

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 9

BLESSED ARE THEY THAT HEAR

"Blessed — happy — to be envied — are they that *hear* the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand" (Rev. 1:3). These opening words of the Revelation, following the salutation of the writer, set forth the clear objective of the book. What words are these! What spirit do they breathe — fear and anxiety, doubt and uncertainty, patient resignation, or understanding, hope and confidence? One might expect an exhortation such as this: "Beloved brethren, the end is at hand! Darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people. Judgment and destruction await the world. The beast government is rising up in the earth and the antichrist is at hand. The dragon stalks across the earth's valleys and over the mountains. Resign yourselves to the inevitable! Defeat and martyrdom await us. We may have to flee to wilderness areas and hide ourselves from the fury of the dragon. The will of the Lord be done. Wherefore comfort one another with these words!" But when we turn to the book of Revelation, we find nothing of the kind! It is not a call to resignation or escape — it is a proclamation of victory! Its tone is joyful! Its prayer is thanksgiving! Its song is heavenly! Its spirit is praise and worship! Its cry is Hallelujah!

The book of Revelation is a prophecy. Prophecy is a Voice — in this case, the voice of God's Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ is three things — Prophet, Priest and King. Prophets *speaking*, priests *reconcile*, and kings *rule*. Prophecy is the word of God — not merely a *foretelling*, but a *forth-telling*. The book of Revelation is undoubtedly the hardest book in the New Testament to understand. However, I also believe that once you grasp by the spirit of wisdom and revelation what it's talking about, it is the most thrilling book of all! Even though the book is puzzling to the natural man and bewildering to the carnal mind, yet the apostle John wrote with blessed assurance to the inChristed these words of divine surety, "*Blessed — happy — to be envied — is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand!*" (Rev. 1:3).

That is one of the most amazing things about this wonderful book — it is the only book in the Bible that promises a unique *blessing* or *happiness* to all those who read it, to all who truly *hear* what it is saying, and to those who *keep* or have fulfilled *within themselves* the things that the book has to say. There are many other books of the scriptures that are easier to understand, but they don't contain that beautiful *promise*! This book promises you, before you begin, that if you *read, hear, and keep* the things written therein **YOU WILL BE BLESSED!** Immediately that gives me a clue to what this book is about. Obviously the book is written to a people who will "keep" its sayings, who will have *fulfilled within themselves* its message, who will be enabled to *experience* in their very own lives the things it proclaims! How else could those who read and hear be said to "keep" all the things that are written in the book? If the panorama of events that unfold within these pages are merely *external* events, *historical* events,

or future literal *world* events, then how can those who read "keep" or "fulfill within themselves" all those things?

It should be clear even to a child that the events of the Revelation happen *within God's people*! Some people's interpretation of Revelation says that the church disappears from the earth at the beginning of chapter four, and that after the church is out of the way — raptured — the rest of the book happens to the world of unbelievers left on the earth. If that be the case, then I'm not interested! I'm not concerned with events that transpire on earth when I'm gone, after I'm out of here forever! The knowledge of those things would be of no benefit to me, nor would they serve any purpose. I wouldn't even be here to find out if it was a true prophecy! Therefore, the message of the book of Revelation cannot be limited to events at the end of the age, nor can it concern events that are to transpire after the saints have flown away to that bright glory world above. It cannot have to do with events in the outer world with its masses of unregenerated humanity. It can only concern a special class of saints who are able to *read* what it says, *hear* with the spiritual ear, and become glad *partakers* of those blessed realities it proclaims! This book is speaking to *me* if only I can *hear* what it says!

Now honestly, if this book is primarily about an age that hasn't yet dawned, do you think that the poor persecuted believers in Asia in John's day (A.D. 90) would be the least bit interested in it? Come with me to the churches in that long ago. We come into their midst as ambassadors of the apostle John who has been banished to the desolate slopes of the isle of Patmos, and we are going to share with them the message of this fantastic Book, which promises them a blessing in the midst of their trials and pain. When you get there where all the persecuted people are meeting together, and who will lose their lives, and you with them, if you are caught meeting together, and you get out a long chart and begin to lecture about the antichrist and his covenant with the Jews in Israel in the last days — do you think that is going to be a *blessing* to those dear saints? Are they going to somehow be able in some mystical way to "keep" or have *fulfilled within themselves* the things you are telling them about? NO WAY! You see, my beloved, when I come to this book the first key to understanding it is the great truth that it is addressed to **me**. And it is addressed to **you**! It is not a book to be just read and heard, but a book to be EXPERIENCED! Its reality is being fulfilled in those elect saints who are the *bondslaves* of Jesus Christ, who are becoming *overcomers*, who are being made *kings and priests* unto God, and who *read, hear, and keep* the things written in the book! These are also the *sons of God*!

