

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 10

HE WHO IS, AND WAS, AND IS TO COME

John was exiled to the isle of Patmos. While on that island he had a marvelous experience with God! He wrote down the revelation that came to him in that experience. After his encounter with the resurrected, ascended, and glorified Christ on Patmos he was released from his island prison and carried this message back to the church. This wonderful message has been going forth to the church for two thousand years! Not only has it been going forth, but it has been working, accomplishing, fulfilling itself within a people gathered out of this age. This revelation is not an ancient history, nor is it something to take place in the future — it has been *happening* ever since the time that God gave it! The book is a *prophecy*, and this fact is stated again at the end of the book (Rev. 22:19). Prophecy for the church, the called out, is for *edification, exhortation, and comfort* (I Cor. 14:3).

Many people want to make the book of Revelation correspond to, and be parallel with, the book of Daniel. The book of Daniel, however, was an *Old Testament* prophecy. It was a book prophesying of literal, physical, outward, earthly events transpiring in the world of literal, physical, natural peoples and nations, the chief of which was God's own nation of Israel. Under the Old Covenant God's people was a natural people, with natural, physical, outward, earthly laws, rituals, ceremonies, customs, priesthood, temple, and government. They fought physical wars with material weapons against natural armies. Under the *New Testament*, however, God's people is a spiritual people, born from above, walking after the Spirit and living in the Spirit. The law of God is an internal law, written in the heart and inscribed upon the mind by the Spirit of the living God. The book of Revelation was not sent to God's natural people, Israel after the flesh. It was sent to God's spiritual people, His called out who are born from above, citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem!

The book of Revelation is, therefore, a spiritual book sent to a spiritual people, involving spiritual events and experiences in the spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ! The book of Daniel ended when Jesus Christ came into the world proclaiming the kingdom of God. It reached its final consummation at the end of Daniel's Seventieth Week, when the Lord turned from the natural Israel nation to build His spiritual house and temple made of living stones. Jesus brought a new order into the earth, the spiritual order of the kingdom of God! Therefore, the battles, upheavals, judgments, dealings, and everything else written in the book of Revelation are *spiritual*, for under the new order of the kingdom of God "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 exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:4-5).

GRACE AND PEACE FROM HIM...

John begins the salutation of his letter to the churches by saying, “John to the seven churches which are in Asia: *Grace* be unto you, and *peace*, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come” (Rev. 1:4). Of the many truths God has made known to His people none shine more brightly or more frequently from the pages of God’s Word than the truth that our salvation and calling, from start to finish, are totally and fully products of the *Grace of God*. This word grace is translated from the Greek word *charis* which not only means “unmerited favor,” but really carries the deeper meaning of “an influence that produces a result.” Thus, grace is not merely the kindness of God in doing something for us which we have not deserved, but it is the essence, the energy, the power and working wrought within as HE DOES for us, to us, in us, and through us! God’s grace, divine grace, then, is DIVINE ENABLEMENT!

In grace God does something more for us than just showing mercy or unmerited favor — He works by His mighty power within to do in and through us WHAT WE OURSELVES CANNOT DO! What a blessed truth this is, and how wonderfully it reveals the graciousness of God! Ah, yes, weak carnal men need mercy — but do you not see, my beloved, that men need something *more than mercy*. They need HELP! Mercy covers my weakness — but divine enablement overcomes it! Mercy forgives my sin — divine enablement conquers it and supersedes it with righteousness! Mercy overlooks my faults — divine enablement causes me to rise above them! Mercy means that God will do for me in spite of myself — divine enablement means that what He does changes me and makes me something more than I was!

Can we not see that when Paul said, “For I am the least of the apostles, that am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But **by the grace of God I am what I am**: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the **grace of God** which was with me” (I Cor. 15:9-10), he pointed us to the fact that his apostolic ministry was entirely the result of DIVINE ENABLEMENT! It wasn’t just “unmerited favor” that made Paul a great apostle, it was something more, it was a *mighty power* working within him, and that power was *grace*! To ever be anything in God Paul needed more than mercy — he needed *enablement, divine enablement*! I pray that the truth and force of these things may grip your heart! Have you ever wondered, in the light of your own apparent weakness, whether you could ever really, truly attain to the high calling of sonship? Let me tell you, my brother, my sister, not only has the Father saved you by His kindness, and called you by His own sovereign choosing, He now giveth *more grace*, more and more and more of His DIVINE ENABLEMENT to bring you unto His purpose! As we consider the tremendous challenges, battles, prunings, purgings, processings, victories, glories and spiritual heights of attainment outlined in the book of Revelation, how fitting that John should preface this great revelation with these words: “**Grace** be unto you!”

