

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

## FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

### Part 28

## THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA

"What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the *seven churches* which are in Asia...the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the *seven churches*" (Rev. 1:11,20).

The church means the "called-out." Church is *ekklesia* in the Greek which is a compound noun made up of *ek*, meaning "out," and *klesia*, meaning "called." When joined together we have the literal meaning in English of "out-called." The word occurs 115 times in the Greek text. In the King James Bible it has been rendered 112 times by the word "church" and three times by the word "assembly." The English word "church" came from the Greek expression *kuriakon doma* meaning "house of the Lord." By a long trail over Teutonic Europe came the word *kirk* and finally *church*. Because of this many people think of the church as a building, but the true building or house of the Lord is the *living organism* of the body of people in whom Christ dwells! And while the word church does indicate this body or house of the Lord, it is still not quite true to the original which means simply and only "out-called." Any other idea or significance than this has been added by man.

We go back to the New Testament for the beginnings of the church; and when once we are there it is wonderful how simple it all is! Jesus Christ comes and preaches the gospel of the kingdom, and manifests the life of God. He stands with His shining nature upon the hill of the truth He has to preach. He is lifted up, by and by, in the fullness of His sacrificial death upon the cross. Then He rises from the dead, ascends into the heavens of God's Spirit, and pours out this Holy Spirit upon His disciples. Toward His light, soul after soul is drawn out of the darkness of ignorance, sin, and death. Into the power of His resurrection one life after another is summoned out of the death of trespasses and sins. It is all personal and individual at first. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." It is this man and that man that is summoned. "Follow me," "Follow me," says the Master, and Matthew leaves his tax-table standing in the street; and the sons of Zebedee pull hastily in from the blue waters of Galilee to give themselves to the Lord, who has called them from the shore. To His most intimate disciples He gives the command, "Go and tarry in Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." It is all personal and individual.

And what came next? Why, the most natural thing in all the world — that which must always come when individual men and women believe the same truth, receive the same experience, or share the same vision and purpose. When did a group of scholars ever sit at the same teacher's feet and not become a school? When did a host of separate men go and volunteer to fight the same enemy and not be drawn into an army? When were a multitude of atoms ever filled with one magnetism and not brought into magnetic communion with one another? All the

individual believers in, and followers of, Christ become one in their common life, love, and hope. And so out of the crowd of disciples comes the corporate expression of the church!

What Jews call a synagogue and what we call a congregation means simply a gathering of people together. That is the idea behind a club, a conference, a meeting. But the church means something different from this! Its members are people who have been called *away* — who have left something behind — who have come out of some place, condition, or state — who are separate and even peculiar. That is the significance of the Greek term *ekklesia*. It is not an “assembly” as some say, although all the individual members are indeed a group. But it is not the “meeting” that makes them the church — it is the fact that they have heard the Master’s call and have been drawn out of their former understanding, walk, condition, and purpose. They are the “out-called”! They are individuals who are being instructed, prepared, and trained to receive their orders to march forth as the army of the Lord! Yet it is not the army that makes them the *ekklesia*, rather, it is the fact of their out-calling that makes them the *ekklesia*!

Ray Prinzing has shared an instructive word: “We speak of this as being ‘the church age,’ and so it is, for this has been a time of CALLING OUT — out from the world, out from the flesh, out from the religious, etc. that we might be gathered unto Him. The church is not a building anymore than the inner sanctuary of our lives is a building. For of a truth the *called out are a people*! Furthermore, it is a very progressive calling out — out — and out some more! Out of darkness into light; out of error into truth; out of the earthly into the heavenly; out of the bondage of the systems of man, into the freedom of the walk of the Spirit; out of religion and into a blessed relationship with Christ. And do take note, it is not just an OUT, it is also an INTO — INTO CHRIST. It does not necessarily imply a coming out from the fellowship with others, unless one has substituted meetings instead of communion with Christ, and rely only upon ‘group therapy’ for solving their problems, rather than turning first and foremost to God Himself. If peoples, groups, fellowships usurp HIS place in your life, then He will say again, ‘Come out of her, my people’ (Rev. 18:4), for He is a jealous God, and desires that we be only His” — end quote.