It is instructive to note that the word "keep" means "to guard or tend," as Adam was commanded to dress the garden of Eden and to "keep" it. When the Lord declares in various places throughout the scriptures that His people are His *vineyard* and His *garden*, we should understand that His purposes are the same now as they were in the beginning when He placed man in the garden of Eden *to dress it and to keep it*. The Garden of God always represents the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. The thought is not only of the Lord's great Garden; but the life of every child of God is a garden within God's Garden! In the beginning Adam failed to dress and keep the garden of his own soul, and what a pitiful thing it is to see that men through the long millenniums since that day have also wretchedly failed and the world has endured a long night of sorrow and pain. The Shulamite, in the Song of Solomon, at the outset of her relationship with the King confessed her own neglect, saying, "They made me keeper of the vineyards; but *my own vineyard have I not kept*" (S. of S. 1:6). Though the Lord may let us tend a portion of His

great Vineyard, though He may let us minister to other souls in different ways, there is a part of the Vineyard of the Lord which He actually gives to each one of us; and that is the vineyards of our own lives.

He would have us care for and guard our hearts above all that we treasure and protect, for out of them are the issues of life. It is this hidden place of our innermost being that must be watched and tended more than all that appears on the outside! Those who are following on to know the Lord in this new kingdom Day are learning to guard and protect the roots and hidden fibers of our beings, our thoughts, our impulses, our desires. Adam was a son of God (Lk. 3:38) and was placed in the garden of Eden to dress and to keep it. Can we not see by this that all who would be sons of God must put away everything that is not of God that is hidden and unseen, as zealously as we put away the defects that appear on the outside, which humble us when they are seen by others?

My brethren, if we cannot tend the gardens of our own souls and lives, we must not think the Lord will entrust us with greater gardens! How can a man rule over other men's souls, how can he judge angels, how can he rule the nations with a rod of iron, how can he exercise dominion over the vastnesses of the universe, yea, how can he rule over ALL THINGS as God hath spoken — if he cannot rule his own spirit? "He that ruleth his own spirit is better than he that taketh a city," said the wise man. There are literally thousands of men and women running about over the face of the earth doing what they call *the work of the Lord*, but it is distressing to see that the vast majority of them were never called nor commissioned by the Lord of the Vineyard in the first place. They are busy doing a great many things *for* God, but they are not *becoming overcomers* that they might truly reign! **I am convinced that the first work of the Lord's Vineyard, which He entrusts to us and calls us to do, is to care for our own spiritual lives and to first partake of the fruit.** We will understand the Father's priorities when we see that Jesus gave *no promise* to any of the seven churches of Asia — but He made great and glorious promises of life and glory and power to *him that overcometh*!

The blessed age of God's kingdom over the nations which is now dawning shall be governed by those saints who have become overcomers, who have sanctified the Lord God in their hearts, who have put away all carnality, foolishness, and evil, who have put on the mind of Christ, having the Father's name written in their foreheads, who have arrived at maturity of sonship, who have come to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Not those who tend the Father's Vineyard negligently, shall be in this company; not those who pamper their flesh and let it overrun their lives, shall be in this company; not those who examine their vineyards only now and then shall appear with the Lamb on the holy mount Zion; it is those who dwell in their gardens and tend them day and night, those who ever keep them before their eyes, that shall be well-pleasing to the Owner of the Vineyard and shall be given dominion over all things. You can count on it!

As I mentioned earlier, the gardens and vineyards of the scriptures are synonymous, meaning THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN ON EARTH. That is the meaning of the garden of Eden! In this very hour the hand of God is planting the plants He chose in Christ before the foundation of the world, each a tree of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that *He might be glorified* (Isa. 61:3). Consider now how great are the words of the prophet: "And the Lord shall guide thee

continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and thou shalt be like **a watered garden**...for the Lord shall comfort Zion...and He shall make her wilderness like **Eden**, and her desert like the **garden of the Lord**; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody" (Isa. 58:11; 51:3).

Ah, yes, the whole earth has been sown with men of various kinds, but in the blessed revelation of the book of Genesis we see that "the LORD GOD PLANTED A GARDEN eastward in Eden" and this Garden bespeaks a special and most favored "planting" of the Lord — the *sons of the kingdom*! The soil of this blest Garden of God is neither uncultivated, stony, nor thorny, for it has come under the hand of the Husbandman, being dealt with that life may spring forth abundantly. Thus the prophet by inspiration wrote, "Doth the plowman plow all day to sow? doth he open and break the clods of his ground? When he hath made smooth the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the seed...this cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working" (Isa. 28:24-25,29).

Truly this explains much of the processing through which God's elect has been passing, for the Lord purposes to bring forth a crop, full fruitage, even to an hundredfold, therefore there have been these tremendous crushing experiences which have broken up the hard clods of our pre-conceived ideas and opinion, the rocks of our stubborn self-will, and the inbedded roots of our own fleshly desires and ways, and the carnal traditions of religion which resisted the inworking of truth. Deeper and deeper have dug the plowshares of the Spirit, breaking up the fallow ground, grinding, smashing, tearing, loosening, breaking up the self-life until all is subdued before Him, until nothing remains but the fine soil for the seed to grow in. The plowman has not been plowing in us all this time just for the sake of plowing, but the preparation is that there might be the sowing of HIS LIFE, that there might be brought forth a harvest of the same kind. That's what the Garden of God is all about! The Christ-life is being sown, and this means the growing up of a *whole new species*, a new creation which shall ultimately come forth in the image and likeness of God, to the praise of His glory. Many of the Lord's precious apprehended ones have wondered why we were plowed so deeply, why God allows us to be broken up to the deepest recesses of our beings, until every way within us has been tried, but it is that HIS LIFE MIGHT FASTEN ITS ROOTS DEEP WITHIN US, so that from deep within, from our very nature, would spring forth the fruitage of Himself.

