

## KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

### FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

#### Part 53

##### THE CHURCH IN SARDIS (continued)

"Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, *I will come on thee as a thief*, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee" (Rev. 3:3).

Sardis had become a famous city. It was a very ancient city, and the old world was full of tales about its wealth, and it had once been the proud capital of Lydia. It was located thirty-five miles southeast of Thyatira. The spacious valley of Hermus was bounded on the south by mount Molus. Projecting from this range there was a narrow ridge of land terminating in a lofty peak that dominated the plain below. On the plateau of that peak was built the splendid city of Sardis. It was over 1,500 feet above the valley. It had towering cliffs leading up to it, and directly behind it. Sardis was also reputed to have an impregnable fortress. Unless one came up by the narrow road over the narrow ridge of land, which was easily defended by a handful of soldiers, it seemed an impossibility for enemy troops to get into the city. It would seem as if nature itself had made the place unattackable.

Its people were proud, arrogant, and over-confident. They felt safe there in their mountain fortress! They were sure that no one could scale this hill with its perpendicular sides. But one day the enemy came, and Cyrus of Persia began a siege of Sardis. For fourteen days Cyrus waited. Then he offered a special reward to anyone who could figure out a method of military entrance into the city. A young soldier was watching the cliffs intently one day when he saw a soldier in Sardis drop his helmet over the battlements. It went clanging down the mountainside. Now, although Sardis stood atop a precipitous hill, the hill had developed faults and cracks. The soldier's helmet fell into one of these fissures. The soldier began to climb down the precipice into the fault to recover his helmet, and then climbed back up again.

The soldier below, watching this activity, noticed this and reasoned there must be a crack in the rock...perhaps an easy entrance into the city above. That night a carefully selected group of Persian soldiers searched out the fissure and made their way to the top of Sardis and found it completely unguarded. As a result Sardis was easily taken. Sardis fell to Cyrus because her defenders had become complacent; they thought themselves too impregnable to need a guard. The enemy slipped in and came upon them "as a thief" and they knew not the hour that he came! Surely it was upon this background that the Lord warned the complacent believers in Sardis, who gloried in their great works and programs for God, while neglecting their inner spiritual condition, "Remember therefore how thou hast received...and repent. If therefore thou shalt not *watch*, I will *come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee!*" Later in the book of Revelation the Lord stated again, "Behold, *I come as a thief*. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garment, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" (Rev. 16:15).

There is a coming of the Lord as a thief! This is not a coming or an appearing that is before the public. It is not an unveiling before the multitudes. A thief does not go down to the public square with a trumpet and say, "I'd like to make an announcement. At three o'clock in the morning I'm going to visit the wealthiest man in this town and I'm going to steal everything I can get my hands on." He doesn't do that! He comes at the darkest part of the night. He comes with softest tread, without noise, without light, without warning. He comes as silently and stealthily as possible, unobserved by the sleepers. He comes to rob. He comes to take away everything that he can. He is after gold and pearls and jewels of great price. Men are unaware of the event until he has come and gone and the items of value to the owner have disappeared with him. The Lord Jesus Himself says that HE WILL COME AS A THIEF!

Almighty Lord! in whom dwellest the wisdom and knowledge of the universe, flood our souls with understanding from above. Remove the dark veil from our minds, and flood our hearts with light divine, that we may clearly behold the sacred secrets of truth long concealed in Thee. Our understanding of this beautiful truth will be greatly enhanced once we understand that in that long ago in the land of Israel Jesus came as a thief. The carnal mind conceives Him as coming in royal splendor and magnificence, with a band of trumpets sounding, a host of angels announcing His arrival, as He makes His triumphal entry into the world riding on a chariot overlaid with gold, His royal garments glistening with jewels of the rarest kind, and a crown of gold on His head and the omnipotent scepter of His kingdom in His hand.