And then follows *peace*. To be filled with God’s peace, to be fully at peace with God, with ourselves and others, to have peace in every situation and circumstance of life, and with everything else in this world and throughout the unbounded heavens is the goal of sonship! You will never get through the experiences of the book of Revelation without peace! So John begins, “**Peace** be unto you!” That is what the kingdom of God is all about in our lives! If there is any one thing, within or without, that troubles us and denies us His peace, then the kingdom of God is not fully

established within us. The Lord is now establishing peace among His elect in Zion. He is now publishing peace and salvation in Zion, and is bringing good tidings of great things to us, by His Spirit. "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem...how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth *peace*; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" (Isa. 52:1,7).

In Hebrews 12:22 we read that we are now come unto mount Zion. To correctly unlock the great revelation and reality of this mount Zion we need to go back and look at the shadow. Israel was God's land, the whole nation of His people. In Israel there was the city of Jerusalem, the capital city, the seat of government comprising all the ruling class. Yet in Jerusalem there was only one who, with his household, dwelt on mount Zion. He was the king! Mount Zion is the highest mount in Jerusalem, and David the king established his throne there. His was the highest pinnacle of glory attainable. But that Zion was only a shadow of the true mount Zion to which we are come in the Spirit. David was king over natural Israel. Christ is king over spiritual Israel. David dwelt on the natural mount Zion. Therefore Christ dwells on the spiritual mount Zion. And this spiritual Zion is composed of those who in union with Christ the Head have reached the very highest pinnacle attainable in the heavenly Jerusalem, those who have followed the Lord all the way to His throne. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne" (Rev. 3:21).

In Revelation 14:1-5 we find a company of 144,000 standing with the Lamb upon mount Zion. By the grammatical structure of the Greek we are assured that not only is Jesus the Lamb, but the 144,000 are lambs! There are 144,000 *lambs* standing with *the Lamb* on mount Zion! This company standing with their Lord can represent nothing other than those who have followed the Lamb all the way from death on mount Calvary to the glory and exaltation of mount Zion! They are lambs, and if there is any characteristic that identifies a lamb, it is *peace*! That is the lamb nature! "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened He not His mouth" (Acts 8:32).

God has but one throne, and those who share that throne share it in the heights of the spiritual mount Zion! All who are dwelling in the high and holy realm of Zion, are hearing the voice of the Son of God! Good tidings of great things, of full salvation, of perfection of holiness and power, the reign of Christ, and the peace of the kingdom of God are now being declared in Zion. "For the Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation. This is my rest forever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it. There will I make the horn (kingship) of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed. His enemies will I clothe with shame: but upon Himself shall His crown flourish" (Ps. 132:13-14,17-18). When that word becomes life to us by the Spirit, the Lord then fills us with the joy, peace, holiness and power of mount Zion. Then those qualities, including His peace, shall flow out of us to fill, first, the city of God, then the whole land of God's own people, and finally the whole earth and all nations. Haggai prophesied, saying of the glory of the latter house, the spiritual temple of living stones, each stone a quickened, living son of God, "And in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts" (Hag. 2:9). When the peace of God has filled the house of the Lord, His peace shall then flow out of the house, bringing true and lasting peace to all the peoples and nations of the world!

The peace of God can only be ministered to the inhabitants of earth by the authority of Christ in the glory and power of His kingdom of sons and daughters. Another prophet prophesied, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, THY KING COMETH unto thee...and He shall speak peace unto the nations, and His dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth” (Zech. 9:9-10). Christ our King rules from the top down, from the height of His throne in the heavenlies down to the lowest valley and the deepest hell. Our King comes first to mount Zion, the sons of God; then to Jerusalem, the whole church, the bride of Christ; next to the land of Israel, that is, all the people of God on whatever spiritual level they may be; and finally to the rest of mankind in the ends of the earth. To all realms His word is *peace*! “Peace from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come...”

HE WHO IS, AND WAS, AND IS TO COME

“Grace be unto you, and peace, from *Him which is, and which was, and which is to come*” (Rev. 1:4).