In order that we may be able to "keep" the words of this prophecy, to guard and tend and have fulfilled within us all that it teaches, we have first been enabled to "hear" what it says! I am reminded of the story of two old Dutchmen, sitting on a park bench. The night had come and the moon started to shine. Not far from the bench where they sat, a river flowed, and from the river came the chorus of the crickets. Pete, the first old gentleman, listened to the crickets and said, "Crickets sure do sing." John, sitting next to him agreed, saying, "Yep, they sure know how to sing." Just then he heard the voices of the choir coming from the nearby church and remarked, "Beautiful music, isn't it?" Pete said, "Yeah, and to think they do it just by rubbing their legs together!"

Each heard a different music — one was listening to the crickets and one was listening to the choir. What you hear depends on where you're coming from and what you're tuned in to. When the disciples asked Jesus why He spoke to the multitudes in parables, He answered by saying,

"This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand." He then reminded them of Isaiah's prophecy wherein he said, "You shall indeed hear, but never understand, and you shall indeed see but never perceive." It almost seems that Jesus was acting vindictively, but He was not, for He also explains why those who saw Him failed to understand. "For this nation's *heart* has grown gross — fat and dull; and their ears heavy and difficult of hearing, and their eyes *they* have tightly closed, lest they see and perceive with their eyes, and hear and comprehend the sense with their ears, and grasp and understand with their heart, and turn and I should heal them" (Mat. 13:15, Amplified). Had they *wanted* to hear, they could have, but they chose not to see or understand. Eight times in the book of Revelation the Lord Jesus says, "He that hath an ear, *let him hear!*"

In our day Bibles can be bought at Wal-Mart and almost any department store, and sermons can be heard any hour of the day or night, but practically no one, the preachers in particular, is *hearing* the word of God! Multitudes read the words of the Bible and do not *hear* them! Intellect may grasp what is written there...but that is not a *hearing*. Hearing the word of God will work transformation in a man! A true hearing of the word will reveal the Father's heart and uncover His ways and give understanding of His purposes. Hearing the word by the Spirit will bring obedience to the word — the obedience of faith — and things will begin to happen! Taken by the Spirit to the valley of dry bones, Ezekiel was asked, "Son of man, can these bones live?" "O Lord God," was the prophet's response, "Thou knowest." He was then told to prophesy to them: "O dry bones, **HEAR THE WORD OF THE LORD!**" The prophet obeyed, and as he declared to them the word of the Lord, they came together, bone to its bone. Covered first with sinews, then with flesh, these lifeless bodies were also quickened by the breath of divine life which entered into them (Eze. 37:1-10). The quickening of the dry bones was effected by their response to the Lord's word! As they **kept hearing** what He was saying to them, the Holy Spirit kept working within them until they were made alive by His breath and stood up, an exceeding great army. In like manner, as we *keep hearing* and *keep responding* to the kingdom word the Spirit is speaking today, the army of the Lord shall stand up in the earth to bring deliverance to all creation! Oh, ye sons of God — **HEAR THE WORD OF THE LORD!**

Shortly after becoming king in Israel, Solomon traveled to Gibeon to offer a sacrifice to the Lord. Here the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Ask what I shall give you." Though grateful to the Lord for having chosen him to succeed his father David, Solomon was keenly aware of his inadequacy to govern the people without divine help. "Give Thy servant therefore," he implored, "an *understanding heart* to govern Thy people, that I may discern between good and evil." Pleased by such a request, the Lord replied, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for long life, or for riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to recognize what is just and right, behold...I have also given you what you have not asked, both riches and honor; so that there shall not be any among the kings equal to you all your days" (I Kings 3:11-13). The expression "an understanding heart" is in the Hebrew text **A HEARING HEART**. And in Isaiah 50:4-5 we read of the inner discipline which Jesus and all the elect sons experience. "Morning by morning He (the Father) wakens, **HE WAKENS MY EAR TO HEAR** as those that are willing to be taught. The Lord has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I turned not backward."

A. B. Simpson was a man of deep spiritual experience. I quote the following from his article *Listening*. "A score of years ago a friend placed in my hand a book called *True Peace*. It was an old medieval message and it had but one thought — THAT GOD WAS WAITING IN THE DEPTHS OF MY BEING TO TALK TO ME IF I WOULD ONLY GET STILL ENOUGH TO HEAR HIS VOICE. I thought this would be a very easy matter and so began to get still. I had no sooner commenced than a perfect pandemonium of voices reached my ears, a thousand clamoring notes from without and within, until I could hear nothing but their noise and din. Some were my own voices, my own questions; some were my very prayers. Others were suggestions of the tempter and the voices from the world of turmoil. In every direction I was pulled and pushed and greeted with noisy acclamations and unspeakable unrest. It seemed necessary for me to listen to some of them and to answer some of them; but God said, 'BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD!'