The truth is that the church in any age consists of a people that is CALLED OUT. They are called out by God, called out of the world, called out of their human, earthly identity and consciousness, called out unto God in the Spirit. Furthermore they are called out of every religious system on earth including those systems that have the audacity to call themselves “the church,” but who in reality are the inventions and programs of man. The church is the called out ones, and they are called out *by God* and they are called out *unto God*. Their ears know His voice and not the clamoring voices of strangers. Well they know by the Spirit that the Babel of voices which clamor to be heard from the pulpit, from the radio, and from the VOB television network (Voice of Babylon) are too often the voices of strangers who seek to draw away disciples after themselves and their grandiose programs and promotions, and not to bring men into living relationship with Christ in the Spirit.

So churches today appear to be *quite different* from what Jesus had in mind when He said, “I will build my church.” He wasn’t talking about building a structure, organization, or meeting — He was speaking of building *men*, building *lives*, of building up a people *into Christ* to be the habitation of God by the Spirit! “I will build my church” speaks of bringing forth *spiritual maturity* in the sons of God! The body of Christ is “built up” by spiritual growth, not by adding

more and more babes to the family, wonderful as that is. And Christ said, “**I** will do it!” “**I** will build my church!” Again He said, “You have not chosen me, but *I have chosen you*” (Jn. 15:16). Today people *choose* a church of “their choice.” When a large evangelistic campaign comes to their city, the evangelist may be cooperating with any number of other churches in an interdenominational sense, and members of many denominations may be urged to attend with their congregations. At the conclusion of an impassioned appeal, the evangelist may invite hungry hearts to come forward and “accept Christ.” Thus people are led to believe it is *up to them* to “choose Christ,” and not up to *Him* to “choose *them*”! And finally they are instructed to go out and attend the church of *their choice*!

The following words by Ricky Evans are so true and vital for God’s elect today. “We are called out, separated. The calling out, the separation, is from the ways of the world. These separations are of an inner nature as God separates the soul from the spirit in us (Heb. 4:12). We may cease to go to certain places we were accustomed to going in the past and doing certain things that we used to do, but the true separation, calling out, is an inner change which brings forth His life in us. We may have come out of Babylon, but God is working to get Babylon out of us!

“Church is not something you do. Church is not something you initiate. It is something which happens to you independently from you. You are called out. You can’t call yourself out! You must be called out by God. Abraham didn’t just decide one day to call himself out of Ur of the Chaldees. God, the God of glory, appeared to him and called him out. God initiated the action! God made the first step toward Abraham. God exposed Himself to Abraham and the appearing of God is what called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees. The appearance of the God of glory was what called Abraham out of his family, out of his own land.

“We must free ourselves from a ‘meeting mentality.’ We have boxed God in to ‘the meeting.’ Whether it be in a building, a home, or somewhere else we must rid ourselves of this ‘meeting mentality.’ One only needs to watch as individuals gather and the appointed time arrives, the change which comes over people, to realize the ‘meeting mentality’ has set in. Suddenly people assume an air of what they deem to be ‘spiritual.’ The preacher’s voice changes to his ‘official voice.’ People try to ‘get in the Spirit’ so there will be a good ‘meeting.’ This will continue for an hour or two, depending on the group, and then the ‘meeting’ is over and people can relax and be themselves again until the next appointed time. The meeting becomes all-important. The meeting becomes the hub around which we build our lives.

