

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 135

THE WOMAN AND THE MANCHILD

(continued)

“And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a *woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars*. And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne” (Rev. 12:1-3).

For many years now, those who are moving in this present truth anointing of the Spirit of God have been hearing proclaimed what is called the “manchild message.” When John saw a woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars upon her head, she travailed in birth to bring forth a manchild who, as soon as he was born, was caught up unto God, and to His throne. We understand by the Spirit that the sun is a type of the glory of Christ, for He is the “Sun of Righteousness,” and on the mount of Transfiguration His countenance shone brighter than the noon-day sun. The fact that this woman is *clothed* with the sun speaks of the garment of the bride, who has made herself ready. The moon is a type of the old order reflective light of outward religious observances of rituals, ceremonies, programs, creeds, ordinances, sacraments, etc., none of which have any light of their own, but all *reflect* light just as the cold, barren, lifeless moon reflects a portion of the light of the sun. It signifies *indirect* and *partial* revelation. This woman, therefore, represents the true church, not having the limited, reflected light of the old order church systems of man, but she has been given the living knowledge of the Son of God and is clothed upon with the radiant glory of the reality of the living Christ!

That crown of twelve stars upon her head signifies that she has come under the *divine government* of the mind of Christ, for twelve is the number of divine government, and the stars speak of the power, glory, and dominion of the wonderful illumination of the mind of Christ. The moon being under her feet signifies that this woman has been lifted up to a higher place in God, in both revelation and experience, than the old order church systems of man, the moon. This tells us

that she is hearing directly from the Lord, rather than responding to others, who have heard about the Lord.

“...*clothed with the sun...*” Norene Nichols has shared some interesting and edifying insights into this important theme. “The garbing of the woman of Revelation twelve is unusual in that she is *clothed with the sun*. On the surface one might refer to this as being clothed in light or understanding which it is, but there is much more meaning lying under the surface of these words than most of us realize. With the help of the Lord we may ponder this matter a little further and see some of what is involved. In the Greek there are two words used for ‘clothed,’ one is *enduo* and the other is *periballo*. In this particular case the word *periballo* is used, and realizing that every word is important in respect to where and how it is used by the Spirit of God in the scriptures, we know that *periballo* is distinctly illuminative. *Enduo* means to ‘go into clothing’ which infers that the clothing is of a certain size and specification into which a person must fit. In other words, a person up to a particular size could fit into a certain garment, but over that size it would be impossible to get into it. On the other hand, *periballo* means to ‘cast around about’ which would infer some sort of a garment that can be put on and cast around a person and made to fit the person rather than the person fit the garment.

“For instance, Luke 24:49 speaks about being ENDUED (*enduo* — *clothed*) with power from on high’ referring to the infilling of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Here the word used means to be *clothed* with power in the sense of *going into clothing*, or having the garment of a particular size into which the person must fit. We have seen much in times past of people who claimed so much because of the enduing of power, when in reality they fitted as best they could into that garment. Thus we have seen many trying to do great wonders and signs in a garment they are in but which is too big for them, into which they have not grown up, and which drags in the dust realm (carnality), bringing a reproach and criticism from many looking on.

“On the other hand, the word *periballo* used of the sun-clad woman infers that this full grown woman has a covering of the sun that is *cast about* her in such a manner that the garment fits her rather than her trying to fit into the garment. This woman is a mature woman — matured in God, matured in love, matured in understanding — and God grants her the clothing that fits her maturity. Her clothing is comprised of one thing — the sun. The sun is the light and warmth of our solar system and rises upon the just and the unjust alike. It is no respecter of persons. The planets revolve around it and are benefited thereby. Thus this woman is clothed with the light (understanding, revelation) and warmth (effect, blessing) of Him who is ‘the Sun of Righteousness.’ She does not withhold her light and warmth from anyone either just or unjust, but beams alike upon all. In other words, her light of understanding is dispersed abroad, not by words, but by BEING, EVEN AS THE SUN SPEAKS NOT BUT WHAT IT IS BY VIRTUE OF ITS NATURE. She claims nothing for herself — no position, no gifts, no power, no ministry — but simply IS what she IS by the grace of God. The sun does not have to say, ‘I am the sun!’ It is that by reason of its being, and this woman is what she is by reason of her being who she is, and as a result, her light and warmth are spread abroad without stint” — end quote.