"Then came the conflict of thoughts for tomorrow and its duties and cares; but God said, 'BE STILL.' And as I listened and slowly learned to obey and shut my ears to every sound, I found after a while that, when other voices ceased, (or I ceased to hear them), there was a still small voice in the depths of my being that began to speak with an inexpressible tenderness and power and comfort. As I listened, it became to me the voice of prayer, the voice of wisdom, the voice of duty, and I did not need to think so hard or pray so hard or trust so hard. That still, small voice of the Holy Spirit in my heart was God speaking in my secret soul; was God's answer to all knowledge and all prayer and all blessings, for it was the living God Himself as my life, my all.

"It is thus that our spirits drink of the life of the risen Lord and we go forth to life's conflicts and duties like a flower that has drunk in through the shades of night the cool and crystal drops of dew. But, as dew never falls on a stormy night, so the dew of His grace never comes to a restless soul. Oh, the calm! The rest! The peace which comes as we wait in His presence until we HEAR FROM HIM!" — end quote.

Hearing by the Spirit. This is the revelation of Jesus Christ in you! The glory of this revelation was passed from Jesus to John. John wrote down the wonder of what he saw so that we could hear the same thing that Jesus spoke to him. One can only understand this prophecy as he becomes still enough to hear the voice of the Son of God within himself! If we do not *hear* by the Spirit the true spiritual message of the book of Revelation we are like the man I read about who went to see a play one time and recommended it to a friend. It was a play in three acts. He said to his friend, "It was a marvelous play. You will love it. It is so uplifting and exhilarating. You will be greatly encouraged." He was astonished when his friend later reported: "I hated that play. I thought it was terrible. Why, the child was kidnapped, the father lost his job, and the mother was in the hospital. It was so depressing. How could you have thought that a play like that was good?" The man said, "But that's not the way it ended!" He said, "Oh, I don't know how it ended. I got so depressed I left after the second act."

Well, my friend, if you mistake the literal *letter of the word* understanding to guide your thinking you will leave the book of Revelation in deep depression after the second act! You will never pass through the veil to the *spirit of the word* understanding that leads to eternal glory! The "end" of this drama is not in chapter twenty-two. The "end" is in the *spiritual reality* that all the signs and symbols are pointing us to! I have found that even among good men, even among spiritual

men, there is a tendency to miss the deep inference of the Holy Spirit's words repeated again and again in the Revelation, "He that hath an ear, let him *hear* what the Spirit saith!" Those words always accompany statements of profound *spiritual* significance. The Spirit is here admonishing us that the astonishing visions described in the Revelation are the unfolding of *spiritual mysteries*. Those who interpret these beautiful visions according to the literal, surface appearance, do not have "an ear to hear," nor are they able to perceive the spiritual concealed in the external. If the events portrayed in the Revelation are to be fulfilled *literally* and *outwardly*, then we must read the words with *natural eyes*, hear them with *natural ears*, and understand them with a *natural mind*. But if the message is deeply *spiritual*, it will be understood only by "He that *hath an ear* to hear!"

The overcoming sons of God are not distinguished by their much speaking, nor by their great works, but by their *hearing*. The book of Revelation is the unveiling of God's Christ, the complete Christ, both Head and body. The purpose of God that was first expressed in Genesis is fulfilled in the unveiled Christ of the Revelation. The anointed prophecy given us through John, when wrought out in our lives, will take us to the fullness of the image and likeness of God! It tells of that which shall take place in each of our lives to transform us into the fullness of Christ to manifest the power and glory of the kingdom of God in the earth! It reveals the exact process of our change from natural to spiritual, from corruptible to incorruptible, and from mortal to immortal! It is the book of our overcoming! It is the book of our metamorphosis! It is the book of our completion! It is the book of our maturity! It is the book of our full stature! It is the book of our destiny! It is the book of our manifestation! It is the book of our exaltation! It is the book of our enthronement! It is the book of our sonship!

Blessed — happy — to be envied is he that *reads* (understands the symbols), and they that *hear* (get the deep spiritual message the symbols represent) the words of this prophecy, and *keep* (have fulfilled experientially in their lives) the things that are written therein: for the time is at hand! Those who read, hear, and keep these things are prepared to rule and reign with Christ in His kingdom!

TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

The risen and ascended Lord descended in a vision of glory on the isle called Patmos, and there meeting His startled disciple, John, gave him a communication concerning the church, the called out, commanding him to write it in a scroll and send it to the seven churches in Asia. The book of Revelation is addressed to Christ's "servants" and to "the seven churches." This great truth is emphasized, it is stated in the plainest of language, both at the opening and the close of the book. "John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace..." (Rev. 1:4). "What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia" (Rev. 1:11). "The Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show unto His servants the things which must shortly be done" (Rev. 22:6). "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches" (Rev. 22:16).