“We have been separated from the world and separated unto HIM. Anything and everything which keeps us from the Father will find itself coming under the pruning knife of our great vinedresser. Sad to say, much that has been called church has been responsible for keeping people from an intimate relationship with the Father. The upheaval within what is called church is nothing more than the pruning knife of the Father as He cuts away that which does not bring us to Himself. As men build their kingdoms to revolve around *themselves*, God is drawing all men unto *Himself*. As men try to fill our lives with their programs and activities, our Father longs to fill us with Himself. Is it not the very desire of our Father that we all *know Him*? (Heb. 8:11). Are not our gatherings meant to bring forth a greater reality of our Father’s presence with us? (Mat. 18:20). Yet we find pastors preparing all week for one or two ‘meetings.’ They prepare their ‘message.’ They plan how they can orchestrate that time called ‘church’ so as to create a utopia

which will attract more people to their building. When meetings don't seem to do the job, they create programs and activities, something that will draw the people and keep them active. Fill their lives with busyness so they won't realize or feel the void within!

"Preachers prepare 'messages,' traveling from meeting to meeting trying to excite the crowds, getting the people *emotionally stirred* so they will come back to the next meeting with their friends. People live from meeting to meeting. They run to get their *fix*! Another shot in the arm of Jesus, hoping that will keep them till the next meeting, hoping it will ease the pain of life until the next fix. When Sunday and Wednesday are not enough, they look for *another* meeting. Perhaps Tuesday or Friday, or both. All the above is simply 'meeting mentality.'

"We would not negate the fact that there are those pastors and traveling ministries who spend time before the Lord and have a word for the body of Christ! These do not spend their time trying to create 'messages,' these are those who have been with the Father and the Father has spoken a word into their lives. The word has become a part of their lives and not just a 'message.' They have a responsibility to feed the sheep and may spend hours studying and praying, but they are not looking for a message. They are hearing from the Father and their time is spent searching and seeking a better understanding of that which the Father is saying. Their time is spent allowing the Father to work the truth He is speaking into their heart, into the very fibers of their lives.

"By no means would we demean our gatherings or their importance. But friend, there has to be a change from the present system of things! We find ourselves standing in the midst of an over-lapping period as we change from Shiloh (form) to Zion (life). Those who want life will come out from the lifeless forms of Shiloh and climb the heights of Zion! The life of the Father is pulsating in our lives! The Christ is manifesting Himself in our midst! It's not the meeting we long for, it is the Father who is now manifesting Himself in our midst. Oh, we must see the voice in the midst! We must see the Christ declaring the Father in our midst! It is not 'meetings' that change lives, it is the 'one in the midst' who changes lives! When we read in the book of Acts how the early believers gathered daily from house to house or in the temple, it was not because they were preached at to 'be faithful to come to the meeting and God will bless you. If you're not faithful God will get you.' They had come into contact with the Christ! They weren't told they had to gather together — they wanted to! Christ was becoming more and more real in their midst. The life within was growing. The kingdom of God was flooding and overflowing their very being. There was no need for threats to persuade them to gather together. Christ was their reason! Are you not beginning to hear a song echoing from deep within your being? Does it sound like an old familiar song that you can't seem to remember? Is this not the song which the morning stars sang together and caused the sons of God to shout for joy? (Job 38:7). Friend, this is none other than the Son declaring the name of the Father in the midst of His brethren! The Son is singing praises to the Father in the midst of your being! The Son is walking through our midst singing praise to the Father!" — end quote.

When God speaks of the church, He means the called-out ones wherever they may be found or for whatever reason they may have been called out. Oh, how we pervert this word in our everyday conversation! We talk to people about “going to church.” What “church” do you belong to? Why don’t you come to our “church”? Or, if the meeting is going exceptionally well, with blessings all around, we say, “Now we’re really *having church!*” We use phrases like, “That is a Baptist church, that is a Pentecostal church.” We have changed the true meaning of the word church from a *calling out* to mean a building, an organization, or a meeting. Thus in our minds the meaning is lost, the reality covered up.

An article which came across my desk, and bears the name of no author, has beautifully articulated this great truth in these words: “There are groups of God’s people everywhere, each in different stages of growth and experience. Some people are called out of the world but do not believe in any further experience or revelation. Others are called out from those who have embraced salvation to a further experience of sanctification. From the sanctified people are called out a Spirit-baptized people. From the baptized people are called out a gifted people. From the gifted people are called out a fruitful people. And finally there is a calling out of those who have reached the maturity of sonship. The particular body of people with whom you identify undoubtedly was called forth at one time from some other group of God’s people! Around your present revelation of truth, therefore, you are the called-out assembly. There is therefore a church within a church; a wheel within a wheel.