Perhaps one of the greatest mysteries of all is that Christ came, not to dazzle the world with a spectacular political coup or military overthrow of the kingdoms of the world, but to reveal the kingdom of God **within men**, to unveil the internal rule of the spirit by which men and families and communities and cities and nations are transformed

from domains of sin, ignorance, fear, evil, greed, lust, sorrow, darkness, disease, and death into shining citadels of righteousness, wisdom, love, joy, peace, health, light, and life. He came the first time to an out-of-the-way place, in the womb of a woman, and lying in a manger. He came riding on a little donkey. “Behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass” (Zech. 9:9). He came in weakness, in meekness, in obscurity. His coming was shrouded in secret. Very few knew when He arrived in the midst! When Jerusalem and the great city of Rome closed their shops that star-lit night they knew not that the King of glory had come to earth. Even Bethlehem did not know.

When our Lord rode into Jerusalem He came not with the flamboyant and dazzling style of an earthly king. There were not legions of angels, no blasting of trumpets, no marching of armies, no royal chariot pulled by lively, prancing, expertly groomed and trained white horses. There was no palace where royal attendants waited to escort Him to His throne, and to await His every command. Our glorious King — yours and mine, beloved — came to the common, ordinary multitude in the most lowly, humble, and unpretentious way — riding on a common beast of burden — yet He came in the quiet and hushed movings of His omnipotent Spirit! The kingdoms of the world knew nothing of His coming until it was too late — the feet of iron and clay were smitten by the power of His word as like a thief He came upon them and spoiled their houses, setting up a kingdom of life and light and love in their midst which shall never be destroyed and of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, and all the kingdoms of men shall be driven away like the chaff of the summer threshingfloor before the wind.

As our Lord came into the world two thousand years ago silently, with softest tread, without fanfare or warning, so does He come to every man! Every well-marked crisis in the life of a child of God is a “coming”

or “appearing” of the Christ, whether we know it at the time or not. Many times we encounter Him in the most unthinkable places, and under the most unpropitious circumstances. In places and ways where we least expect to find the Lord, He will meet us face to face. There are times when we are faced with a mountain of circumstances, which appears unsurmountable and immovable. This is often the very place where we find Him waiting for us! All the mountains in our lives are raised up through our lack or unbelief, but there are no mountains of difficulty with God!

There are occasions when such appearances of the Lord seem the very opposite of what they are, times when our fate seems to be at the mercy of haphazard influences and accidental events. The really great crises in the experience of any of us are in most cases unexpected, take us unaware. If you read the Lord’s symbolical and figurative descriptions of His coming in this light you cannot fail to see how true they are in each of our lives. He says no warning will be given! People will be going about their ordinary avocations in the ordinary way, taking for granted that nothing different will occur from what they have been accustomed to from day to day; outwardly there will be nothing portentous, no sign that the old order of things is at an end; and then, like a clap of thunder, the cataclysm will be upon them! “For as the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; SO SHALL ALSO THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN BE.”

We are bidden to look for the Lord’s appearing in all the changes and happenings of our lives. The Lord directs and mandates every experience in the lives of His called and chosen elect, there are no accidents for any of us, and every event is the vehicle of His appearing to us. In the crises, changes, processings, strippings, purgings, prunings, blessings, and quickenings HE COMES to succor and relieve, to claim us

for Himself, to teach us His ways, to inwork of His nature, and transform into His image and likeness. Nothing happens without Him; nothing can reach us that is not directly the token of His presence — or, as I prefer to put it, it is His very own special advent, the coming, the appearing of Christ to us in a fresh experiencing of Himself! “Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh!”

As a thief! Can the natural mind even fathom the depths of a truth so eternal and sublime? This statement plainly indicates the manner of the Lord’s coming. It shows that He is always present unseen, doing a work of which men are for a time entirely unaware. His working is therefore in a quiet manner, unobserved and entirely unknown until the discovery is made in consciousness of the handiwork He has wrought in secret. His arising steals its way upon us as the dawning of the day. The sun comes up at an early hour in the morning and if you are awake and up at that time you will see it rise, but if you sleep until noon, a great number of important things can transpire ere you are aware. The morning can be over before you know what is going on!