On reading these distinct declarations it should be clear to every discerning mind that the outward nations and the unregenerated people of the world have no more to do with this prophecy than they have with the epistle to the Ephesians. They may possibly be alluded to in the

one, as in the other, but it is not *for them*, and it is not mainly *concerned with them*. IT IS FOR US, the people of God! The prophecy is for the *bondslaves* of Jesus Christ, and for those who are called out and separated unto Him, and to apply it to anything other than God's dealings with His elect saints is to take the children's bread and give it to dogs. It is no use to say, "Yes! But though given to the church, it might still be a revelation of the counsels of God about the kingdoms of *this world*." **It might.** The epistle to the Ephesians **might** have been a letter about the lost tribes of Israel in the British Isles, but it was not! The visions of Daniel **might** have been visions of the seven churches of Asia, but they were not! Jesus **could** have sent a message to His servants about the final judgments on the world, from which they were already delivered, but He did not! Jesus **might** have communicated to His elect how He, who is the saviour of all men and the reconciler of the world, would one day turn on the world He so loved and cast them all into eternal damnation, but He did not!

We should notice carefully and reverently the words of the angel to John: "*Seal not* the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is *at hand*" (Rev. 22:10). The angel's statement stands in stark contrast to the command Daniel received at the end of his book: "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and *seal the book*, even to the time of the end" (Dan. 12:4). Daniel was specifically ordered to seal up his prophecy, because it referred to "the end," in the distant future. But John was told *not* to seal up his prophecy, because the time of which it speaks is *at hand*! To have sealed those precious sayings would have been to hide them, to pull a veil over them, to shut them up as if they stood for some kind of hidden wisdom or impenetrable mystery. But they are not! The message of the Revelation is concerned with great spiritual principles and divine dealings which have been operative in the lives of God's elect throughout the age, and are today. The time is **now**! The place is **here**! The people is **us**! The revelation of Jesus Christ is an on-going unfolding until HE is formed and revealed in all the glorious and eternal fullness of Himself in His body on earth! The totality of the mighty workings and processings of God portrayed by sign and symbol within this wonderful book must be fulfilled within the life of each son of God!

The book of Revelation is not concerned with worldly kingdoms and empires except as they become linked with the affairs of God's people. The book of Daniel, written under the Old Covenant, addressed to a natural people living in a natural land, ruled by outward laws, with a natural worship in a physical temple with external rituals and ceremonies, is therefore a natural book dealing with outward earthly events, the rise and fall of empires, rulers, with literal wars and fleshly conflicts. For example, the eighth chapter of Daniel contains one of Daniel's visions. His vision there is of a ram and a he-goat. The ram and the he-goat represented empires and kings that came on the scene not long before the birth of Jesus. There is no question that this prophecy is speaking of literal nations and kings, for those nations are actually mentioned in the text. And so it is throughout the book of Daniel! I wonder sometimes that if it were possible for Daniel to be here listening to the "end-times" prophecy teachers in the church systems today, if he would recognize his own prophecies, because of the grotesque way they have been distorted in their interpretation. Most teachers of Daniel can't even get the "literal" right! The book of Daniel was *not a revelation or unveiling*. It was a SEALED BOOK!

The book of Revelation, contrary to common thought, is not the sequel to the book of Daniel, nor is it a parallel revelation! In fact, it has almost nothing in common with the book of Daniel! The

book of Revelation was written under the New Covenant, the administration of the Spirit, and is therefore a spiritual book, addressed to spiritual people, born of the heavenly Jerusalem, who live and walk in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, are ruled by the indwelling spirit of Life, who worship in the true tabernacle not made with hands, and offer up spiritual sacrifices unto God by Jesus Christ! The book of Revelation is *not*, nor has it ever been a SEALED BOOK. Nor does it speak of natural, fleshly, physical, literal, outward things of this world. It is the *unveiling* of **Jesus Christ!**

I have no desire to contend with any man about these things, for we can safely leave this in the hands of the Lord. However, just as the book of Revelation is not the sequel to Daniel, neither does its message parallel the Olivet Discourse — Matthew 24! With true spiritual perception we must understand the great *difference* between these prophecies! Whereas the prophecies of Matthew 24 were directed to the Jews and concerned the Jews and pointed to the end of the Jewish kingdom of the house of Judah, the book of Revelation is written to the church, the called out, and concerns the church, and points to God's ultimate purpose in and through His elect body. Matthew 24 is natural and earthly, the book of Revelation is spiritual and heavenly! Matthew 24 sets forth literal, carnal, outward, earthly conflicts that occurred in all their horrible fury with the destruction of Jerusalem, the temple, the priesthood, the sacrificial system, and the entire Old Testament economy. All these horrendous events took place in A.D. 70 when the Roman general Titus besieged Jerusalem and brought it to total desolation.