In the realm of the Spirit the past, present, and future co-exist. It is high and lifted up in the throne realm that we are given the ability to see the past, the present, and the future all at once. Again and again in the book of Revelation, where our Lord is mentioned, He is spoken of as He who is, He who was, and He who is to come — meaning that when we leave the earth realm we transcend time as we know it. Planet earth is but a tiny speck in the eye of God’s infinite greatness. We live out our natural lives on a virtual reality machine called Earth. The five senses manipulate us into believing that what we see, hear, feel, taste, and touch are real — but what you see and touch and feel are not real, they are not objective, they are not abiding realities at all! They are merely a passing phenomenon. People often say, “I want something *solid*, I need to see the *facts*, I need something that’s real — I’m a *realist*!” In our journey from the natural to the spiritual realm we learn, however, that were it not for a power *beyond* the things we see, none of them would exist. “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things *not seen*. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which *are seen* were *not made of things which do appear*” (Heb. 11:1-3). That which we perceive as reality is temporary and passing and has been established out of something eternal that your eye cannot see! If we want to walk with God we must be willing to jump out of the boat of the five senses and learn how to let our spirit gravitate into what God is, and then bring it back down into this earth until it takes on manifestation.

“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty” (Rev. 1:8). That is awesome! You see, every time Jesus is mentioned in this book He is never mentioned in the past, or just the present, or in the future. Every time we meet Jesus in the book of Revelation it is the Jesus who *is*, and who *was*, and who *is to come*. The reason is that the book of Revelation gives us a view of the kingdom of God from the divine perspective — as God views it — and the past, the present, and the future encompass the outworking of God’s purpose in the earth through His wonderful **plan of the ages**. That is what is so powerful — in the Spirit you can see the whole plan of God from beginning to end! The purposes of God in the earth embrace *past history*, *present awareness*, and *future consummation*. Everything in the universe, and everything in your life, precious friend of mine, exists in the past, the present, and the future. Jesus was doing something

two thousand years ago, Jesus was doing something five hundred years ago, Jesus was doing something fifty years ago, Jesus was doing something yesterday, Jesus is doing something right now, and He will be working His great work in all of our tomorrows!

The Lord which is, and which was, and which is to come is God expressed in the dimension of time. This is not talking about the *eternal* Lord who is without beginning or end. Certainly God is the eternal One! But the verb “to be” relates to *time*. *Was*, *is*, and *is to come* are all time expressions. You will not find this Lord who is, and was, and is to come, in eternity! This is the God of *the ages* revealed in a unique Lordship within those ages. A concept we must immediately grasp in order to understand God’s plan of the ages is that *time is a created phenomenon* consisting of past, present, and future just as man is a created phenomenon having youth, middle age, and old age. No, you cannot smell, touch, or feel time, but it is there, ever-present, always marching into the future. Time was created; it had a beginning, it shall have an end. This Lord who is, and who was, and who is to come, is *the beginning and the end*. He is God working out His purpose and revelation in time. Time is only one thing among countless other things that are part of the entire created universe. It is as much a “species” of creation as, for example, rocks, elephants, trees, and water are species of creation. Before the creation of the universe, there was no time; at the end of the ages when the present material universe is dissolved and replaced by a new, spiritual universe, time as we know it shall cease to exist. It will be swallowed up into eternity just as all death will be swallowed up into victory, and there shall be no more death! No more *time* and no more *death*! Time was created in the beginning, and will be dissolved at the end of the ages. This Lord who is, and who was, and who is to come, is the Lord we meet in time, in His purpose of the ages!

I am compelled to state that the Bible says very little by way of a definition of eternity, because the Bible is essentially a book of time and for time. It was written for man who lives in a temporal state and who is not yet a totally eternal being. Only as we enter that *state of being* called eternity...only as HE who IS ETERNITY becomes “All-in-all” within us...only as we are spiritually metamorphosed into our eternal condition...only as eternity becomes an absolute reality to us...only then will formerly temporal beings such as we now are, truly comprehend and understand eternity and things of an eternal nature. This marvelous work has now begun within our spirit as *our spirit* has been quickened by *His Spirit*! I stated that the Bible is relatively silent about what eternity is; that is not to say that human teachings and theology haven’t taught us a great deal about eternity, but, alas! much of it over the past centuries has come from the carnal minds of Babylonish theologians and not from the mind of the Eternal One via the Holy Spirit.

Eternity is a state of absolute *timelessness*, not of *unending time*. Eternity is a *state of being* without change, fluctuation or progression, resident in the very nature and person of God in which such concepts as past, present, future, before, after, change, transition, growth, birth, death, beginning, end, etc., do not exist. Do you see? Time is not part of eternity. Eternity is not composed of segments of time. Eternity is not time standing still. It is simply not time at all! Eternity doesn’t go on and on and on, *ad infinitum*. Eternity doesn’t go anywhere, nor does it do anything. Eternity simply IS. It is just a glorious experience of BEING! Eternity simply IS, just as God simply IS. Jesus said, “Before Abraham was, I AM” (Jn. 5:58) — not “Before Abraham was, I WAS.” There are no past or future tenses in eternity. There is only one eternal NOW!

