is about to be revealed from the midst of us is the true Christ of God. It is his Head and His body.

When Jesus left the earth, He was caught up in a cloud. This was not one of the clouds we see daily in our skies; this was the cloud of witnesses that are on the other side of the veil. Jesus was caught up among His people and He will re-appear from the midst of His people.

Paul had the word concerning the mystery, but we are the revealers of the mystery. The Christ that has been formed in us is about to be birthed as His true body, identified by the true Head. At this time, Christ in us is still a mystery, but when He is revealed, creation will behold the One that it has been so eager to see.

Those who are birthing this Manchild, are very much aware that they are the cause of the fall of the systems of this world. They know that the reason everything is shaking and falling apart is because His appearing is at hand. They know that the devil who has ruled the minds and hearts of men is in the throes of death. So we do not try to fix the things that God is shaking, we look up to see the salvation of our God. This is the answer to the question below.

WHY DO THE HEATHEN RAGE?

"Why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying 'Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." (Ps.2: 1-3)

These famous words from the Psalms paint a picture of what is taking place in our world and in front of our very eyes today. The word "rage" here does not speak of controlled anger; it speaks of great masses, as herds of animals, assembling tumultuously with force, brutality and violence. Today, the world is in an uproar, even as the raging waves of the sea in the midst of a tempestuous storm. Well did the prophet write, *"But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt."* (Isa.57: 20)

Above all the din and commotion, the people are asking for answers and multitudes of voices are arising from everywhere to incite and inflame the people even more. Particularly in Christian circles, this is the time when prophetic voices from those who have made studies of the literal word are urging the people to follow and support them. They are intensely focused on what is happening to the kingdoms of this world, and to this country in particular. This is why it is imperative to hear from the true Shepherd within and not be trampled by the herd.

When I sought the Lord about this, He made it very clear to me that I should not waste my time studying the good, the bad and the ugly of the politics of the kingdoms of this world. He pointed out that there is a much better kingdom to explore and a much greater King to bow down to*."*

The Lord showed me that this is the time to keep A SINGLE EYE upon the kingdom of God. The things happening in the world are for signs to us, but we can waste precious time looking and studying the signs. We can get caught up in trying to repair what our God is tearing down. We need to keep a single vision and our affections (emotional attachment), on things from above and not of earth. The intellectual carnal man is drawn by the affairs of men and if we are still attached to earthly things we can easily be swallowed up by them.

Why would we find it more interesting to know what is happening in the world than what is happening in God's kingdom? I believe this happens when we have not really seen the kingdom. Most Christians think that the kingdom of God is a place somewhere in heaven. Others think that we will see it in the distant future.

Jesus said that we could see the kingdom and enter into the kingdom of God when we are born again. So we do not have to wait to die to go there and we do not have to wait for a future government on earth either. We have to be born from above for the King to take His place and open the kingdom of God within us.

YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN

The gospels record that Jesus came preaching the "kingdom of God." He did many miracles and healings and He preached the kingdom of God. These were strange words in the ears of a people who had once been God's protected people and now were suffering oppression under Roman occupation. The Jews were looking for a deliverer. They sought the "Messiah," not to restore their souls, but to restore the kingdom to Israel. They were strictly letter of the law and could not see in the Spirit.

When Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, he also desired that the kingdom be restored to Israel; this is what drove him to his furtive night visit. He was a rabbi, a teacher of the people and would be humiliated to be found talking to this Man, but he had observed the miracles and healings that Jesus had done and he was impressed; was He the One? he needed to know.

Before Nicodemus could state his question, Jesus was already talking to him about the kingdom of God. He said, *"Verily, verily, I say to thee, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* (Jn.3: 3) What was on Nicodemus' heart was not what was on the Master's heart. But the famous

conversation went on. Nicodemus commented on natural birth while Jesus was talking in the Spirit. *"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."* (Vs.6)

Jesus was trying to get through to this dear rabbi that His kingdom was not of this world and that He did not come to restore Israel literally; He had something better and higher than that. So Jesus zeroed in on the kingdom of God and He made it very personal. He expounded that in order to see or even understand that there is a kingdom of God, one must be born from above.

Many of God's dear people today rely on their imagination to understand the kingdom of God. Some may think it is a place in heaven where Jesus sits on a throne or perhaps a future world that will be ruled only by Christians. These are pictures out of the carnal minds of some who have had an initial experience with the Lord and think that they are no longer carnal.