There is neither time nor space to go into detail concerning those matters in this writing, but in our Lord's words in Matthew 24 we have one of the most explicit and unusual forecasts of events to be found anywhere in the scriptures. It is unusual in its simplicity and in the exactness of its detail. Every word of it has already been fulfilled and is now history! It was fulfilled with absolute precision right down to the last jot and tittle. The Jewish historian, Josephus, records a great deal of this history in his writings. It is remarkable to note that Jesus told His disciples, while standing before the temple in Jerusalem, "Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (Mat. 24:2). Josephus records how the desolation of Jerusalem was so complete that the site *looked like a plowed field*, and those who later passed by wondered that it had ever been inhabited by man! Those who study the history of these things know that the "end time" of Daniel's prophecy, and of Jesus' Olivet Discourse, was in fact the "end time" of the Old Covenant with its outward nation, temple, priesthood, sacrifices, laws, rituals, and ceremonies. That "end time" came in A.D. 70! It had nothing whatever to do with the present "end" of the church age! And contrary to the teachings of religious Babylon, there is not one word of Matthew 24 that remains to be fulfilled! Years later the glorified Lord Jesus appeared to John on Patmos and gave him the greater, higher, more glorious *spiritual revelation* for His *heavenly people*! This revelation concerns those who are citizens of the NEW JERUSALEM, who eat of the hidden manna and the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God, who are clothed, not in the garments of Aaron's priesthood, but in the white robes of Christ's righteousness, who are called to sonship on the heavenly mount Zion, destined to reign in the kingdom of Jesus Christ upon His throne in the heavenlies, and are becoming kings and priests after the order of Melchizedek!

God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom dwelleth wisdom and knowledge, flood Thou our souls with understanding from above! Open now our eyes that we may behold the depths of

truth that can be known only by the quickening of Thy Spirit! Remove the dark veil from our hearts, the veil of natural understanding and religious tradition cast over our minds by the carnal church systems of men, that light divine may shine upon us! Grant to our spirits the breath of inspiration that we may know as Thou knowest, and see as Thou seest! Amen! The book of Revelation was not sent to Israel nor to the nations. It was sent to the church, the *called out elect of God*. The only "end" referred to in this book is JESUS! "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and *the end*, the first and the last" (Rev. 22:13). The Revelation is not about "the end times;" it is about a NEW DAY, it is the REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST!

If by the grace of God the truth of this holy vision can burst upon you, you will see that the book of Revelation is a *spiritual book*! The Revelation cannot be understood in any natural way. It's a spiritual book and requires spiritual understanding! It's a book of spiritual events, spiritual experiences, spiritual conflicts and triumphs, and spiritual principles — not events you will read in USA Today! Some people say, "You *spiritualize* everything!" Do you not know that God *is Spirit*? If the Holy Spirit, sent forth from the resurrected, ascended, glorified Jesus wrote a book, what kind of book do you suppose it would be? Why, bless your heart, it would be a spiritual book! "The words that I speak unto you, they *are spirit* and they are life," declared the Son of God. What kind of mind do you think it would take to understand a spiritual book? Ah, a *spiritual mind*! "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might *know* the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing *spiritual things* with *spiritual*. But the natural man *receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God*: for they are foolishness unto him: neither *can* he know them, because they are *spiritually discerned*" (I Cor. 2:12-14). The very plain teaching of these words of Paul is that we are not to try and understand the revelation of God in a literal, outward sense. All divine truth *is spiritual* and must be *spiritually discerned*.

Well did a precious brother write: "If the book cannot be taken literally, then we must spiritualize it by the Holy Spirit. Trying to spiritualize with your natural mind is worse than logic and reason. Spiritualizing with your natural mind is just plain fantasizing! Real spiritualizing is done by the Holy Spirit and when He does it, it is real and it is true! It is sad and a tragedy, but most so-called teachers of prophecy have very little of the Holy Spirit working in them. And, some of them are down-right scoundrels! They wax eloquent and write many books to explain Revelation by their natural minds. Without the Holy Spirit, what they say is a pile of nonsense and fantasy. There are very, very few sermons or books on prophecy that do not fall into this category! The pastors, the teachers, the bishops, the apostles, the presidents of universities, the chancellors of theological seminaries, or whoever they may be, without the Holy Spirit, are *spiritually ignorant*. It seems the higher an individual ranks in the hierarchy of today's churches, the less he knows of spiritual things. **God does not reveal spiritual things to the wise and prudent**, but unto babes. We have listened to the highly esteemed prophetic teachers, but we hear only fantasies and traditions that are spawned in the womb of natural minds. Such ones have little or no truth.

"Years ago I read the writings of a woman who had trouble spelling her words and mimeographing her copies. Her workmanship was very inferior, but her message was a tremendous revelation of *The Voice Of God Who Speaks In Me*! Probably this woman could not preach a homiletical sermon or explain one Greek tense from another, but she knew the voice of

God and she walked in a glorious light of divine revelation. On the other hand, the learned leaders who take the Revelation literally, grope in the darkness of their own natural minds. This simple woman — humble saint of God — knew more about God, His will and purpose than the pompous chancellor of a theological seminary who recently was introduced on a TV network as probably the greatest theologian on earth. This woman knew more about the things of the Spirit than the learned ministers who wrote books out of their natural minds. She knew because she walked and talked with God! He lived in her and He talked to her from His abode in her. The learned chancellor wrote books, preached sermons, and conducted schools that turned out literate ministers of prophecy who knew little or nothing of the spiritual meaning of the prophecy. The chancellor tried to explain prophecy. He informed us Jesus was far off in heaven. We could get to meet Him some day if we made 'The Rapture.' This man knew little about spiritually interpreting God's word. He misquoted and misapplied scriptures like a novice. He insisted on taking the Bible literally in every place possible and he spoke against spiritualizing it as if spiritualizing it were an evil thing! He looked and acted as if he knew many things, but I will take the simple woman's position in preference to the highly esteemed theologian. This learned man knew a lot of things, but this woman *knew God!*" — end quote.