Now the eternal God has injected Himself into time. “In the *beginning* God created...” Since that wonderful dawn God has been the God of His creation, the God of heaven and earth, the God of the ages, the God of history, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of His people, the God of our salvation. The great revelation of the scriptures is that this universe and this world is governed by a throne, and that throne is not in London, it’s not in Rome, it’s not in Washington — it’s in heaven, the eternal dimension. Time is being governed by eternity! Ultimate reality sits upon a throne and governs galaxies, solar systems, planets, creatures, time, and history. Generation after generation, through the rise and fall of empires, and the shifting sands of history, God remains. He works all His purposes in all things, but HE changes not! Yet — God in Christ became a man! God as man has tenses to His being: the yesterday of the past, the today of the present, the tomorrow of the future. This is not the *eternal* God, but the God who has dispensed His eternity into time. “Jesus Christ the same — *yesterday, today, and for the ages*” (Heb. 13:8, literal). “And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not *day and night*, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which *was*, and *is*, and *is to come*” (Rev. 4:8). Day and night do not exist in eternity nor in the heavenly realm of God’s Spirit! Is it not clear that this scene is not set in some far-off heaven somewhere. In the heaven the preachers preach about there *is no day and night*! There is no sun or moon or stars, and there is *no night* there! This scene is set in *time*! HE is praised and extolled both DAY AND NIGHT, this God who WAS, and IS, and IS TO COME! HE is worshipped and adored both DAY AND NIGHT, this God of the ages, this Architect of history, this Lord of time, this King of the universe, this Most High who “liveth for the ages, whose dominion is an age during dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation: and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?” (Dan. 4:34-35, Literal & KJV).

Oh, take me not back through the long ages to a Christ that walked the shores of Galilee, to a Christ that *was*! He *is*! He lives! He is here! In my *today*! I can never be alone, never grope in the dark for a hand, never be forsaken, never lack in the hour of need, never fail in His on-going purposes, never need a Saviour, a Guide, a Brother, a Head, a Leader, a Captain, a Father. I have Him, He who was everything in the yesterday of the past, and who will be everything in the tomorrow of the future, is mine today; and in each conscious moment of my existence here, and throughout all the ages, He is my life, my all! He is not a far-off, untouchable God, “inhabiting eternity,” as the King James Bible erroneously states, but a God made nigh, INHABITING THE AGES, involved in His creation, working tirelessly and unceasingly and unfailingly until His wonderful plan is brought to a successful conclusion and HE becomes gloriously ALL IN ALL!

The life we now have is a progressing, growing, conquering life — the **life of the ages**. It is life that has come through the quickening of our spirit by His Spirit, giving a new beginning, and the potential to become, in due time, all He is. I am sure my readers, with myself, must confess that there is some progress still to be made, growth still to be experienced, transformation yet to be wrought before we stand in Him in the fullness of that life that needs no change, no further development, no additional experience, no fuller stature, no added triumph, no increase of wisdom, knowledge, or power — that state of being as unchangeable as He is unchangeable, *eternal as He is eternal*! Only faintly now do our eyes behold the splendor of that *eternal realm* which lies before us, but as we approach reverently and with godly fear, not disrespectfully and thoughtlessly

as nosy children prying into some sacred thing, the Lord of glory is meeting us and is becoming a Father unto us and we are the sons of God in whom the Father shall unfold the fullness of His life, mind, will, and glory. Thus are we coming into *that same image* and we shall share with Christ the glory He had with the Father **before time was — ETERNAL GLORY!**

What Christians for centuries have called “eternal life” is in the Greek “life *aionios*” — the life of the ages! How I thank God that my present state of being is *not eternal*! There is *more*! The new man in me is changing, growing, increasing, maturing unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ! Some entertain the notion that once they have received Christ within them they have the whole Christ in all His fullness and that’s all there is. But in the scriptures there is the *growth* and the *formation* of Christ in us, and the *increase* of God! To those in whom the Christ life is but a *babe* within them, Peter writes, “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may *grow* thereby” (I Pet. 2:2). To those pressing on to maturity Paul wrote, “But speaking the truth in love, may *grow up* into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ” (Eph. 4:15). Some would rather ignore this growing, changing, increasing *life of the ages*, somehow projecting themselves into that life which is eternal, claiming “by faith” the finished product, while by-passing the tedious processing that develops and matures that life. Ah, dear ones, it doesn’t work that way! Christ is being *formed in us* and it will take “the ages,” my friend, to unfold it all. As long as there is need for growth, change, and advancement, there is need for time. Until redemption is complete its work will proceed in time, but the finished work of redemption stands at time’s end. Thank God! There is an **end** — then eternity, God all-in-all! “I am the *beginning* and the *ending*, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come.”