Traditional teaching has led us to think in terms of the first coming of Christ and His second coming, whereas the scriptures speak in terms of the progressive revelation of Jesus Christ. The Bible nowhere talks about the “first coming” and the “second coming”. People use those terms as though they are found everywhere in the word of God! Yet the truth is, they are found nowhere! If I were to request a preacher to preach a sermon on the “second coming” of Christ using only the scriptures that mention His “second coming” it would be a short sermon indeed! In fact, it would be no sermon at all. We could just turn out the lights and all go home. The term is not in the Book. Neither is the term “first coming” in the Bible. These are unscriptural and extra-biblical terms. Those who use them have invented a theology all their own which is foreign to the word of God.

What the Bible does talk about is the progressive revelation of Jesus Christ, the unveiling of the Son of God, and many different “comings” of the Lord. The Holy Spirit records, “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me who is to be Ruler in Israel, whose *goings forth* have been of old, from everlasting” (Mic. 5:2). Notice His “goings forth.” The plural is used. The goings forth of the Lord speak about the Lord Jesus Christ! Now, the idea of “goings” has to do with the onward marching of God — the unfolding of the purpose of God, step by step. This is what is indicated here. This is what history is all about, the progressive revelation of the Christ, the marching forward of God, the ever-increasing of the unveiling of Himself to man!

Like the sound of many waters, the testimony of the word of God records with abundant and stunning and inescapable evidence that the coming of Christ is not a single event, or two great events, but includes many different manifestations. His coming to us is a many-sided experience. To multitudes He appears as Saviour. They find Him at the crossroads of their lives. They invite Him to “Come into my heart, come into my heart, Lord Jesus!” And this coming is just as real and meaningful and powerful as was His coming long centuries ago! To many He becomes their salvation, but they never venture any deeper to know Him intimately. They have only a superficial knowledge of Him. To others He appears as Bridegroom. “Behold, the Bridegroom *cometh!*” is the cry that meets the ears of the virgins waiting for His appearing. And for those who were unprepared, whose lamps had gone out and they had no oil, He came “as a thief” and they missed their hour of visitation. But for those who are prepared, they hear His voice and are moved by His love, and follow on to know Him in deeper measures of intimacy and union. To others He appears as a Refiner’s Fire. “The Lord, whom ye seek, shall *suddenly come* to His temple...like a refiner’s fire...He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver...and He shall purge the sons of Levi (priesthood), that they may offer unto the Lord an offering

in righteousness” (Mal. 3:1-3). This is a coming of the Lord that the “second coming” preachers miss altogether! The Lord comes to His priesthood company consuming their hay, wood, and stubble, eliminating by the spirit of burning all that is of self and not of God. These are only a few of the many “comings” and “appearings” of the Lord mentioned in the scriptures. The coming of the Lord is as many-faceted as the most dazzling crystal of earth! And in many of these comings the Lord comes upon men either in blessing or in judgment “as a thief.”

#### **THEY SHALL WALK WITH ME IN WHITE**

“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in *white raiment*...thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and *they shall walk with me in white*: for they are worthy” (Rev. 3:4-5).

White garments (or robes) are mentioned seven times in the book of Revelation. The Laodiceans are counseled to buy white raiment to hide the shame of their nakedness (3:18). Those who have been slain, who have laid down *their lives* to take up *His*, and are awaiting vindication, are given white robes (6:11). In the celestial throne room the twenty-four elders are clad in white garments (4:4). Before the throne stands a great multitude that no man can number, who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (7:9,13). The armies of heaven who follow the conquering Christ upon white horses are arrayed in fine linen, white and pure (19:14). We may conclude, therefore, that the white garments promised to the overcomer are the white raiment in which all of these are clothed, representing a *spiritual attire*, indeed, a **state of being!**

There is another thought here that we must not overlook. All down through the ages, from the time Adam was expelled from the



Garden on, God has never left Himself without a remnant. Somewhere in the world, no matter how dark the age, or overwhelming the apostasy and wickedness, God has had a people who walked with Him in the Spirit. To Sardis the Lord said, “Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall *walk with me in white*: for they are worthy.” This glorious promise is made to the “few” or God’s remnant out of the church of Sardis. This remnant is composed of people who have not soiled their garments with the spirit and ways of the world or the seductiveness of man-made religion. That this remnant is God’s called and chosen elect, the company of the overcomers, is clear, for the Lord continues, “*He that overcometh*, the same shall be clothed in white raiment.”