“In Gideon’s army there was a special chosen company of three hundred; an army within an army. In David and his four hundred men there was an Israel within Israel who finally took the kingdom. Israel was called ‘the church in the wilderness’ (Acts 7:38). They were God’s called-out ones. They were called out of the bondage of Egypt. Many stages of consecration may be witnessed even amongst natural Israel. There was a company called ‘the mixed multitude’ that went up out of Egypt with Israel and then there was Israel in general who were called to a greater measure of consecration as the people of the Lord. Then from amongst them there was a tribe of the priesthood called to a still closer walk with the Lord in a still greater measure of consecration. Of all that came out of Egypt by Moses, Joshua and Caleb alone, with the younger generation, were called to a still newer experience of entering the promised land. All these companies were called-out ones, but some were called to go where others refused to go. The New Testament church called forth by the apostles was called forth from what remained of the church in the wilderness (Israel) with the addition of the Gentiles who were called out through the ministry of the apostle Paul. This proves that one church or called-out people can come forth from another church or called-out people.

“From the formal and sectarian ranks and the confusion of Babylon a church is now coming forth: a church of spiritually endued saints, called out to attain the maturity of sonship. God is now raising up the builders to build this new body who will be a habitation of God through the Spirit, and they in turn will perfect all the others who are called out, and raise their experience from the glory where they now reside unto the glories that are above them. This will continue until all believers have been raised to perfection, until the entire church will be a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. God recognizes all believers as being His children, but He does not recognize them all as being of one stature. He sees some as babes, some children, some young men, and some fathers” — end quote. Let us always remember that regardless of which company

of called out ones we pertain to, ALL of the Lord's people, on whatever level of growth and experience they have attained to, are on some plane God's called-out or His church!

## THE SEVEN CHURCHES

The *seven churches* in the book of Revelation are seven realms to overcome, seven opportunities to be victorious. What is the church? You are the church. I am the church. We are all the church. So *we* are the seven churches! You are the seven churches! I am the seven churches! We are all the seven churches! Just as the seven spirits are but one spirit in fullness, so the seven churches are but one church in its completeness. All the characteristics of the seven churches may be found in each of us individually as well as in every local body and also in the whole universal church collectively. In each of our experience there is the capacity to partake of everything that the seven churches represent. I, you, all of us may be tested in each area of its negatives or excel in each aspect of its positives. The seven churches are *seven realities* and *seven potentialities* within ourselves. The seven churches are within you, my beloved, or else we are of all men most miserable, for none of us is the whole church nor are all of us those seven churches that existed in Asia in that long ago. If the whole reality is not within each one of us, then the promises to the overcomers are not fully available to us. We would each be able to attain to only *one* — the one pertaining to the church we identify with!

If the seven churches represent seven *church ages*, as many teach, then we have a problem! You would be able to appropriate only the promises to the overcomer that belong to the church age you live in. Furthermore, if we are now in the Laodicean church age, as many assert, the only promise we can claim is that of throneship. To the church of Laodicea the Lord says, "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). That is a beautiful promise and a wonderful calling! But if this is the Laodicean church age, we would be denied the promise of eating of the tree of life, given to the church in Ephesus; we would be refused the promise of not being hurt of the second death, given to the church in Smyrna; we would be prevented from eating of the hidden manna, and receiving a white stone and a new name, as promised the overcomers in the church at Pergamos; we could by no means be given power over the nations to rule them with a rod of iron, for that promise was made only to the overcomers in the church in Thyratira; we would be prohibited from partaking of the promises to the overcomers in Sardis of being clothed in white raiment, and that our name will not be blotted out of the book of life; nor could we in any way become a pillar in the temple of God, or have written upon us the name (nature) of our God, or the name of the city of our God, or the new name of God's Christ — for those promises could only be experienced by those overcomers out of the Philadelphia church age!