As God’s plan of the ages has progressed there has been a level of life, a spiritual vitality, for each age. Each age has been different. Men in antediluvian times knew God in a certain way and received life of a particular order. Israel, under the law, and the ministry of the prophets, entered into another degree of spiritual life. Perhaps I can give you a simple illustration in this way. There is a difference between “fetus” life, “baby” life, “child” life, “adolescent” life, and “mature” life. There is a difference between “youthful” life, “middle age” life, and “old age” life. Can we not see by this that there is a continuing development of *God’s life within us*, until HIS FULLNESS is attained, and there shall be a continuing development of His life in the whole human family throughout the age and the ages to come until God becomes all-in-all!

God is cultivating within His sons an *eternal nature*! The thoughts of God’s people are becoming boundless and eternal, no longer controlled and motivated purely by carnal memories of the past, by present events, or by dim hopes for an endless future in “mansions over the hilltop.” The fledgling spirits of God’s sons are fast growing up into the limitless expanses of God’s own changeless, eternal spiritual state of being. Yes, the whole man is becoming a new, eternal creation, no longer limited by the space-time-continuum. Even our present vile bodies shall be *changed*, fashioned like unto His body of glory! God’s maturing sons see the reality of a state of being called eternity, and their hearts strain and leap upward toward that “plane” in God!

Now let us consider for a moment the Lord which IS. Who is this Lord which IS? In what way does He differ from the Lord which *was*, or the Lord which *is to come*? Someone says, “There is no difference — it is all the same Lord!” Ah, yes, it is the same Lord, but there is a *difference* in His *administration* and *manifestation*! As startling as it may seem, this Lord

which *is* — is YOU! If He is not *you*, who are you? The Lord which *is*, is the same Lord which *was*, but with a difference. Let us look at the Lord who *was*! “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God **was** manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (I Tim. 3:16). Let us look closely at what Paul is saying! Great is the mystery of godliness or God-like-ness. God was...God*was*...God **was**...MANIFESTED IN THE FLESH! Who is it that *was* God manifested in the flesh? Why, Jesus, of course! This is the great *mystery of God-like-ness*! Was Jesus like God? “If you have seen me, you have seen the Father.” Why was Jesus like God? Because He *was* God! “In the beginning *was* the Word, and the Word *was* with God, and the Word *was* God” (Jn. 1:1). Who is the God that *was*? You couldn’t answer it any better than that if you tried! And scripture could be piled upon scripture to show that God manifested in the flesh of Jesus is the Lord *which was*! “God *was* in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.” Great is the mystery of God-like-ness...Jesus *was* God manifested in the flesh! Hallelujah!

The Lord which *was* is also the Lord which *is*! The present tense of God’s manifestation in Christ is expressed by the apostle Paul when he said, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ *liveth in me*” (Gal. 2:20). Jesus Himself prophesied of this manifestation of God in His people, saying, “If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and *make our abode with (in) him*” (Jn. 14:23). “God is in you.” “God dwelleth in you.” When we think of God manifested in the flesh we think of the man walking by the shores of blue Galilee, walking among humanity, in His humanity, demonstrating what humanity was intended to be. But God has raised our vision beyond **He who was** and is causing us to see **Him who is**! “Now *ye are* the body of Christ.” Christ is no longer walking in that body that tread the sands of Galilee! He is walking in another body today, in your body, in my body, in all those sons whom He is bringing to His glory! In the realm of **Him who is** we find a glory beyond the **was** which enables us to press into and participate in the **is**. While many still look for the coming of the **was** in the clouds, we have now experienced the One who **IS COMING TO BE GLORIFIED IN HIS SAINTS**!

Would God that Christians could be awakened to the glory of Him who is! The same John who in spirit beheld the glory of the many-membered Son of man on Patmos, penned these significant words to the children of God: “Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? *He is antichrist*, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also” (I Jn. 2:22-23). Now what does John mean when he speaks of denying the Father and the Son? Let us make no mistake about this! A little further on John enlarges on this statement so that we need not be left in the dark. “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. *Hereby know ye the Spirit of God*: EVERY SPIRIT THAT CONFESSETH THAT JESUS CHRIST **IS COME** IN THE FLESH IS OF GOD: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ **is come** in the flesh is not of God: and *this is that spirit of antichrist*, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and now already is in the world” (I Jn. 4:1-3).