This white raiment is not the *imputed righteousness* that is given to us when we receive Christ as Saviour. You will note that the Lord, in the book of Revelation, is sending these letters to the seven churches. Therefore, He is speaking to people who have already received the imputed righteousness to their account! Though righteousness has been imputed to them through faith in Jesus, there is yet another white raiment that comes only through *overcoming*. This is not the imputed righteousness of Jesus as Saviour, but the **actual righteousness** which God is bringing us to as our state of being, that perfect walk in Christ, His nature and glory raised up in us as our very own life, that perfection that He is bringing us to fulfilling the words of Jesus, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Mat. 5:48). And fulfilling the exhortation of Paul, “But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ” (Eph. 4:15). This is the fifth stage of our journey into the fullness of Christ — to be led to that perfection, that perfect righteousness, nature, and glory of the Son of the living God!

The miracle of what God has done through Jesus Christ ravishes my heart. I am enthralled beyond measure that He has translated me

out of the kingdom of darkness, and is clothing me with the fullness of the Son of God. Daily I am putting on the Lord Jesus Christ who is my robe of righteousness and my house from heaven, the new man, the spiritual body, and the new building of God, eternal in the heavens. Just as the life within a lamb produces its covering of wool, so does the life of Christ within each son of God create the garments of our full salvation. We put on the robe of Christ's righteousness, not by putting it on from outside of ourselves, by our own self-effort and good works, but by the working and power of His life within.

Some time ago Jody Dragoo shared with us a beautiful experience the Lord gave him in vision in which he saw the glory of the robe of righteousness as the spiritual body of the new man. The following is his account of this manifestation. We have shared this once before, a number of years ago, but it is so precious and powerful I cannot but share it again in connection with our present subject.

"The events that I now share are none other than the sons and daughters of God coming into their own, having overcome through the blood of the Lamb and having put on the incorruptible, immortal, and resurrected body of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was about seven o'clock one morning when I awoke to get ready for work. I didn't stay awake long as the next thing I knew I found myself in a foreign land. The name of the land was not revealed, but it may have been in Africa. The area was hot and dry without any wind on this day. The sky above was blue and clear for miles around. The sand beneath my feet was bright due to the sun beating down upon it. There were areas of sparse plant life, but not sufficient to sustain life. The area had apparently been in a long drought as there were very few cattle around. There were a few people who still resided in this village, one of which was a woman who was carrying a pail of water upon her head. She was off to my left and under the porches or walkways of the village.

“Another individual was a young black man who wore a light shirt and dark pants, who took me through the village. He spoke of the conditions that the people faced daily and how hard the drought had been on the livestock and all concerned. As we walked, he said the greatest need of his people was for rain. While he talked, I did not answer a word. It seemed I was completely aware of the situation at hand and the conditions they were in (Amos 8:11-14). Next we came to an open area within the village where we stopped and this individual stepped a few feet away from where I stood. After he spoke of the greatest need of the village being rain, immediately my hands and arms raised upwards toward the Father. It was at this point that I began to notice my *garment*. I was wearing a white robe with a small belt around the waist. There were no wrinkles or spot within the robe, and no sand on it. The robe kept out the effects of the climate and I felt no heat at all. As for my feet, I don’t recall them touching the ground at any time.

“One aspect of this robe which has deeply impressed me is the fact that it felt different from the clothes or ‘robes’ we normally wear. With the clothes we usually wear we can feel the separation from our body. Furthermore, the fact that we have to change them daily, testifies to us that they are not really a part of our being. They are only temporary coverings until the permanent garment is put on. This robe, however, *was part of my being*. It was inseparable from my body. There was no sense of division or separateness. Is this not the picture of the corruptible putting on the incorruptible, the mortal putting on the immortal — the putting on of the Lord Jesus Christ who is formed within us! Is this not but the fulfillment of Romans 8:23 in regard to the complete redemption of the body? The sons and daughters of God clothed with the incorruptible, immortal, resurrected body of Christ, covered with the glory of God! And these go forth ministering from that incorruptible realm of *pure spirit*, delivering creation from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