“...*and the moon under her feet...*” Through the summer months Lorain and I enjoy sitting on the front porch of our house in the late evenings listening to the night sounds and watching the stars, moon, satellites, and airplanes in the heavens above. We especially like to be out there at the

full moon and see it rise up over the Hueco mountains in all its brilliance. What do we know when we see the beautiful moon shining so brightly? We know the sun is in the heavens; we can't see it, but we know it's there because the moon is shining, reflecting the light of the sun! Now, this woman that John beholds in spirit, this wonder in the heavens, has the moon under her feet. Do you know why? She doesn't need an external proof anymore that the Sun of Righteousness is shining — for she is *clothed with the sun!*

May God open the eyes of every reader of these lines to clearly see and understand the great mystery that we now unfold. Israel of old with her outward law, outward sacrifices, outward temple, outward priesthood, outward feasts, outward rituals and ceremonies — all these external ministrations were merely a sign that Yahweh was in the heavens! All these things merely reflected the light of God, the Spirit, but they were not the light and not one of them had any light within itself. The moon shines so we know that the sun is there. The great truth that the Holy Spirit would make known to us is that external religious ordinances of every kind are typified by the moon — they are not the true light of Christ, they merely reflect light. As the writings of the New Testament progress, we see a theme unfold before our wondering eyes which eventually bursts forth in all the splendor of a blooming flower of truth. The writer to the Hebrews exudes the fragrance of this blossoming truth when he writes, “*Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect...which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings (Greek: baptismos — baptisms), and carnal ordinances, IMPOSED ON THEM UNTIL THE TIME OF REFORMATION (CHANGE)*” (Heb. 9:9-10). These externals were needed when men could neither see or know God and needed to be assured that God was there. But now, praise His name, He has sent the Spirit of His Son and we are *putting on the Lord Jesus Christ*, we are being clothed with the light of the glory of God that radiates from the face of Jesus Christ! Therefore, we no longer have any need of the moon for we are clothed with the sun! Isn't it wonderful!

In nearly every religious system today we have a lot of *reflected light* of outward rituals, ceremonies, sacraments, and ordinances. Water baptism, for example, is merely an outward symbol of reflected light, for it is an external exercise which *stands for* and *represents* and *portrays* that **true spiritual baptism** into the death of Christ whereby our sins are carried away into the sea of forgetfulness and our new creation life arises in the power of His resurrection. The Lord's supper or communion is but an outward symbol or reflected light of that deep *spiritual experience* whereby we truly eat the flesh (word) of Christ and drink His blood (spirit) in truth and reality. The whole Christian world, including some who profess to be sons of God, continues to walk on in the semi-darkness of the reflected light of the moon. But this woman, this heavenly woman, this sun-clad woman, this woman pregnant with the Christ *has put the moon under her feet!* SHE IS LIVING IN THE REALM ABOVE ALL TYPES AND SHADOWS AND SYMBOLS, ABOVE ALL REFLECTED LIGHT, CLOTHED WITH THE SPLENDOR OF THE NOONDAY SUN, THE MAJESTY AND GLORY OF THE LIVING CHRIST. She has risen above the outward shadows!

This woman doesn't need to appear in church on Easter morning to proclaim the resurrection of our Lord, for she has risen with Him and is now seated together with Him in the heavenly places in Christ. She has no need to sip wine or eat a wafer in order to recognize the death of the Lord and her union with Him, for she bears within herself the marks of the dying of

the Lord Jesus, and she is dead, and her new life is hid with Christ in God. She doesn't need to be baptized in water in any particular name, by any certain formula, for any special work of God, for by one Spirit she has already *been baptized into one body, baptized into the Christ*, she has "put on" Christ, and is now bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh. Oh, yes! This woman, this virgin bride of Christ, dwells in a heavenly place in the dazzling glory of spiritual understanding, reality, and power. Only the woman thus clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, is able to birth the manchild, the manifest sons of God! The sons of God are not birthed out of carnal, earth-bound religious systems of men who are ruled in the night time darkness of their walk as carnal Christians by the reflected light of the moon. Coming out of Babylon was not our birth into sonship! It is the woman who has come out of Babylon. It is only in the high place of pure spiritual experience that the life of sonship is conceived and brought to birth. The Lord is now bringing His elect into the hot, throbbing, pulsating, radiating, penetrating LIGHT OF LIFE!

Even at the most elemental level of our spiritual walk every saint of God who yearns for peace, victory, and growth in the spirit must begin to put the moon of external rules, regulations, laws, commandments, and man-imposed standards of righteousness under his feet. I believe the dream of every child of God is to walk fully in the will of the Father. The ability to do so lies right within HIS NATURE WITHIN US! All nature teaches us this simple but sublime truth — *the root determines the fruit*. The mystery is just this: Adam can *never* be holy; Christ can *never* sin. So once the consciousness of the *new man* arises within you, you are on your way to victory! God is not judging you — we have all been judged already at Calvary. Once the law of the spirit of life has been quickened within you your natural man will still be the natural man and he will fail at times, *but God is not looking at that!* Our heavenly Father, more than anyone in the universe, understands perfectly that Adam *cannot* be anything but what he is — a sinner! He also knows that only *Christ in you* has the power to be holy, for *Christ is holy*. And even God isn't trying to lay the law on old Adam (your natural man) and make him reform. That's not the plan! The plan is for Christ in you to daily *increase* while the Adamic man, the flesh, daily *decreases*. As we learn to live out of our true identity, the new man, Christ in us, there is *no more consciousness of sin*. That means we stop worrying about sin and getting all bent out of shape every time Adam acts up! Instead, we concentrate on our new life and feed, water, nurture, and cultivate the Christ within!