Now let us get these statements clear in our minds! We have heard many wild speculations about who the antichrist will be, but John declares the antichrist to be one who denies that Jesus is the Christ, which is denying the Father and the Son. But how does he do this? BY NOT

CONFESSING JESUS CHRIST HAVING COME IN THE FLESH! But what does this mean? It states that we know the Spirit of God by His confessing Jesus Christ having come in the flesh. Does this mean that Roman Catholicism is the Spirit of God? It confesses that Jesus Christ was a man, born of a virgin. It confesses that He *came* in the flesh as a babe in Bethlehem. They even parade Him before the world hanging upon a cross, crucified. Millions of others around the world, representing every kind of religion and false cult existing admit the same historical facts. Do all of these represent the Spirit of God?

These verses have a deeper meaning! They are not speaking of the fact of Jesus Christ having lived on earth as a man. Almost anyone will admit that! But the profound truth which all of popular religion has missed, is the fact of the Christ actually coming into this flesh, *my flesh*, *your flesh*, and becoming an eternal and inseparable part of us! Millions confess **Him who was**, but very few in this dark age confess **Him who is**! “And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ IS (NOW) COME in the flesh is not of God: and *this* is that spirit of antichrist...ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them (the antichrists): because GREATER IS HE THAT I-S IN YOU (your flesh), THAN HE THAT I-S IN THE WORLD” (I Jn. 4:3-4). Every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ **IS** come in *your flesh* and in *my flesh*, beloved, — is antichrist! Why? Because **Greater is He (Jesus Christ) that IS IN YOUR FLESH than he (the spirit of antichrist) that IS IN THE ADAMIC FLESH OF THE WORLD!** Our very own natural, human consciousness would deny that the Almighty God of the universe dwells, and lives, and in all things triumphs in us! So don’t worry about poor old Mussolini or Henry Kissinger being the antichrist — truly he is enthroned in our own carnal minds!

He that is in you will never leave you nor forsake you! This is the Christ from whose love no power nor creature in heaven or earth can separate us! Paul preached not himself, but Christ Jesus the Lord. After stating this himself, he follows on to say, “But this treasure (Christ) *we have in earthen vessels*” (II Cor. 4:7). Christ is now being *formed* in our earthen vessels! Just as God was formed in Jesus within the womb of Mary, so is Christ being formed in the womb of our mortal flesh! Only the complete, mature formation of Christ within us will bring us to manifestation as sons of God. Sonship is the actual quickening of the Christ life who has become the new man within. *Great* is the mystery of God-like-ness! Christ in us is both ageless and deathless, the actual Son of the God of heaven. He is being formed in all His nature, wisdom, glory and power in this human frame, even as He was formed in the firstborn Son, Jesus, to perform His mighty works.

By personal application, if my spirit does not confess that Christ is come in my flesh, I am antichrist. The confession of my *spirit* is a much stronger confession than might be made by my mouth. With *themouth* confession is made unto *salvation*, but with the *spirit* confession is made unto *sonship*. The confession of one’s *spirit* bespeaks an expression arising from an **inner state of being**, not merely a belief of the mind. If my *spirit* is confessing that Christ is come in my flesh, it is confessing it by a **living manifestation!** As I live out Christ in the nitty-gritty of every day experience, in every situation and circumstance, doing all the will of my heavenly Father upon this earth, I am confessing with my spirit that Christ is come in my flesh! Ah, I might say with my mouth that Christ is come in my flesh, that I am a son of God, ready to walk on water and glow in the dark, but my spirit speak just the opposite, as the fountain of my life sends forth polluted

waters. Multitudes have a mouth confession of the presence of Christ within whose “*spirit confesseth not that Christ is come*” in their flesh!