Most decent preachers teach that to be born again we needed to admit that we are sinners and that we must repent of our sins. It was after I had gone through an "identity crisis" at home and an experience at the Methodist Church that I went with a neighbor to a small gathering of saints in a store front building and heard that I needed to repent. I ran to the makeshift altar and fell on my face before the Lord. I cried my heart out and could not stop the flow of tears for what seemed a long long time.

It was there that I prayed the "sinner's prayer" and received forgiveness from God. When I got up from my knees, I felt like I had been scrubbed clean and I knew that I was a new person. I began to read my Bible and it was to me like eating crusty French bread fresh out of the oven.

I read in the Bible that *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.."* and I began to clean up my habits. I quit smoking cigarettes and drinking my occasional cocktail. I dropped the friends who thought that I had turned "religious;" we no longer had anything in common and I began going to church regularly. I knew that I had had a real experience with God, but I did not realize that I was only a babe. I thought I had arrived but I had a long road ahead of me and I was thirty years old.

I may have had the experience of being born again but I was a long way from seeing the kingdom. The churches that I attended at first taught me about the Lord, but they did not lead me to the true kingdom; they led me to the Law. They did not teach me the real purpose of being born again, they taught me their version of Christianity. However, this was all a part of my growing up.

When we have a "born again experience," we still need to go through many stages of growth just as a natural child does. Jesus was born as a baby *"And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him."* (Luke 2: 40)

When Jesus was twelve years old Joseph and Mary went to the feast at Jerusalem as it was the yearly custom. It was during that time that Jesus spent three days in the temple, *"sitting in with the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions and all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers."* (Vs.46b-47)
The child was not only growing physically; he was growing spiritually. Jesus was not afraid to listen and ask questions, *"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."* (Vs. 52)

Even though we may be scholars and perhaps even pastors in a church, when we are first "born again," we are as little babies who need the daily milk of the word. God uses all the experiences of our past and present life to bring us up to maturity but there is still a lot of growing up to do.

As Jesus increased, His enemies increased as well in number and in intensity. His enemies were those who felt threatened by His presence, mainly those of the religious orders, and so it is for us. This is another instrument that the Lord uses for our growing up. As we begin to hear Him, not only does our own family often turn against us, but often those who have nurtured us in the milk of the Word as well.

Jesus was taught the Scriptures by His godly mother and when He was thirty years old He went to see His cousin John who was baptizing in the River Jordan. Thirty is the number of full maturity. It was at thirty that David ascended the throne and at thirty, it was time for Jesus to take His place with the full authority of God's Son. It was time for Him to begin His ministry.

When John saw Jesus, He was awed and declared that He was greater than he was. But Jesus said that this baptism was necessary to fulfill all righteousness and John went ahead. *"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water, and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him. And lo a voice from heaven, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."* (Matt. 3: 16-17)

It was then that "the heavens opened" and the Father confirmed to Jesus that indeed He is His Son and that the time has come to fulfill His calling.

Ray and Sheila Knight write powerful short thoughts that they send through emails. These are called *"A moment Nugget."* In No.117 of these they write about the "Adoption of Sons" and quote this verse with this thought,*"He was then, at that precise moment placed as God's mature first-born Son and Father's full nature was released for the ministry that God had ordained for Him."* (You can receive this brother's emails by writing to him at 1930knights@gmail.com)

From that time on, Jesus could have no doubt that He was the Son of God, yet He was going to be sorely tested. Immediately after that event *"Jesus was led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil."* (Matt.4: 1) It was bound to happen and actually was needful to strengthen His faith in what He had just heard from the Father.

And so, when we first find out that *"Now we are the sons of God..."* the devil meets us and challenges us in the wilderness of our carnal minds. He harasses us day and night with thoughts of doubt about what our Father has called us to, "Who do you think you are?" "Do you really believe that you are a son of God?" "You really believe that the Father speaks to you?"

The devil kept harassing Jesus. He wanted to plant doubts in His mind *"If thou be the Son of God..."* But Jesus backed him up by saying, *"IT IS WRITTEN!"* It was not just written on pages of a book, it was written in His heart and mind. This is what we have to do continually: Deny the devil who plants doubts in our carnal minds and know that His Word (Christ) is written in our hearts. We stand every moment of the day and night against the thief that is out to rob us of our true identity in Christ.