I'm a great believer in *setting men free* — free from rules and commandments, free from condemnation, free from the consciousness of sin — for the strength of sin *is the law*. You are going to *be* who you *are!* It's as simple as that. Someone says, "If you don't teach people the law, if you don't instruct them in what to do and what not to do, if you don't lay down the guidelines and set the standards, how will they know how to live and do righteousness?" The answer is just this — *by nature!* Every man lives by his nature, and every man who does righteousness does so by the nature of Christ in him or he will not do righteousness! "The law made *nothing perfect*." Nothing! Can we grasp that? "*For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit*" (Rom. 8:3-4).

If I have to instruct you on how to live you are not benefiting from me because I have not the power to *cause you to obey what I tell you*. But if I set you free you are free to do one thing —

you are free to ***be who you are!*** If you are living in the consciousness of Christ you are going to act like Him and be like Him! The reason Christ has redeemed us is not to save us from hell and take us to heaven, as the churches foolishly teach; rather, it is to quicken us within our spirit so that we can ***discover our life, our real self, our true identity*** as sons of our heavenly Father! Oh, yes! Our spiritual life within is the secret place of the most High. It is Christ within us, our *only* hope of glory! Once we learn that laws, rules, regulations, commandments, standards, sacraments, and so-called church disciplines are absolutely and utterly impotent to do one thing for us, we will put that cold, sterile, reflective light of the moon under our feet and begin to put on the Lord Jesus Christ — CLOTHED WITH THE SUN! Isn't it wonderful!

"...and upon her head a crown of twelve stars..." She is crowned, but not with *kingly* authority, for she is not seated upon the throne. Her child is *caught up* unto God, and to His throne. The woman has not reached the highest pinnacle in the Spirit, for her child, as soon as it is born, is caught up into a realm above her. Her crown is the *stephanos* crown of the overcomer, yet it is unique, for instead of being formed of laurel branches as were the *stephanos* placed upon the head of the victors at the Greek games, it is composed of stars. It is neither a true *stephanos* nor is it the golden crown of a king! It is a crown of twelve stars. Here it is the number that is most significant. Twelve is the number in the numerology of God that denotes all, absolutely all or the end. And the end of God's plan is sonship! You see, we have sixty seconds in a minute, sixty minutes in an hour, twenty-four hours in a day, seven days in a week, four weeks in a month, and twelve months in a year. But when you come to twelve you come to the end of time as we know it, for in the twelve months the earth's circuit around the sun is complete. In twelve you come to the highest denomination of time as we know it; you can start over with two years, three years, a thousand years, or a trillion years, but you've come to the end.

Twelve is also in scripture the number of *divine government*. The ruling order of God is revealed in the fact that there were twelve patriarchs from Seth to Noah before the flood; also twelve after the flood from Shem to Jacob. There were the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve princes of those tribes. And in the New Testament we find the twelve apostles of the Lamb, the twelve foundations in the New Jerusalem, the twelve gates, the twelve pearls, and the twelve angels (messengers). All the measurements of the city involve the number twelve. There are twelve stones in the high priest's breastplate. Twelve persons are recorded as being specially anointed for government, five as priests and seven as kings. All this speaks of Divine Government!

The sun-clad woman is crowned with divine government, yet, again, it is *not government on the level of the throne*. The divine government she is under is the order of God in a particular realm. Each realm in God has its own order! There was an order of God for the patriarchs, another order of God for Israel under Moses, a different order of God for Israel under Joshua, a further order of God for Israel under the judges, and another order of God for Israel under the kings. Each was God's order, His divine order, but the rule of God over His people took different forms. Today there is a divine order of God for the church and only a few saints in the whole world have submitted themselves to God's divine order. *"And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the*

faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:11-13).

Nearly all churches operate and function under man-made, man-controlled systems, that bear little resemblance to the order of God! The Babylon religious system is not the “order” of the Spirit nor is it in any way “divine”! Its origin is from the carnal concepts and inventions of man! The true divine church order, however, beautiful and wonderful as it is, still is NOT THE DIVINE ORDER FOR THE SONS OF GOD! The woman is crowned with a crown of twelve stars, the divine order of church government; but the manchild is caught up to the highest realm in God to sit as Christ upon His throne! That is the difference. The woman has an authority, but it is not the authority of the throne!

THE VIRGIN CHURCH

In this study we are going to share with you one of the greatest mysteries in the word of God; a mystery that it is absolutely necessary for every member of God’s elect to clearly understand in order to truly apprehend the calling of sonship with power in this great day of the Lord. Now in order to understand the great mystery that Jesus is seeking to reveal to us in John’s vision of the sun-clad woman who brings forth the manchild, you need to understand that this woman is the *virgin church*. Now, who was the original virgin that brought forth a manchild? The prophet Isaiah prophesies of that first virgin and that first manchild. *“Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel”* (Isa. 7:14). Every Christian knows that this prophecy was fulfilled when the Virgin Mary gave birth to her firstborn son, Jesus.