So, when we see by the spirit of wisdom and revelation that all the saints of the entire church age *are the seven churches*, that you and I today are the seven churches, that the seven churches are within each of us, and that God has given this revelation in a mystery that the carnal mind cannot comprehend, then we are filled with the secret wisdom that comes only to the *mature in Christ*. My hope in Christ is that I may lay hold upon *all the overcoming promises* of my Lord and find that abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of Jesus Christ the Son of God! I open wide my heart to receive of all the rebukes, admonitions, chastenings, encouragements, commendations, and promises to all the seven churches! They are one and all mine, and they are

yours! I am, as you are, and as we all are, the seven golden candlesticks. As soon as I turn and behold that great truth, as soon as I know *who I am*, know my identity, know my birth, know who my Father is, know the kingdom to which I pertain, and know my calling; as soon as I turn and behold the seven golden candlesticks and see them lighted within my own soul and in my spirit; then do I begin to understand in the mind of Christ what is the height and the depth and the length and the breadth of the reality of *Christ in me the hope of glory*!

The word church, as I have pointed out, is from the Greek *ekklesia*, meaning the “called-out.” There is a meaning connected with that word which denotes that these called out ones are in progress, from one position to another. They are involved in movement. *Ekklesia* is not a static position! The called out are called out *from* something and *unto* something. Many people believe they have been called out from the world, from the values of the world, from the ways of the world, from the spirit of the world, from its philosophies and concepts, and from the flesh, from sin, from death; but they have no concept at all of what they are called *unto*. They have the idea that the church itself is what they are called unto! But the church is merely the vehicle of the calling — not the calling itself. The church, the calling out, denotes movement. What you were called out from is not the church, nor is that which you are called unto the church. The church occupies the territory *between* these two things!

It is like a man who boards a train in New York City going to Los Angeles. The train is the vehicle of his movement and travel, to carry him from his point of origin to his destination. The train is a wonderful experience, but it is not his destination. He has no plan to live permanently on the train. By the train he is able to move *from* New York City *to* Los Angeles. In like manner the church is the instrument of God by which He carries the called out *from* the Babylon of this world *unto* the fullness of the kingdom of God! It denotes movement. We are called out to move from one point to another, ever ascending from glory to glory and from realm to realm in our experience of Christ. Sonship and the kingdom are *via* the church. But the church is neither sonship nor the kingdom! Those who overcome within the church realm will inherit the kingdom, and those who overcome within the church realm will attain to sonship. Hear it! “He that *overcometh* shall *inherit all things*; and I will be his God, and he shall be my *son*” (Rev. 21:7). The church is not our destination!

All over the world today there is a curious people being called and drawn to a union in the high places of the Spirit where their very nature and existence are being changed. What is emerging in this hour is the birth of a manchild, a life out of a life, a people out of a people, a company out of a company, a son out of the bride, to produce the full image of Christ Jesus in the earth again. The fully manifest presence of His glory and power, of His life and light and love, will mark the beginning of a transfer of the powers of this dying age into the hands of a people that has apprehended the prize of the *high calling* of God in Christ Jesus. The whole purpose of redemption is to save, deliver, quicken, restore, and transform mankind according to the life and truth that are in Christ Jesus. This involves the calling out and raising up of a body of sons in His image, filled with His wisdom, knowledge, love, grace, and power to be the instrument through which Christ will appear on the earth again in the fullness of Himself to liberate all men and all nations from the tyranny of sin, ignorance, poverty, limitation, sickness, pain, sorrow, and death. On the immediate horizon is this very emerging presence of Christ manifest through a

many-membered body *called out* from every form of background of religion, nationality, and ethnicity!