“From this we should understand that putting on the robe — the incorruptible, immortal glory of God — is actually our *union with the robe*, making us complete, perfect, and lacking nothing! It is interesting to note that the robe comes forth from the inner working of the Father Himself. It is He who weaves each and every strand into a whole, complete unit. It is brought forth from within as the Lord Jesus Christ is formed within us, revealed in fuller detail day by day. This is the Father’s work, and it is beautiful to behold! The robe is out of our innermost being and part of our entire being.

“The next thing I noticed was my thought processes and how they worked. The mind seemed to operate on a completely different realm from what we are accustomed to. This reveals that the mind of Christ was in full operation. This is the new mind and heart promised by the Father. The mind that was in Christ Jesus was the mind of the Father. And it was this mind which was in operation within me. This is the renewed mind of which Paul spoke. It is this mind that the Father is perfecting within His sons and daughters. And it is this mind that sought the Father for rain for a dry village!

“As I raised my hands upward an intercession for the people began, the Father was seen in a large white cloud which began producing rain clouds. Almost immediately these clouds began pouring rain down upon the village. It was rain in abundance that watered the ground and filled their wells. I can’t say what the words I spoke were, but they had such power and authority in them that the elements themselves were brought to obedience. As the rains came, the man who guided me through the village had an astonished look upon His face. He asked, ‘How did you do this?’ It was at this point that I awoke.

“As I have continued to meditate on this it has begun to transform my attitude, my understanding, my life, and all that is within me. It has become strong meat in times of testing. The scripture which states that ‘it does not yet appear what we shall be,’ comes to mind in reference to

this dream and witnesses to my spirit about the things shortly to come to pass. How beautiful it is when Father pulls back some of the veil and shows us these things! To see the ministry of the sons and daughters of God coming into their own, being clothed with the glory of God, and delivering creation from the bondage of sin and death is wonderful to behold. I will never forget the robe which He revealed, and how it was part of my being, and covered and protected all of my being. Ah, the sons and daughters with the mind of Christ shall lack nothing!” — end quote. And may I add — *nothing* shall be impossible unto them! They shall ask for rain for all creation, even the presence, life, and power of God to restore all things, and suddenly shall it come upon the world! Isn’t it wonderful!

I thank God today that there is a righteousness, a divine righteousness that God can raise up within men, and which can exalt a man to the image and likeness of God. In no other way can men ever be exalted or lifted up out of the power of sin, self, sorrow, and death. Thank God for the *imputed righteousness* of Christ — it is sufficient to remove your sin-consciousness and bring you into fellowship with God. But it is not enough to make you an overcomer, perfect, mature, in the full stature of Christ. Men get all hung up on the imputed righteousness of Christ and never get on to the business of *transformation into the image of God*. They major in milk, but have no meat. They get men started, but never grow them up!

So I gladly and thankfully this day record this truth that the righteousness of which I speak is the righteousness of God, which by faith we may possess; not only a righteousness imputed, in which we can trust for the beginning of our salvation, but a righteousness IMPARTED, INWORKED INTO THE NATURE, RAISED UP AS **ACTUAL RIGHTEOUSNESS AS A STATE OF BEING**. All very good is this talk about imputed righteousness, but I cannot — will not — settle for a righteousness that is only imputed. If it is not the very **nature of our being** then we are not

really changed at all. The robe of imputed righteousness is the robe that can become soiled! “Thou has a few names even in Sardis which have not *defiled their garments*.” “And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment *spotted by the flesh*” (Jude 23). But there is a robe that *cannot be soiled*! This is the robe of the *overcomer*! This is the perfection and glory of Christ which transforms us into the likeness of God!