We must not make the mistake of thinking that this sun-clad woman represents the mother of Jesus, or that at least she represents the fleshly Israel. Many commentators, reading and understanding with carnal minds, have supposed that this woman is Mary and the manchild is Jesus. The great Spanish artist, Murillo, has given us painting after painting of this scene. It was one of his favorite subjects. Magnificent canvasses they are, showing the Virgin Mary, in her traditional robes of blue and white, her body great with child, most modestly portrayed, with the glory of the sun about her and the crescent moon under her feet, and the coronet of stars upon her head. All who have looked upon one of those great paintings have been awed by the gifts and powers of the artist — BUT THIS IS NOT A VISION OF THE VIRGIN MARY! There is a religious order in the world today which elevates Mary, the mother of our Lord, to the level of veneration. We cannot deny that of all the women who have graced this earth from the dawn of history until now, Mary can be said to have been the greatest and most precious. The angel Gabriel appeared to her and called her “the blessed of the Lord.” She was to become the mother of Jesus who would save His people from their sins.

In the Old Testament there are many instances in which barren mothers cried out to God for a son. Samuel’s mother, Samson’s mother, Moses’ mother, all cried out to God for the removal of their barrenness. Every Hebrew mother hoped, and cherished the thought, that she might become the mother of the promised Christ — the Messiah. God had promised that some woman of Israel would bear a son who would be the Anointed, the Messiah, who would deliver His people and bring to pass in the earth the kingdom of God. Therefore, among all the mothers of Israel,

there was none so blessed as was Mary. Mary was indeed chosen of God for a specific and wonderful purpose. However, it was not Mary who introduced the new dispensation! She was selected to be the vessel, the channel through whom God would give a Son, Jesus, and it was the Son who was destined to bring in the new age. Mary took her place with one hundred and nineteen other believers on the day of Pentecost as the glory revealed in her Son, who promised to share it with them, became a glorious reality in her. Now the mother could rejoice in the glory of her Son!

In the vision before us is a picture of the greatest mother ever placed by God upon the earth! Precious as she was, the Virgin Mary is not the *greatest mother*. John beheld in spirit a woman of surpassing glory, the greatest mother ordained of God to make her appearance in history. She is not the Virgin Mary — she is the ***Virgin Church!*** Throughout the New Testament, the woman is used as a metaphor to describe the church. She is never referred to as “man” or “son.” And it is the Virgin Church which is chosen by our heavenly Father to bring forth a many-membered son — the perfect man, the manifest sons of God! The greatest mother ever placed upon the earth by God is this Virgin Church, the bride of Christ. She is a woman adorned for her Bridegroom.

Contrary to the fables taught by the church systems, the purpose of the bride’s existence in the earth is not merely that she be adorned and prepared, bejeweled with gifts of the Spirit and ready to become the wife of the Bridegroom. Her transcendent mission in the earth is to *be a mother!* She was never ordained to bring in that greater age to come or to establish the kingdom of God over the nations. From the beginning God purposed that just as Mary brought forth the *firstborn Son of God*, so the greater, many-membered woman, the Virgin Church, would give birth to a *many-membered manchild*, the manifest sons of God, who would introduce the new dispensation and bring the kingdom of God to pass in all the earth. God has placed this church in the earth not merely to become the wife and the bride of the Bridegroom, glorified in heaven some day, but to give birth right here on earth to the offspring who should rise up in such power, in such authority, and such kingship, that all the principalities and powers in all heavenly and earthly realms shall not equal him in glory!

The “many sons brought to glory” shall be born of a chaste, Virgin Church, without contradiction the greatest mother that God has planted on the face of the earth, the Jerusalem which is above, in the heavenly realms of the Spirit. This church is not going out with a whimper or a limp, nor shall it be “evacuated” to escape the evil and horrors of an antichrist and a great tribulation. It shall conclude this age victorious, with joy unspeakable and full of glory, and riding a river of peace and blessing and life and power. It shall arise in freedom from all bondage and limitation, and the Lamb’s wife shall be holy, strong, anointed, transformed, and glorious. Oh, yes, she shall endure the pain of travail in bringing forth her son, but then shall rejoice with exceeding great joy and victory at the sight of her newborn manchild! Yes — she will be a GREAT WONDER IN HEAVEN!

John was not shown things that had already happened and were now history. The revelation of Jesus Christ is not a history book! It is the unfolding of the spirit, life, and glory of Christ, and that glory is not revealed in either Mary or Israel, but in the saints, in the body of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, John the Revelator was being shown things which “*must be hereafter,*” and

not things which had already taken place. Mary was history when John saw this sun-clad woman, Jesus had already been born, lived, died, resurrected, and ascended several decades before John saw this manchild being birthed! The Revelation is written and sent to the *church* and its message concerns the church. Here, the bride of Christ is portrayed as a symbolic woman. This is the woman of whom Paul spoke when he told the saints in Corinth, “*For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ*” (II Cor. 11:2). And again the apostle speaks of this woman, the bride of Christ, saying, “*For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. THIS IS A GREAT MYSTERY: BUT I SPEAK CONCERNING CHRIST AND THE CHURCH*” (Eph. 5:31-32).