“I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Mat. 16:18). I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH. What wonderful words are those of Jesus the Christ! And He is still building that church. There is no man or group of men who may of themselves build this church. It is not their church, it is His church, the *body of Christ*, and He will build it! It is a church which is *dependent upon no ministers upon earth*, however much it values those who proclaim the word of God to its members. The life of its members does not hang upon man-made church membership, nor upon Old Testament style outward forms of rituals, ceremonies, types, and shadows such as water baptism and communion, nor any other natural, outward, external observance. Truly it was the *Old Covenant* which “stood in meats and drinks, and divers washings (baptisms), and carnal (outward, fleshly, natural) ordinances, imposed on them **until the time of reformation (change)**” (Heb. 9:10).

This church has only one Head, one great Shepherd, one chief Apostle and Bishop — and that is Jesus Christ. He alone, by His Spirit, admits the members of this church. Till He opens the door no man on earth can open it — neither bishops, nor presbyters, nor evangelists, nor pastors, nor boards, nor convocations, nor synods. Let a man be called, touched, awakened, and quickened by the Spirit of the Lord, and in that heaven-blessed moment he becomes a member of this church. There is *no* church membership in heaven or in earth apart from this. God Himself must call you out and God Himself must set you in. Only God can do this! “And *the Lord* added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47). Any other form of church membership is a bare-faced sham, an invention of man, a carnal-minded mockery of that which is true. The moment you are born of God’s Spirit you are a member of the church of the *firstborn*, whose names are written in heaven (Heb. 12:23).

Every effort on the part of man to have you join yourself with one of the man-made organizations falsely *called* “the church” is an effort to lead you astray from your union with Christ the Head and that divine work which the Holy Spirit accomplished when He placed you by His power into His body, which is the true church. The misguided and false shepherds would seduce you to commit fornication with that bawdy mother of harlots and her prostitute daughters of many denominational names. How cunningly and seductively do these preachers perform the work of Satan by telling their converts to “join the church of your choice!” God’s thought is not the church systems of man; it is not churches as organized denominational systems; it is not propagation of denominational teaching and enterprise. God’s thought is to have a people in the earth in whom, and in the midst of whom, Christ is all, and in all. That is the church! In the thought of God the church begins and ends with this — the life of Christ formed and reproduced in a people! He passes by the great institutions, the so-called “church” and He is with those who in themselves are of an humble and contrite spirit and who tremble at His word. God’s thought for us is that One, even Jesus Christ, who is the fullness of God in bodily form, should *be our fullness*!

The church that mankind is building is visible. The church that the Christ is building is invisible, but it is the powerful and all-inclusive one! The church that men build is earthly and seeks physical, material blessings; but the church that the Christ births out of His life dwells in heavenly places and is blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus! Lively stones, living



stones, stones of another world, are being daily added to this church and it is growing and becoming more powerful in the Spirit with each passing day. The church is the miracle of Christ's resurrection life appearing again in a people upon the earth! At just the right time, at God's appointed time, this living church will be made known to all men everywhere, and begin to openly work to bring the whole of creation into the fullness of God. Hallelujah!

## **RACHEL AND LEAH**

There is a wonderful story in the Old Testament which illustrates a beautiful spiritual truth concerning the church. It is the story of Jacob and Rachel and Leah found in chapter twenty-nine of the book of Genesis.

The story relates how Laban had two daughters; the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah's eyes were weak and dull looking, but Rachel was beautiful and attractive. Jacob fell in love with Rachel, so he said to Laban, "I will work for you for seven years if you will give me Rachel your youngest daughter for my wife." Laban responded, "It is better for me to give her to you than to another man. Stay and live with me." So Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed to him but a few days, because of the love he had for her. Finally, Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife, for my time is completed, so that I may take her to me."

Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast with much to eat and drink. But when night came he took Leah his daughter and brought her in the darkness to Jacob. Jacob took her into his place and had intercourse with her. When the morning sun arose Jacob saw his wife, and alas, it was Leah! Jacob promptly found Laban and confronted him, "What is this you have done to me? Did I not work for you all those seven years for Rachel? Why then have you deceived and cheated and thrown me down like this?" And Laban said, "It is not permitted in our country to give the younger daughter in marriage before the eldest. Finish the wedding feast week with Leah, then we will give you Rachel also, and you shall work for me yet seven years more in return." So Jacob complied and spent the wedding feast week with Leah; then Laban gave him Rachel his daughter as his wife.