It is clear that the garments which can be *defiled* (Rev. 3:4) are not to be identified with the white raiment of the overcomer nor with the white raiment in which those who have not defiled their garments walk with Christ. The white raiment that is not and cannot be defiled, soiled, or stained, is the garment of *glory* — being a part of that inheritance which is *incorruptible* and fadeth not away. This is the garment of the overcomer of which the Lord speaks, “and they shall walk with me in *white*, for they are worthy.” The Greek word here translated “white” actually speaks more of the brilliant radiance of *light* than it does of a color. It is the same word which is used of the appearance of Christ at the time of His transfiguration as “white and glistering.”

Actually what is being said here is that those who overcome will be clothed upon with the radiant glory of the risen and ascended Lord! Just as He is robed in celestial light (Ps. 104:2), so we are progressively being clothed from glory to glory with light as with a garment. The words used carry the sense of shining in intense whiteness, in a dazzling heavenly glory. A vesture of light would enclothe the overcomer and the glory of the celestial realms would be his garb. In that great day when we shall perfectly image and out-ray the exact likeness of God in the fullness of our sonship, we, too, shall be clothed in glistering garments of white light. We who “walk in the light as He is in the light” shall show forth the glory of God through our incorruptible bodies of glory!

George Hawtin has written in this connection, “So it was on that never-to-be-forgotten day our Lord led His three disciples to the top of a very high mountain and was transfigured before them (Matt. 17:1-2). The record states that “His face did shine as the *sun*, and His raiment was white as the *light*.” Only light is truly white. His garments were not white like a snowflake; they were as white as the light! Jesus was transfigured before them. He was transformed. He was changed. The Greek word *metamorphoo* is the word the evangelist Matthew used to describe the change that took place in Him on that wonderful day. As a groveling worm is transformed to become a butterfly, so our Lord was transformed from corruptible to incorruptible, from natural man to manifested Son of God. The celestial light of the glory of God shown from His face brighter than the glory of the sun. This was the shining forth of the incorruptible! Our Lord was revealing the unspeakable, excellent glory of the incorruptible realm. He was showing them, first, what He Himself would be, and secondly, He intended that these astonished onlookers should understand what the incorruptible sons of God will be when they reign with Him in that heavenly realm. This was the overpowering sight John beheld in the Revelation — one like the Son of man whose voice was as “many waters” standing in that same brilliant glory of heavenly incorruption. This is the fullness of the body of Christ!” — end quote.

Those who are following on to know the Lord in this new kingdom day shall fully receive that new garment of white, which is the garment of the incorruptible Life, Light, and Glory of Christ! The message of Christ to His elect of the present time is, “He that overcometh shall be clothed in white raiment...and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.” FOR THEY ARE WORTHY! Not because they have believed in Jesus and been forgiven and cleansed from their past sins. Oh, no! It is because they have been changed, transformed, metamorphosed into the nature and glory of Christ Himself. This white raiment is nothing less

than the new body of the Christ Life, for how else could these “walk with Him in white”?

The Lord Himself also said to His elect, “I counsel thee to buy of me...*white raiment* that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy *nakedness* do not appear” (Rev. 3:18). This white raiment is certainly not the imputed righteousness of Christ, for that you do not need to “buy!” Paul also expressed something of the groaning and travailing we all experience as we endure the bondages and frustrations of this body of death. He said that we long to be *clothed upon* with our house which is from heaven, so that when this earthly house of this body is dissolved, we might *not be found naked*. As long as we are in this body, we are burdened, yea, we groan, not that we would be unclothed (as in the death of the grave), but clothed upon with the new body of the Christ Life, so that this mortality might be swallowed up by HIS LIFE.

“Now He that has wrought us for the selfsame thing **is God**, who also hath given unto us **the earnest of the Spirit**” (II Cor. 5:5). The “earnest of the Spirit” is the indwelling life which assures us that we shall attain to our appointed goal, for the fulfillment of His promise must be **by the Spirit**, and not by any ability we think we have. I must confess I do not know **how** the Lord will transform these bodies, nor do I wish to presume upon the timing of the Lord. I do know that any self-effort is vain, health foods contribute absolutely nothing, and confessions by which we try to “name it and claim it” have not worked for any I have known who tried it. I am only aware of the strange inner working of the Spirit of the Lord that has awakened me to the truth that the sons of God shall step into the immortality of the Christ in spirit, soul, *and* body, for any reality less than this cannot set creation free from the **bondage of corruption!**