This is why we pray for one another that our faith will not fail. We edify one another by recognizing the Christ in each other. I know a dear brother in the Lord who always greets the saints by calling them sons of God or priests and kings. He does this in a sincere loving way. God bless this brother!

BEGOTTEN AGAIN

"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ; Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied." (I Pet.1: 1-2)

When Peter wrote this epistle, he made sure that he addressed the elect and not just anyone. They were the ones who had been dispersed throughout the countryside because of their faith. They knew their calling and stood firm in it. They no longer belonged to a church or synagogue, they came from every direction and had different backgrounds, but they had in common that they witnessed to the same word of God and had the same hope. They were begotten again and heirs of God

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath ***begotten us again*** *unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that*

fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you. Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."
(I Pet.1: 3-5)

Peter assured them that indeed they were begotten again and that their hope was anchored in the resurrection of Jesus. Even if they did not attain to it now, they were filling up the cup of the body of Christ toward this resurrection. This was their burning hope and it is ours. Just as Jesus had said, their kingdom was not of this world and their King ruled from within their hearts.

Jesus was begotten of God and born of Mary, yet *"He made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men."* (Phil.2: 7) This is why He insisted that John baptize Him in the waters of baptism, signifying that He was in the form of a man.

Although He had never sinned, He lowered Himself to that status. But when He rose from the waters and the Spirit like a dove came and rested upon Him, His Father confirmed audibly that He was not only the son of Mary after the flesh, but He was indeed begotten of His Father from above.

We are first born of Adam but when we repent and are baptized into Christ's death and resurrection, the heavens open unto us and although we are yet babes, we know that we belong to our Father from above. We begin to hear and see things in the realm of Spirit. As the Lord turns on His light into the dark places of our souls and spirits, our Bible becomes a new book and an entire realm that had been unknown to us surfaces to be explored. Our old identity is being replaced.

This is when we begin to see the kingdom of God within. We find that there is more to life than the material physical world around us, and as we are being quickened or made alive in the spirit we are entering into a new world. It is then that conflict arises between us and our church and between our very own family and friends. Not everyone can see the kingdom let alone enter into it. The kingdom is not opened to the natural man and it is not known to the religious legalistic Christians.

Jesus said, *"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."* (Luke 12: 32) The kingdom is given to those who hear the voice of the true Shepherd and follow Him. It is given to those who *"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."* God looks upon the heart; He looks for those whose hearts seek after spiritual wealth.

David cried unto the Lord, *"As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God."* (Ps.42:1) David was not as interested in the magnificent palace that he would someday occupy, David's soul was thirsting to know God. Does our heart thirst for the power of God to obtain the riches of this world, or is our soul panting after spiritual riches? If we are called of God we will find that the world has nothing that we really desire, and in our daily work God will bless us so that we can provide for ourselves and our families.

After he was called of God, David spent some time in the house of Saul but it was not long until he found that his life was in danger and he fled. So it is with us. When we are first called, we spend some time in the religious systems of this world, but soon we have to flee in order to make our calling and election sure.

TWO DIMENSIONS OF LIFE

*"These things I have spoken unto you, that **in me** ye might have peace. **In the world** ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."* (Jn.16: 33) The words of this verse speak directly to our hearts today. Jesus explains that there are only two ways of living this life; IN ME or IN THE WORLD. IN ME, Jesus says, "you might have peace!" IN THE WORLD, you shall have tribulation.

Tribulation comes from a word meaning "pressure." Pressure is the principle of the world. It is its basic mode of operation. The "world" here is from the Greek word "cosmos." It means an "arrangement," an "order," "a system of things."The cosmos is the system of all things originating in the carnal

mind of the natural Adam man.

The principle of the world is pressure, the principle of the kingdom of God is peace. This is the choice. IN HIM is actually the only place we are able to find true peace. We may be in Him and still have tribulation but we will find peace even in the midst of our tribulations. However, IN THE WORLD there is no peace and plenty of tribulation, this is a sure thing.

The cosmos include every institution, every organization, every system and method of government which has been spun out of the carnal mind of the natural Adam man. This includes every religious organization and all governmental institutions. It would be a mistake to believe that because a government has a Christian president and a few Christian congressmen, it could run like the kingdom of God.