The great mystery that the Holy Spirit is unfolding to us in the revelation given to John on Patmos is the truth that Jesus is the Pattern Son, the firstborn among many brethren, and the *proto-type* of all the manifest sons of God! Just as Jesus, the first Son, was born of a virgin, so shall every manifest son of God be born of a virgin. The first Son was only one man, so He was born of a single woman, Mary, the virgin of Nazareth. But the manifest sons of God, Christ's many brethren, are a corporate body of sons like unto the first Son, and they are therefore born of a many-membered virgin, the Virgin Church.

“*And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and He took one of his ribs , and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man...and Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living*” (Gen. 2:21-23; 3:20). One reason there is this uncanny attraction of the woman to the male, and the man to the female, is that the feminine quality was taken out of man. While the King James Bible says that Eve was made from a “rib,” the Hebrew word is much broader than that. It means a “chamber” and was used even for rooms or chambers of the temple in Jerusalem. Eve was more than a rib, God took a chamber, a side, an aspect of Adam's personality and substance, and of this he built a woman. The feminine nature had been an integral part of Adam's makeup until the Lord separated it and formed it into an individual personality — Eve. What the woman is, is uniquely what the man is, and that is why everybody pairs off. So just as Eve is the mother of all the sons of men, so the Virgin Church is the mother of all the sons of God!

It is an unfathomable mystery, but there is a divine quality in God that is feminine, and has birthed all life after the spirit. And it is the same divine feminine quality of God *formed in a people, the Virgin Church*, that is birthing us into the realm of sonship! Someone says, “I don't believe it.” Then I must ask, “How can the manchild be born without a mother?” The birth of Jesus is the pattern! “*But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman...*” (Gal. 4:4). Almost two millennia ago God manifested His first Son. He is the first-born of all the sons of God and He was not *formed or birthed without a mother!* The Son of God was born into this world from a woman. He didn't fall out of the sky directly from the Father in heaven. The very fact that Jesus is the first-born among many brethren tells us that all the manifest sons of God must be *born*. Ah, my beloved, I'm intrigued with the glory of motherhood! The woman's body functions to bring forth life. How could there be anything more blessed, more powerful, more wonderful, more glorious? There is nothing more miraculous or awe-inspiring

than this! The invisible, unknowable, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent God of the universe saw fit to use a woman to manifest His own Son! She was, in some deep and mysterious way, able to conceive the Word of God within herself and bring it forth for men to behold and handle as the word of life sent from heaven! This transcends by far anything we can conceive of!

Some years ago Brenda Hoskins shared this testimony. “When God was leading me out of the ‘religious’ system, I started having gatherings in my apartment. During one of those meetings, I had a vision in which I saw a woman giving birth and there were several women (midwives) standing shoulder to shoulder, forming a circle around her as the child was born. It was a boy and as I looked at this scene, I saw the child grow from an infant to a youngster as quickly as he was raised up through the air. It was like he floated up and he grew up right before my eyes, and all the while there were hands trying to touch him. The hands were reaching through the midwives, but no hands could touch him as the midwives were his protection. The vision focused on the child and the midwives more than the woman. His development took only minutes. Later, Jesus told me that He was going to take me back to a ‘virgin’ state. Just before the Lord told me this I was told about the necessity of the ‘virgin’ birth and the holy child had to be conceived and delivered through a vessel never touched by human hands. He said that in my previous state I was too contaminated with other lovers and had too much flesh of the ‘religious’ man’s ways. I understood that when I was ready, cleansed spiritually, then I would conceive and bring forth ‘a great thing.’ This was about ten years ago. At the time I knew nothing of the manchild in Revelation or the bride.”

The next thing you need to understand in order to grasp this great mystery is that the Virgin Church is just that — a virgin. I do not mean that every person who makes up this virgin church company is naturally and physically a virgin, one who has never had sexual relations in the flesh. The Spirit is not talking here about natural things, but He is teaching us of *spiritual realities*! Can we not see by this that the beautiful sun-clad woman is spiritually a virgin, she is virgin in her relationship to the Lord, reserved for Him and for Him alone. We have known what it is to be conformed to the course of THIS WORLD. Then we have known what it is to trust Christ as Saviour and seek to serve Him while remaining entangled in all the defilement of a corrupt Babylonish religious system. But God is calling forth a glorious body of Christ who, because of the word of the Lord and the quickening of the Holy Spirit, is desiring to be VIRGIN — separated only unto her glorious Bridegroom. How lightly we sometimes take the purposes of God in us! It is one thing to be washed in the blood, freed from all our past sins, and quite another thing to truly be virgin in our desires to keep ourselves only unto the Lord — no other loves. Separation is coming from everything of the flesh, the world, the devil, and from every vestige of entanglement with the false church systems of man which we have made our Head in place of the living Christ.