The Lord has spoken this beautiful truth to many thousands of His called and elect saints in these recent years, but we would not be so



foolish as to claim anything before the time. God does have a *time!* And it is in *His appointment.* God does have a *way!* And it is *by His Spirit.* Father will do the work in His “fullness of time” just as Jesus came “in the fullness of time” and “when the day of Pentecost was fully come” He returned in mighty Spirit power! I am only able to declare what I hear of Him. The timing is up to Him. So we press forward into His life while patiently waiting for the moving of His Spirit. Should my body go to the grave before Father’s appointed hour arrives for the manifestation of the sons of God I will not miss that unveiling, for just as surely as Christ Jesus rose from the tomb in resurrection power and glory, as the Son of God with power, so shall He raise me up in that day in the power of His resurrection, for the manifestation of sonship is the manifestation of HIS RESURRECTION LIFE!

Doesn’t it stir up your pure mind and incite your spirit to heights of wonder when you read of the “young man” who sat at the sepulcher after the resurrection of Jesus who was “clothed in a long white garment” (Mk. 16:5). He had just descended from that high and lofty spiritual realm to give counsel and comfort to the bereaved disciples, that realm where there is no sickness, darkness, or death, but where all is LIGHT AND LIFE. And it is that same realm of LIGHT AND LIFE to which Christ Himself has invited us, when He said, “and they shall **walk with me in white.**”

At the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ in human flesh as the first begotten Son of God, the brightest light the world had ever seen shone upon mankind. “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the *light of life*” (Jn. 8:12). Christ was literally clothed in light that shone as the noonday sun, scintillating with all the colors of the spectrum as He walked and talked in unbroken fellowship with Him who is the Father of Light. Saul of Tarsus was blinded by the dazzling light of this Son of God, when he met Him on the road to Damascus, and John the beloved beheld this glory

again as the actual out-ricing of the Light which God is. Think of it! As Jesus is in His glory of resurrection, brilliant in scintillating splendor, so shall we be when we have come to know Him fully in the power of His resurrection, helping to illuminate the entire universe with the out-ricing of Christ from within us.

As surely as the Daystar is arising in your heart, my brother, my sister, just so certain is it that the glory of the Lord shall be seen upon His people! "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising" (Isa. 60:1-3). This glory is not religious zeal or soulish emotionalism and excitement — it is real **spiritual power**. It is the divine effulgence that radiates His majesty and affects all things. The glory is arising upon the Lord's elect, is being activated within us, and shall dwell upon us until we all become radiant with the substance of His celestial being, the emanating train of His power. This is the celestial garment of His white-light!

Can one hold back the dawn or forbid the sun to rise? The night is for them that sleep; but for those who walk in the light of the Lord even the darkness shall be light before them. The dawn belongs to all who have lifted their eyes from the shadows unto the realm of Light and Life and Truth...for they walk in the glorious freedom of the sons of God. The sons of God shall arise above the mountains of the earth as the living radiance of His kingdom, yea, even as the embodiment of the Father of Light. Each son a living member of His Christ. God is clothing them with the garments of His glory, and the brilliance of God's eternal sunrise shall shine from their eyes and speak from their mouths. All realms shall be flooded with the light of God as all creation partakes of the liberty of the sons of God. Aren't you glad!

## I WILL NOT BLOT OUT HIS NAME

“To him that overcometh...I will *not blot out his name out of the book of life*, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels” (Rev. 3:5).

Here is one who by no means will have his name erased from the list of those having attained to THE LIFE. We cannot escape the conclusion that it is possible to have one's name erased from this wonderful book, else the promise would be meaningless. So, what does that mean? Since the qualification for having one's name or nature inscribed eternally in this book is *overcoming*, this being something done subsequent to becoming a child of God, what is being presented is not the salvation and life which are the free gift of God's grace, received by simple faith in Jesus. The subject here is MATURITY OF LIFE — the very life of the Son of God reproduced in a people that is **like Him** in the fullness of Himself. This one *can* be disqualified from!