All government, even the best that man has devised is part of the cosmos. Our educational system, our economic systems are all part of the cosmos. They are all taught and guided by the wisdom of the world. And they all operate on the principle of pressure.

People all over the land are under pressure and subject to nervous and mental breakdowns. Their health is threatened by the pressure put upon them. Jesus was talking about the pressures that we are daily subjected to in the world. Jesus was offering a place of rest and peace to all who are heavily laden. A place IN HIM while we are in the world; a place where we overcome the pressures of each day.

John wrote that, in the world and the worldly church, there are antichrist spirits (spirits that are usurping the place that belongs to Christ). They are all "religious" spirits but "...greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world." (I Jn.4:4b) This means that He has made a way in each of us, to overcome every pressure and every spirit that is in the world.

Our geographical location does not assure that we will not feel the pressure, it is our spiritual location that makes the difference. We cannot find this peace by by running to a secluded place. We cannot run away from pressure for it is part of the Adam nature. We need to learn to quickly find our way IN HIM. *"I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust."* (Ps.91:2)

WHAT IS MAN?

"For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, 'What is man, that thou art mindful of him? Or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madedst him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." (Heb.2: 5-9)

Just as it is written, when God created man in His own image, He put all His works into his hands. *"God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. "* (Gen.1: 27-28))

The man in God's image was given dominion over the earth, but he had no contact with the ground. God saw that in His garden, *"There was not a man to till the ground."* (Gen. 2: 5b) *"And 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."* (Vs.7) It was when God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into him the breath of life that man became a living soul (earthy body) and took over his earthly dominion.

Paul wrote, *"As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.* (I Cor.15: 48) The man in the image of God is not the same as the man who is a living soul. The man in the image of God has the thoughts and ways of God, he is the heavenly man of the Spirit. By contrast God told this earthy man, *"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith 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) The two men are as different as day and night.

When we are begotten again, or born from above, we are begotten of the seed of the heavenly man or Christ man. The Christ man is the seed that we receive by the Holy Spirit. He is the One who quickens even our mortal or earthly bodies. This is why it is necessary to be born from above for in the earthly man we can only know the things of the natural world. It is in the heavenly man, that we find the world and the power of spirit.

From the beginning, God's plan was set and it never changes. *"Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world."* (Acts 15: 18) When God formed the earthly man, He had fully purposed to make man's body His abode. He would dwell within man and be seen and known by His visible creation. Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life. He declared that His Father dwelt in Him and that when man had seen Jesus, they had seen the Father.

The body that God formed out of the dust of the ground is essential to God's purpose indeed. It is the form of His eternal habitation among men, only it needs to be quickened and given the life of God by His Spirit.

This is where we find ourselves. First we become aware that in these earthly vessels God has planted the seed of the heavenly man. It is what Jesus was teaching with the parables of the sower and of the harvest. Through Jesus' atoning sacrifice, the vessels are prepared to receive the seed of the heavenly man. Thus, the son of Man is multiplying Himself in the earth, but not without a struggle. Those in whom the seed of the son of Man has been growing have been feeling the power of their new life. Some have taken hold of the "gifts" of that life while others are looking for the better resurrection.

It is this new man who takes his place at the right Hand of the Majesty on high and is ordained from the beginning to have all things in subjection under him. But now we only see the One who, through the suffering of death, has tasted death for every man and has been crowned with glory and honor. Jesus Christ is the FIRST of this new creation of God and it is by the power of His Spirit that He is bringing many brethren to the same glory.

In his darkness, man by his own wisdom could not find God so he imagined all kinds of gods and they are all after his own earthy image. Christ is the Light of man; He is the Truth who removes all the images and false gods of darkness. We have even worshiped an image of the One we thought was the true God. We have made images of Jesus Christ as well, but each time that He shines His light in us and we receive Him, we overcome the lie and the death that is in us.

Is it any wonder that we go through constant changes? Up to the time we came to Christ, our carnal minds with all its intellectual knowledge had directed our lives. All our decisions had been made through that channel. But as we continue in Christ, we find that the Holy Spirit has been taking the power away from our carnal minds and turning it over to Christ.

A new man is arising from the midst of us. This is our new birth. The new man is Christ Himself come in earthen vessels. When He appears in us, we will be we will be like Him and be fully BORN AGAIN! *"Beloved, now are the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see him as he is."* (I Jn .3:2)

Because of His love, ***Jackie Caporaso***