The next mystery that we need to understand, in order to comprehend what the Holy Spirit is really saying to us, is that not only does this virgin church company keep itself wholly unto the Lord, but while she is truly *espoused* unto the Lord the marriage of the Lamb has not yet been consummated. She has not been joined in marriage union with the Lord, else she would not be a *virgin*. When we speak of the “virgin church” we must understand that we speak of the *bride of Christ* who is espoused to Jesus Christ as His wife. We often entertain very faulty ideas concerning this beautiful truth because many of our western customs are so different from the eastern customs. Many people think that the true church is *not yet* the bride of Christ and will

only *become* the bride of Christ at the time of the “marriage of the Lamb” revealed in chapter nineteen of the Revelation. But such is not the case! Let me explain the eastern custom of betrothal and marriage, the traditions from which the analogy of marriage in scripture is drawn.

The apostle Paul referred to this great mystery when he wrote, “*I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ*” (II Cor. 11:2). The meaning put on “espousal” is vital. The Basic Bible reads, “*You have been married by me to one husband.*” Wuest says, “*I gave you in marriage...*” Both show the marriage as a past event. In Bible days, prior to the actual marriage consummation, there was what was known as the *betrothal* or the *espousal*. This was somewhat like our modern engagement, except that it was much more binding and obligatory. It was more than a mere promise between two individuals to eventually “get married,” for it *was* in fact *the marriage*. At the time of the espousal the families of the man and woman were involved in the negotiation of a contract between the two parties. It was a notable occasion! The payment of a suitable dowry was usually a feature of the contract. The groom or his father had to pay a price to the girl’s father for the bride. When the contract was signed and sealed in the presence of witnesses, the contract meant that the couple were legally married — they were husband and wife. Matthew makes this plain when he records, “*Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away (divorce her) privately*” (Mat. 1:18-19).

This period of engagement or betrothal was taken so seriously that any violation of the engagement was adultery and any break-up of the espousal required a legal procedure — a bill of divorcement. This reveals the seriousness of the situation when Joseph learned that Mary was with child. The news did more than stun him! It forced him to make a decision; either to expose Mary publicly or to break off the relationship privately. In either case, Mary would have been dishonored by her family and friends, degraded by the Jewish community. Even worse, her son would have been born an outcast with no rights or citizenship, and prohibited from worship in the temple. Under these circumstances, Joseph chose to be as gracious and kind as Jewish law permitted; he decided to put her away privately. But then the angel brought the message to Joseph and he took Mary home as his wife and became the father of Jesus. What explains his change of heart? Just this, his belief in God’s message that Mary’s child was a special creation, conceived of the Holy Spirit, to bring salvation into our world.

Now let us return to the marriage customs. After the espousal, at a later time, the second step in the wedding took place. During the interval, the two were not joined physically in intimacy. The bride remained a virgin. The girl continued to live in her own home, and the man in his. The groom begins to prepare a home for them to live in. This period also gave the bride a chance to “prepare herself” and “make herself ready” for the coming union. She learns many needful things and beautifies herself in every way. She wants to be perfect for her lover. One of the most important parts of her beautification was her gown. The white wedding dress was then chosen and knit together into a beautiful garment for her to wear when the groom comes for her. The wedding dress symbolized her pure and chaste life.

On the appointed day the groom came with his friends to take the bride back to his home, and then a seven-day *wedding feast* took place. They often celebrated these feasts twice a day during those seven days. The feast was the part of the “marriage” that Jesus attended in Cana of Galilee when He turned water into wine. And this is also the scene at the “marriage of the Lamb” in the book of Revelation! It is called the “marriage supper” or marriage feast of the Lamb. This is not the espousal, but the time of *union*. *“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb...”* (Rev. 19:7-9).

And now, let us reveal unto you a secret: In the unfolding revelation of Jesus Christ through the book of Revelation the marriage feast of the Lamb takes place toward the end of the book in chapter nineteen; however, the sun-clad woman bears the manchild, the manifest sons of God, in chapter twelve. Therefore, we see that the great truth that Jesus has revealed to us here is that just as the firstborn Son of God was conceived of the Holy Ghost in the womb of Mary *before* she and Joseph came together, so the manchild company of His many brethren is conceived of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the many-membered Virgin Church *before* the Virgin Church has entered into her ultimate union and intimacy with Christ. This might astound you, nevertheless it is true! The Virgin Church will be found impregnated with the seed of sonship by the Holy Ghost to bring forth the manchild from among those who make up the true church of the living God, which is clothed with the glory of Christ, has the moon of religion under her feet, and is crowned with the illumination of the mind of Christ. She is espoused to Christ, but will become the bride of Christ at the marriage of the Lamb after the days of her purification are ended in the wilderness place where she makes herself ready.