If you will allow the Holy Spirit of truth to draw you away from the mish-mash of human theology as taught by the messengers of Babylon, you will discover that they have mis-matched the prophecies of the Revelation with other prophecies in the Bible and created a hybrid, confused, misshapen, deformed, distorted, grotesque monster called "eschatology." I do not like the word "eschatology" because it is chiefly a theological term of the carnal church system. The so-called "end time events" taught out of the book of Revelation are contorted theories pieced together by carnal minds. Pieces are taken from Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah, Matthew 24, and other scriptures and put together in order to create a particular "spin" of it. Oh that men would awaken to the truth that they might see the Revelation as a sovereign revelation to the sons of God that is not mixed up to be revealed in a puzzle of other prophets. It *stands alone!* True, it uses Old Testament language and employs Old Testament illustrations, but it raises them up to new levels and transcendent heights of spiritual experience in the celestial world of the kingdom of God within. You don't go back into the Old Testament and piece things together in order to give the Revelation validity and meaning. Let it stand alone — and when you do it becomes, not the revelation of mere chaotic outer world events, but truly and preeminently THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST! It becomes a book you want to read with every wink because you want to remind yourself who you are, *who* is working in you, and *how* He is working in you to bring forth the unveiling of Jesus Christ in your own experience.

Many who study this glorious Revelation are more interested in finding possible references to space travel and nuclear weapons than in discovering the deep inworkings and mighty dealings of the Holy Spirit in the lives of those who are becoming God's Christ. The testimony of *Jesus* is the spirit of *this prophecy!* To ignore Jesus in favor of atomic blasts is a perversion of the spirit of truth. It is a *prophecy* to the *church* — God's called out elect! As a prophecy, it's to the Lord's *spiritual people*, the *body of Christ*, the *ransomed of the Lord!* There is not a chance that the apostle John, standing in the blinding glory of Christ's majestic presence, would have thought it important to prophesy about Cobra helicopters, space shuttles, computers or laser tattoos. Nor would he have been interested in foretelling the future of the United States of America, Russia, China, Iraq or the European Community. Not that these things are not

important, or that the sons of God should not be concerned with the destiny of nations in God's great plan of the ages, but the book of Revelation is about God's purposes in His redeemed, called, and chosen people! It is concerned with matters of far greater importance and consequence than satisfying our curiosity about the Common Market or the secret, sinister schemes of Saddam Hussein or the Illuminati. **It was written to show what the Father has done to save and transform His people and to glorify Himself through His sons!**

You will not read the fulfillments of its prophecies on the pages of *Time* magazine, but you will see them manifest in the lives of men and women! The word of the Lord in its spiritual meaning does not describe for us the carnal warfare between nations. For what have wars between nations to do with the kingdom of God? The weapons of our warfare are *not carnal*, but are *mighty through God*! The kingdom of God comes not by the sword, so of what importance in the outworking of God's kingdom on earth are the conflicts between nations and empires? These have no meaning whatsoever! The battles beheld in spirit by the eagle-eyed seer of Patmos signify spiritual combats, combats between light and darkness, between spirit and flesh, between truth and error, between righteousness and unrighteousness, between the precious mind of Christ and the carnal mind, between life and death. A man must experience this combat within himself to become a spiritual conqueror and gain the crown of life! A war in the Middle East has absolutely *nothing* to do with this! Our Lord, in the days of His flesh, carried on such spiritual warfare in an infinitely greater way than others, overcoming the compounded powers of the world, the flesh and the devil — and finally *death itself*! What a warfare! What a victory! How the mighty battles of the Roman empire pale in contrast with this! The first and second World Wars accomplished almost nothing for humanity compared with what Jesus won! He has opened up the way to victory and triumph over every enemy of sin, sorrow, limitation and death for all who are willing to follow Him into the power of the kingdom of God! Our Lord is a **spiritual conqueror**! And the book of Revelation is addressed to **him that overcometh**! That should reveal within every heart what kind of warfare the book presents!

I have often been encouraged by the messages from brother Paul Mueller, and nowhere more than by the following words: "The book of Revelation is clearly declared to be *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*. It is a book of symbolic truths revealing the Christ, both Head and body. And the revelation of the Christ has nothing whatever to do with literal nations involved in literal wars. But the revelation of Jesus Christ has everything to do with the manifestation of Christ in His corporate body of sons, and their spiritual growth. Therefore, we must understand the message of the book of Revelation to be spiritual. We are engaged in a war in the realm of the spirit, where all evil and carnality is being dealt with. This war is about our coming to perfection and dealing with the carnal, Adamic nature within us. I have said that this battle is a war to end all wars for the age, and I believe it! When we, as the firstfruits, are free of our carnality, a pattern will be established for the deliverance and freedom of many others! And when the carnal nature is removed from all mankind, the cause of all wars and violence in the world will also end.