Jacob had been promised Rachel, but after the wedding, when he woke up in the morning, he discovered he was with the wrong woman! How could a man marry a woman, take her into his tent, spend the night with her in his bed, make love to her, and not know he had the wrong woman? I never knew the deep significance of that event in the life of Jacob until God shined the blazing, penetrating light of His revelation upon my life. I woke up one day in my spiritual experience and realized that I was not joined to Rachel. Don't you know that that is what has happened to us all? Did not most of you who read these lines wake up one morning in your walk with God and realize you didn't have the woman you thought you married when you received Christ? You joined yourself to the church, thinking you were coming into union with the beautiful, desirable, pure bride of Christ, but the woman you entered into intimacy with was not the woman you thought you had! I admire Jacob for the courage he had to accept what had befallen him and because of his great love for the woman he desired he first confronted the issue, and then he abode with Laban for another seven years. *He would not be denied!*

Leah represents the church systems of man. It is easy to settle for tradition, but you need courage to hold out for what you want in God. I wonder how many of us would have worked another seven years for Rachel! It would be very easy to settle for less than God has called us to. How very easy it would be to settle for the feast of Pentecost rather than paying the price required to press on into the feast of Tabernacles. It requires no effort at all to settle for the immaturity of the church realm instead of laying hold upon sonship to God. It takes courage, patience, and faith to go beyond the weak-eyed (lack of spiritual vision) Leah, to leave the in-part realm of the church world behind and blaze the trail into God's highest and best — the beautiful hope of fullness and maturity in God!

So much depends upon our vantage point. Let all men know that though we desire Rachel and are willing to work another seven years for her, the fact remains that *Leah is of God*. Leah is the mother of Israel. The church realm, the church system as we know it, is of God, regardless of how weak-eyed it is, how grotesque it is, how organized it is, how apostate it is, how dead it is, how fleshly and carnal it is, or how alive it is — the measure of life that is in it is of God! Most of us have had some degree of contentment with the church system at some time in our life. There was a night when we received Leah to ourselves, not knowing any better because of the great spiritual darkness that enveloped us. There was a night when we slept with Leah in our tent and enjoyed her pleasures, we delighted in her programs, her rituals, her ceremonies, her methods, her promotions, her doctrines, her ways, for we wist not who she was!

I remember well my early days in the church system, I thought I had found the highest purpose of God in the universe. I presumed that I had found the ultimate reality of God attainable in this life. Now I have woken up under the dawning rays of the new day of the glory of Christ and realize that what I was first joined to was not what I hungered and thirsted after! It was not what I wanted. From the very beginning there was a sense in my deepest heart that somehow there had to be *more*, there must be something *greater, fuller* in God. I discovered that I was attached to the wrong principles, the wrong expression, the wrong spirit, the wrong doctrine, the wrong objectives, the wrong name, the wrong hope, the wrong activities and program. Oh, yes! In the shimmering light of day I was able to clearly see that what I had did not measure up nor did it satisfy. It left a great and profound void in my life. It was the weak-eyed Leah, but by the spirit and revelation of God we have caught a glimpse of Rachel and been ravished in our hearts!

We have no desire to harm Leah, no desire at all to hurt her, denounce her, ridicule her, destroy her, or even to put her away — we just cannot *settle for her*! We are willing to work another seven years, we are willing to *pay the required price* to gain Rachel! We have set our faces to go after what we want! And Leah probably has a problem with it, but *we want Rachel*. We don't want Leah. We are sick of Leah. We are tired of Leah's weak-eyed religion with no vision of God's great plan and purpose. We are weary of Leah churches. We are burned out with Leah people. We are worn out from Leah's carnal programs and dead works. Leah in Hebrew means *dull*. Oh yes, she's *dull*! That's what the old order (elder daughter) church systems are — they're dull, slow-witted, dense, undiscerning, humdrum, lifeless, spiritless, tasteless, monotonous. They hold nothing for us anymore!