Oh, that men might believe it! Truly, Christ in us is our only hope of glory! HE IS the glory! But antichrist will hear of no such hope of glory. His hope does not rest wholly in the Christ within, but in his own ability and works, his own faithfulness or endurance. He is cluttered about with laws, regulations, creeds, ordinances, observances, rituals, ceremonies, programs, traditions, and religious exercises of this order and that, all of which are designed to assure his right standing with God. He is thus denying the Father and the Son, for the *living Christ alone* is not his life! Anything that *adds something* to the Christ life within, to fill some place or function in our lives that is not filled by THE LIFE OF CHRIST ALONE, — **is antichrist!** The word “antichrist” is made up of the Greek preposition *anti* and the word for Christ. *Anti* bears the meaning of that which is “opposed to” by “supplanting” or being “instead of.” During the Middle Ages, a man who was considered a hostile, self-substituted, usurping Pope — one occupying the Pope’s place and receiving his honors and exercising his functions — was called an “antipope.” This term is commonly used in history in this connection. Such a “Pope” was not merely a person who was *against* the Pope. Martin Luther was *against* the Pope, but he was not an antipope because he never went to Rome and usurped the Pope’s seat, making himself the Pope! An antipope was a person who was against the Pope by attempting to take the Pope’s place. This happened on occasion in previous centuries. In like manner, the antichrist is that spirit, mind, nature, personality, consciousness, activity, enterprise, work, function, method, program or any other thing that comes TO TAKE THE PLACE OF CHRIST in our lives — and *by so doing* opposes Christ!

Therefore we find that most of the candidates for antichrist promoted by the preachers haven’t even come close to *being* antichrists! Antichrist signifies one who sets himself up in the place of Christ, by appropriating some of the prerogatives and attributes of Christ. That is, antichrist appears **as** Christ and by so doing is actually **against** Christ — *usurping the place that rightly belongs to Christ alone!* Anything that is placed *instead of* Christ, is literally antichrist. The very moment the love of God, the truth of God, the glory of God, and the power of God wanes from the spirits of the Lord’s people, flying out the windows of their souls, a whole host of attitudes, ideas, beliefs, doctrines, rules, regulations, rituals, ceremonies, sacraments, ordinances, forms, methods, organization, and traditions stalk boldly through the door to *take the place of reality and life in the Spirit*. Any little form of *substitution* that supplants the ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF THE INDWELLING CHRIST LIFE — is **ANTICHRIST!**

Those who have truly received the call to sonship have now learned, and learned well, that there is no need for these or myriad other religious trappings in the walk of sonship, for CHRIST WITHIN abundantly supplies everything they can possibly ever need! In order for Christ to be “all in all” He must first become ALL! God was in Christ, and God in Christ is in us! From the moment that the Father declared Christ’s sonship the spirit of sonship moved in and through Him and His whole life became the revelation of His Father. The nature, mind, will and power of His Father manifested through Him, and it was the same power of the Father in Him that raised Him from the dead! And now a vast family of His “many brethren” have received that same spirit of sonship, even the same spirit that raised Christ from the dead dwells within us and shall also quicken *our mortal bodies* by that spirit that *dwells in us!*

Beloved, if **He that was** is now **He that is** within you, what, under all God's heavens, could be added to you *from without*? Let us bow in holy reverence to worship and adore, and to live and walk in the blessed reality of such an high and holy calling! Stop seeking anything at all from or through the myriad *substitutes* pawned by the countless modern day antichrists of the church systems of man. These external religious observances will not suffice for those destined for the throne! CHRIST HIMSELF IS SUFFICIENT! In the name of Jesus Christ, divorce yourself completely and forever from all the substitutes, the realm of the **instead of**. You will find absolutely nothing in any of it that will satisfy the deepest cravings of your heart after God. CHRIST WITHIN IS ALL YOU NEED! This is the Lord who *was* Jesus of Nazareth, but who now *is* the many sons of God in the earth! God is bringing many sons to glory and we are being conformed to the image of God's firstborn Son. The eternal God never changes, but this Lord who was, and is, and is to come does change from glory to glory!

The reality of Christ in us is not a beautiful analogy nor a clever facsimile — it is truly HIM! Bennie Skinner once gave the following illustration. “When they crank up that mint in Washington D.C. with the special engraving machine, and start printing twenty dollar bills on that special paper with the special ink, they then cut them into singles, bundle them together, and put a band around them. You wouldn't take a bundle of these, hold them up, and say, ‘Why, that *looks like* twenty dollar bills!’ No, you wouldn't say that because you can see, you *know*, that they *are* twenty dollar bills!” In like manner, no one will need to say of the sons of God, “These sons *look like* Jesus Christ,” for all shall surely see and know that the Lord who **was IS THE LORD WHICH IS!**

What, then, does it mean when it says, “...and the Lord which *is to come*”? The expression “which is to come” is from the Greek *erchomai*, meaning “the coming one.” Now, how is the Lord which was, and the Lord which is, also the coming One? What does it mean? It means that in our consciousness, in our experience, He is yet coming to be all that He is! That's what the processing is all about! “And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven...when He *shall come* to be *glorified in His saints*, and to be *admired in* all them that believe in that Day” (II Thes. 1:7,10). In the New Testament it was a great revelation that Christ was a many-membered body and that Christ was in them in mighty spirit power. This great truth became a glorious reality as each member of the Christ body found his or her place within that corporate expression of the Lord. But they also spoke of the coming Day of Christ and the coming and revelation of the Lord in a surpassing glory. They anticipated a full-orbed manifestation of this Lord in the glory of *manifested sonship*. “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which *shall be* revealed in us. For the earnest expectation *waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God*” (Rom. 8:18-19).