There are two companies — the second company is found in the spiritual womb of the first company, and is spiritually birthed out of that company. And the company of the manifest sons of God which is birthed out from the Virgin Church is greater in nature, glory, and power than the Virgin Church, just as our Lord Jesus Christ was greater in nature, glory, and power than His mother, the Virgin Mary. Furthermore, the birth of the manifest sons of God has nothing to do with God’s people coming out of Babylon, for the sons do not come out of Babylon, although they may have previously come out of Babylon to become the Virgin Church, but that is not their birth into sonship. For, you see, the sons are not born of a harlot — the sons are born of the seed of God which is raised up within them in the womb of the Virgin Church! Oh, the mystery of it! Many symbols are used in the book of Revelation to describe the progressively unfolding revelation of Jesus Christ in the earth, and these things are not myth, folklore, fables, or fairy tales. They are living reality of which we have touched, handled, and tasted and they are happening right here on this earth in flesh and blood people! Out of this *glorious church* there comes forth a conquering army of sons to rule all nations and put all enemies under the feet of the Christ of God! Isn’t it wonderful!

As John beheld and pondered this divine mystery, soon thereafter he beheld another wonder altogether as startling as the first. *“And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, **Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that setteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed***

fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. 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...and the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: and upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” (Rev. 17:1-5).

A little later the same angel came to John again and spoke with him, saying, **“Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem...”** (Rev. 21:9-10).

“Come hither; I will show unto thee...” These words take on new depth of meaning when we understand that in the book of Revelation the word “come” always signifies AN INVITATION TO REVELATION. The whore and the sun-clad woman are two women; the invitation goes forth to come and see by the spirit what they mean; and I do not hesitate to tell you that it requires a REVELATION FROM GOD to see either! The church of Christ is called a *mystery*. She is presented as a *virgin*. She is called a *bride*. Finally, she is presented as a *city*, the New Jerusalem, the city of peace, righteousness, glory, and divine order. This scarlet-clad woman is called a *mystery*. She is not a virgin, she is an *harlot*. She is not an espoused wife, she is the *paramour* and *mistress* of the kings of the earth. Finally, she is that great *city* which is called Babylon, the city of confusion, filthiness, and fleshly disorder. As to Babylon, John adds, *“When I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I WILL TELL THEE THE MYSTERY OF THE WOMAN...the seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman setteth. The waters are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues...and the woman which thou sawest is that great city (a corporate people), which reigneth over the kings of the earth”* (Rev. 17:7).

These prophecies present two broadly contrasted WOMEN, identified with two broadly contrasted CITIES, one reality being in each case, doubly represented, as a WOMAN, and as a CITY; the harlot and Babylon are one; the glorious sun-clad woman and the heavenly Jerusalem are one. May the Spirit of the living God enlighten the eyes of all who read and give understanding, giving abundantly of the spirit of wisdom and revelation that each may be able to discern and easily differentiate between that VIRGIN CHURCH without spot or wrinkle, and that filthy HARLOT SYSTEM, full of names of blasphemy, with her multiplied sects and denominations, with her abominable false doctrines and idolatrous practices, who seduces the inhabitants of the world with the unspeakable lie that she is, herself, the bride of Christ. One would certainly think that God’s people would respond to the invitation to revelation whereby the Spirit says, “COME HITHER, and I will show you,” and that they would look with anointed eyes and readily see the difference between the virgin and the harlot, but such is not the case. Would God that all men could see the hidden mystery of Christ and the church! Would God that all men could see the hidden mystery of the sun-clad woman who delivers the manchild! Would God that all men could see that this hidden mystery has nothing to do with that tradition-ridden system which all men everywhere believe to be THE CHURCH!

Now there are *three* companies. The Scarlet-Clad Woman (harlot church system), the Sun-Clad Woman (virgin church), and the Manchild (manifest sons of God). Some precious people, because they have separated from some Babylonish denomination and come out of the church systems of man, *suppose* that this was the “mother church” birthing them into sonship. This, my beloved, is *wrong!* The “mother” of the manchild is *not the harlot church system* but that *virgin church* composed exclusively of a people clothed with the glory of Christ, crowned with the stars of God’s divine order, and having the cold, imitative, reflective light of ceremony, ritual, tradition, and doctrine put under foot. When the Spirit calls, “Come out of her, my people,” this is not His call to *sons*. This is His call urging a people to come out of the defilements of Babylon and be *cleansed* — that they might by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost become a *virgin* unto Christ. It is here in this virgin state that the seed of sonship is planted in her womb!

*“He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, **How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?** And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be **called the Son of God**”* (Lk. 1:32-35).