Rachel was initially barren, but Leah was fruitful. You will find that carnal, traditional religion multiplies disciples rapidly. People flock to these carnal, man-centered appeals that

promise naught but blessings upon the flesh. People love to be *entertained*, and the popular churches are expert entertainers! Therefore Leah bears many children, while the beloved Rachel appears barren.

Do you know what Rachel did? She kept her father's flock (Gen. 29:9). She did a man's job. Rachel was a shepherdess. Rachel kept her father's flock, she brought them out for watering, and Jacob couldn't believe she was doing a man's job. His response was, "This is my woman!" Rachel typifies the realm of the overcomer, the realm that, though it appears as a woman, the church, is in reality fulfilling the role of a man, the sons of God. I want Rachel! I'm willing to wait for Rachel. I'm willing to work, to expend all my time, all my energies, all my hopes and dreams, to get Rachel. She will be mine. I will be joined to that beautiful realm of God's glory and beauty and power. And though she bore far less sons than Leah, she became the mother of Joseph, *the bearer of the birthright*, who more than any son of Jacob serves as the type of Christ and His body, the sons of God. As Joseph ascended the throne of Egypt, and fed the nations in the years of drought, so shall the sons of God be given power over the nations and shall shepherd and feed them under the rule of the kingdom of God. Sonship is the hope of all creation. It is the hope dearest to the heart of God. Therefore I admonish you this day — **HOLD OUT FOR RACHEL, HOLD OUT FOR THE PROMISE, HOLD OUT FOR THE BIRTHRIGHT!**

Hold out, my brother, my sister, for the truth and reality and not just a blessing. Hold out for life and immortality, not just a healing or a miracle. Hold out for the fullness of God, not just a touch of God. You don't need the traditions and programs of religion, you need Christ manifested in your body, soul, and spirit. I'd rather be dead than reproduce the nonsense of religion. I'd rather be buried than dwell in Babylon again. It's easy to marry tradition and reproduce! People love to say they are disciples. People love to say that they follow Jesus. And they do follow Him — just as the Galilean multitudes followed Him in that long ago *for the loaves and the fishes*. Men still flock to the loaves and the fishes. And men still walk away, flee, and forsake the Lord when He teaches the deep things of God, when He points out the narrow road that leads to the life of the kingdom, and when it leads to the cross.

It is easy to marry tradition and be joined to the blessings. I traveled and ministered for years among people who wanted me to be joined to them in that religious state where I just tickled them, entertained them, baptized them, prayed for them, blessed them, healed them, and taught them a whole lot about the devil, the antichrist, the tribulation, the end of the world. Today I have left all of that behind. The one consuming passion of my life is to grow up in Christ as a son of God. My desire today is to overcome all things, to be filled with the mind of God, to lay hold upon the glory of God, to be perfected in the nature of God, to be swallowed up by the life of God, and to apprehend the power of God. I want to see all creation delivered from the bondage of corruption — I'm not the least bit interested in the limited, tired, time-worn, dead-end methods of the past. I want Rachel! I must have Rachel! I will pay any price for Rachel! I *will* get Rachel!

I write these things to those who are the *called out* for this great day of the Lord. Truly we have been called out by God to be about our Father's business, to fulfill His redemptive, restorative, and governmental purposes in the earth. We are a people with a purpose! As we walk in the Spirit we are receiving power and authority in the earth to accomplish the will of God among

men! This is the work of the Holy Spirit! Just because we assemble together at a place called “church” on Sunday does not mean we are the Lord’s *ekklesia* or that we do what God calls us to do at such a gathering. There is nothing sacred about “going to church” if the Spirit of God has not called us together! When a believer hears the true “calling out” it is the Holy Spirit calling him out to Himself, revealing His will, and empowering him to accomplish His plan. It has nothing whatever to do with going to a “church” building where we do all sorts of things which may or may not have anything to do with the work of God! Oh, how we have been cheated by Leah! Let us press on, dear ones, until we get Rachel!