Jesus Christ is coming again, and He is coming to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all those holy sons of God who by His grace have come into His image through the ages. This is the fullness of the Christ! Not for the world nor all that is in it would I for one moment miss the glory which is yet to come! To reign with Christ and with Him usher all creation into the glory of God, which has been the vision of the prophets, the dream of the sages, the cry of the sons, the unrelenting purpose of God, and the longing and expectation of *all creation* is a prize of far vaster worth than all the power and glory and wealth of all the nations of earth combined. Though God's Christ is one, it will take the ages to come to reveal His manifold

beauties and graces. He is the one Christ, yet His body is made up of many redeemed souls. He is the true Vine, yet there are many branches. He is the uniquely begotten Son of God, yet He is leading many sons to His own glory. He is the only Saviour, yet He is bringing a whole company of saviours up on mount Zion.

I bring you good news! YOU ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST — not the “mystical body” as the theologians of Babylon are wont to define it, but you are **THE BODY** of Christ, making you the Lord which is to come! Christ is *in you* of a truth, precious one, to manifest the fullness of Himself. Christ *is your life*. Christ is being formed in you, and you are being conformed to His image. In looking at a piece of petrified wood we can see this. One time it was wood, NOW IT IS ROCK. For something has happened to it! Certain minerals entered into every cell of that piece of wood and wrought a complete change in it. This process continued until that piece of wood had become rock. Same shape, same size, and it has exactly the same cell structure. But what a great change has taken place! THIS IS WHAT GOD IS DOING IN US! Something is happening to us! We do not understand all about it, but we know that there is a change going on in our innermost beings. It is God permeating us with Himself! God is impregnating us with Himself! God is taking over, filling even our very cells with all He is. This change is taking place in our inner selves, in our spirits, in our minds, and ultimately in our bodies. This process shall continue until we arrive at the condition of being saturated with God. God shall so fill us, so overwhelm us, so change us that we take on the very characteristics of God!

I think the highest privilege that scripture puts before us is surely that Christ will be *glorified in us* — that He will be *admired in us*. Think of it, my brethren, so completely has the image of the earthly passed away — so completely is the image of the heavenly gained that CHRIST is seen, CHRIST is admired in us! It is not the believer that is admired, glorified though he be. It is Christ who is admired in him! All that the saints are radiates HIS glory. It is in HIS beauty they are arrayed — in HIS glory they shine. The image they bear is HIS — HIS blood has bought them, HIS spirit has transformed them, HIS hand has formed them. They shine as the sun in that heavenly glory, but only as HIS light, and for HIS praise. This is not the hour for any self-exaltation, nor for the promotion of “my ministry,” nor for the building of “my kingdom,” for it is HE who is coming to be GLORIFIED IN US! Many think that the call to sonship is for their glorification — but it is not so. Little wonder that He is purging, pruning, breaking, sifting, melting, bringing us to such absolute nothingness, so that the only one left to be revealed is THE CHRIST. It is Christ glorified in us who is HE WHICH IS TO COME!

God will not allow us to refuse to see the Christ in each other and then look upon Him in some other form. Look not for the Christ who *was*, and do not cling to the Christ who *is*, yet know of a surety that Christ in us is HIM all the way! We will have to recognize Him in our brethren. God will not satisfy our carnal nature by allowing us to see Jesus descending from heaven in clouds of glory, alone in that glory. We shall be *glorified together*, the scripture says. Why would I look for Jesus in clouds of glory while I pass by His body on earth and refuse to *see Him in them*! It is this message that is coming to us today! If I want to see Christ I look at you, because that is where He is forming Himself, manifesting Himself, and glorifying Himself! The body of Christ is not something apart from Christ, not just something that Christ has formed as a separate entity. The body of Christ IS CHRIST in the earth! Until I *see, recognize, love* and *honor* Christ in you, my brother, my sister, I would not see, recognize, love or honor one I

would see riding upon a cloud! When this precious knowledge becomes sweet to our soul, we begin to look at one another and BEHOLD HIM! I now see **Him who is** and I shall look, and look, and look until in His temple which we are I see **Him who is to come!**