It must be remembered that the manner in which Mary conceived Christ is one thing and the fact that she really conceived Him is another. The absence of a human father, or any kind of sexual union, in the conception of Christ accounts for her virginity remaining intact, but the reality of her maternal role in conceiving Him was not thereby affected. The angel proclaimed great and glorious things of the son who would be born of her, but this did not trouble Mary. She simply believed and accepted them as the design of God. Her concern was not *can* this be done, but *“How* shall this happen, since I do not know man?” More is contained in this question of the first mother of a son of God than meets the eye! She was espoused to Joseph and her espousal meant that she was his wife. And yet she was to become pregnant before she and Joseph came together! What a dilemma! *HOW* can this be fulfilled without sexual intercourse with a man? What man? The angel overcame this difficulty by explaining at once that the conception of Jesus would take place not through intercourse with man, but by the power of God! As a virgin, and with her virginity intact, she would conceive and become a mother! When she responded to the angel, saying, “Let it be done to me according to thy word,” the son of God took flesh in her womb.

I think that every saint of God who has been granted the revelation of sonship has joined his or her voice in unison with that of the virgin of Nazareth, “*HOW SHALL THIS BE, SEEING I KNOW NOT A MAN?*” How can we have this great deliverance, this maturity, this victory over sin, sickness, and death, this change and transformation, this mighty ministry of life and power, this dominion over the nations, if we don’t *do something*? If we don’t become involved in some man’s program, if we don’t join in some great outreach, if we don’t become associated with some great system that has the clout, the connections, the money, the organization, the network to impact the world and its leaders and governments — how shall this be? My beloved, we are all yearning for that *SPIRIT MOVE WHICH IS WROUGHT APART FROM MAN*, that which God Himself shall do! The answer to our heart’s cry in this hour is the same answer the angel

gave to the blessed virgin of Nazareth, “THE HOLY GHOST SHALL COME UPON THEE AND THE POWER OF THE HIGHEST SHALL OVERSHADOW THEE: THEREFORE ALSO THAT HOLY THING WHICH SHALL BE BORN OF THEE **SHALL BE CALLED THE SON OF GOD!**” Oh, yes! The manchild is not a generative work of man. It is God’s generation in us, to bring forth after His kind. It is begun by the Holy Spirit, it is carried on by the Holy Spirit, and it is finished by the Holy Spirit. The creature (not even the woman, the mother) starts nothing, continues nothing, and finishes nothing.

It is very important that no member of God’s elect shall know any *man* in this hour of God’s calling. Paul said, “When it pleased God to reveal His Son in me, immediately I *conferred not with flesh and blood.*” Neither must we go by our own opinions, for the flesh of our carnal “man” is no more spiritual than that of any man! Many people consult their own intelligence, others are always looking to find some preacher, some prophet, some apostle, bishop, teacher, fellowship, church, or movement which they can submit to, be mentored by, and support, which they imagine can carry them into sonship. God does not want any man to be involved in what He is doing! God uses men, but it is one thing for God to use a man, it is quite another thing to think that by some kind of *spiritual union* with that man we can raise up the seed of Christ within ourselves!

Again Paul said, “I am an apostle neither *by man* nor *of man*, but by Jesus Christ.” Man had nothing to do with Paul’s apostleship! It was not conferred on him in Jerusalem by Peter, John, James, or any of the other apostles of the Lord. It was the sovereign work of God! The Holy Ghost came upon him, the power of the Highest overshadowed him, and the seed of Christ was raised up in him! Yes, God used the church, just as He used the angel Gabriel to deliver the message to Mary that she would have a son and how this would come to be. But Gabriel had no part in bringing it to pass! God used the ministries of the church to confirm, establish, and send forth Paul and many others in their ministries in the early church, yet it was not *of man*, nor was it *by man*. “Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers...as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the **Holy Ghost said:** Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto **I** have called them. And when they had prayed and fasted and laid hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being **sent forth by the Holy Ghost**, departed” (Acts 13:1-3). Yes, God used men, but it was GOD who called them, it was GOD who made them apostles, and it was GOD who sent them! God does use men by the power of the Holy Ghost to impart truth to us, and minister many other wonderful things to us, but there is a difference between this and seeking by some kind of *spiritual union* with man to bring forth the manchild. The former is by the sovereign moving of God, the latter is by the instigation and manipulation of man!

In closing, Carl Schwing has shared this precious word of confirmation: “In the dawning of the past age, a virgin, without ‘knowing man’ conceived by the overshadowing of the Father’s Spirit. Three men followed a star and just a few shepherds heard the message and the song of redeeming grace. As the world continued on its merry way, the people of God argued over the coming of the Messiah...glorious and wonderful works of the Lord were transpiring...a new age was dawning, and the Holy Child was growing in great wisdom and obedience. Today, the people of the world are diligently searching for the ‘right men’ to govern their countries...*there are no right men.* The people of God are running to and fro looking for the ‘right men’ to feed their hungry souls...*there are no right men.* The many-membered Christ man is rising with life,

righteousness, and equality in His wings. The Father has given to him (them) the words of the life-giving gospel. It will be by the many-voiced Christ that the message of freedom and restoration will be proclaimed.”

[To be continued...](#)
EBY

J. PRESTON