"What wonderful spiritual truth is revealed when we understand and interpret this book in the Spirit of the word rather than with the dead letter of the word inspired by the carnal mind! The carnal nature has enclosed itself behind all manner of high-sounding religious doctrines, where 'HE' has found refuge during the previous six days of man. Old Adam would like us all to believe that this prophetic word is referring to a literal war and not to a spiritual war that will

destroy 'HIM'. All during the six days of man, old Adam has been hiding behind 'HIS' false doctrines. And this is the way God ordained it to be for a time. The wisdom and anointing of God is sadly lacking in man's carnal interpretations of the God-given and God-anointed prophecies of the book of Revelation. What good would another literal war do for the world? Is there any real, divine purpose in another literal war that would destroy multitudes? None whatsoever! If the majority of literal, sinful human beings were destroyed in another violent world war, as some suggest, the old, corrupt, Adamic nature would still plague mankind. And so would the devil!

"The truth is, the carnal, Adamic nature is responsible for all the wars from the beginning of time. What the creation needs is not another literal war, but a spiritual war that will end all wars! God knows this better than we do! His omniscient wisdom is far superior to the ideas and opinions of the religious theologians. And He has set forth a plan by which the present warfare, which we are now engaged in, shall destroy the man of sin and bind Satan for the age. This is indeed a war that shall end all wars and violence in the world for the duration of the kingdom of God on earth!

"Then the firstfruits, which we are, shall be holy, resulting in a world that shall become holy also. The principle of the kingdom of God is: **'For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy'** (Rom. 11:16). Also, the kingdom of God *'is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened'* (Mat. 13:33). As the firstfruits of the kingdom of God, we are becoming holy. We are mixed into the lump of the world, and shall change the world even as we have been changed! Therefore, the entire lump, the whole world, shall become holy, just as we have been made holy, not by our own works of righteousness of which we might boast, but by the abundant and transforming grace of our God!" — end quote.

As I mentioned earlier in our series on *The Kingdom of God*, I was once among those who believed the negative predictions of men. But through the years of walking with God something wonderful has happened to me! I spent several years of my early life and ministry with what I call an "apocalyptic mentality." By that term I mean that mind-set that is always looking for the "end" of the age with great cataclysmic upheavals and tremendous earth-shaking events — kingdoms falling, economies crashing, nuclear warfare erupting, and all those violent, catastrophic happenings that are supposed to take place in the world at the end of time. I was expecting that! We watched the Soviet Union, we watched events in the Middle East, we watched the stock market, because if crashed, we felt the "end" was certainly upon us! We were concerned about a one world government, invasion of the United States, the Illuminati, and a thousand other *earthly things*.

God delivered me from that apocalyptic mentality! He showed me clearly and powerfully that it was founded upon a *web of lies*! It was rooted in the *spirit of fear*! Its origin was right in the hallways of *Mystery Babylon*! It takes the same power of God to deliver one from that spirit of delusion that it takes to deliver one from any other demon. You see, every nation on earth has already experienced economic collapse at some time, including ours. Every nation has had war and destruction. The terrorist attack on the United States last year was indeed horrible, but not even to be compared to the horrors visited upon Europe and Japan in the Second World War. Great empires have risen and fallen throughout history, and none of them heralded the end of

time. Plagues, pestilence, earthquakes, storms, and disasters of many kinds have killed millions of people in hundreds of nations and devastated whole civilizations, but none ever brought the end of the world. All of those things have been happening out there in the external world since the beginning of time, but let me tell you, none of them have anything whatever to do with the coming of the kingdom of God! Only the nature of the Father formed in His elect, only the full measure of the stature of Christ formed in God's New Creation Man, only the power of God upon His people, only the glory of God in His manifested sons, will signal the hour of transition into the greater glory of the kingdom of God upon the nations of earth!

The mind of Christ is now being imparted to God's elect in greater fullness. By the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the glorious mind of Christ we are beginning to see all things as they really are. We are now seeing new things, a new heaven and a new earth! This holy knowledge comes not by any outward observation, but by the mighty working of God in our lives. This is a mighty transition for me and for the body of Christ, as I trust it is the reality of all who read these lines. Christ is revealing Himself, His mind, His heart, His glory and His purpose in the midst of His chosen ones. I hear the witness of this from thousands of saints all over the world! There are many groups with whom we have no direct connection that are now speaking these same things! None of us were taught by man, we held no council to agree on doctrine or formulate a teaching, nor did we receive it by reading one another's writings or attending gatherings, meetings or conventions. It is the sovereign work of God among those who have been called and separated unto God in this new kingdom Day!

The hope and promise and power and glory of the kingdom of God is more clear and focused in my spirit today than at any time in the past! The earnest expectation of the manifestation of the sons of God burns more brightly in my heart now than it ever has! I rejoice that this is the DAY of the manifestation when Christ with His body shall see the triumph of His life within, bringing blessing, life, light, love and full and complete deliverance to all mankind! This is the Present Truth. This is what the Spirit *is saying* to the overcomers in this great hour! Great and glorious things are at hand! **THIS IS THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST!**