“And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope *unto the end*: that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience *inherit the promises*” (Heb. 6:11-12). “For we are made partakers of Christ, *if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end*” (Heb. 3:14). “Wherefore the rather, brethren, *make your calling and election sure*: for if ye do these things, ye shall *never fall*: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (II Pet. 1:10-11). “Be ye faithful *unto death* (of self), and I will give thee a *crown of life*. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that *no man take thy crown*” (Rev. 2:10; 3:11). “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, *I myself should be a castaway (unapproved)*” (I Cor. 9:27).

It is interesting to note that in the genealogies of the Bible there are only two books which are identified: (1) “the book of the generations of Adam” (Gen. 5:1) — all mankind is in that book, but it is a book of death — and (2) “the book of the generation of Jesus Christ (Mat. 1:1). The phrase, “the book of the generation,” is an unusual expression. It occurs only in connection with Adam and then in connection with Christ. The book of the generation of Jesus Christ is THE BOOK OF LIFE! It speaks of the life of Christ being generated, raised up and reproduced in us until we are fully like Him!

The book of life is called in the Revelation, “the book of the life of the Lamb” (Rev. 13:8). If I were to give you a book entitled THE BOOK OF THE LIFE OF GEORGE WASHINGTON, you would understand at once that it is the biography or autobiography of the life of the first president of the United States of America. That book should contain everything you always wanted to know about George Washington! Every detail of his life would be there: where he was born, who his parents were, where he was raised, the schools he attended, who he married, how he became general of the army, and finally president of our great nation.

In the same way, THE BOOK OF THE LIFE OF THE LAMB is the biography of God’s Lamb, the expose of who He is, what He is like, and what He does. Everything you ever wanted to know about the Son of God is contained in this wonderful book of the life of the Lamb! It is not a literal book, of course, for we are dealing with symbols; the sons and daughters of the Most High are themselves the LIVING RECORD AND REVELATION of the life of the indwelling Lamb! It was to the apostle Paul that the revelation was given that the book of life, the book of the Lamb, the book of the Son of God IS A PEOPLE. “Foreasmuch as Y-E are manifestly declared to be THE EPISTLE OF CHRIST ministered by us, written *not with ink*, but with the *Spirit of the living God*; *not in tables of stone*, but in *fleshy tables of the heart*. Who also has made us able

ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life” (II Cor. 3:3-6).

How pitiful that the people of earth for the most part have never read this beautiful EPISTLE OF CHRIST, this glorious BOOK OF THE LIFE OF THE LAMB. They have poured over the books of religion, the books of hypocrisy, the books of fleshly wisdom, forms of godliness, dead doctrines, static creeds, empty rituals, lifeless ceremonies, and man-made rules and regulations. But precious few have ever seen the BOOK OF THE LIFE OF THE LAMB! Oh! What a wonderful gospel shall fill the earth beneath and the celestial worlds above when God opens His holy book of life! The book of life is that blessed company of the sons of God, elect, chosen, and transformed into the image of Christ throughout the ages. This book is being carefully written word by word, sentence by sentence, paragraph by paragraph, page by page, and chapter by chapter in the nitty-gritty of our daily experience with God until the full revelation of the Christ shall be written therein. Time’s clock is striking the hour and the time is drawing wonderfully nigh for the manifestation of the sons of God, the opening of God’s book of life people, and what a revelation it shall be! There the whole world shall see and read in the simplest of language everything there is to know about Jesus Christ, the Son of God! All creation from time immemorial has groaned and travailed for the manifestation of the sons of God, to see and read and understand and know in them the many-faceted beauty and glory of God’s Christ, that they also might be delivered from the bondage of corruption.

God has a **message** for the world — the revelation of Jesus Christ! This message is being written in flaming words of glory upon the pages of the lives and hearts and minds of men and women who are dying to that impudent and death-dealing devil of self, in order to walk and live by the spirit of HIS LIFE. I am terribly at a loss of words to express the glory of God’s BOOK OF LIFE COMPANY, but I can assure you

that once it is fully ready, prepared and finished, it shall become the world's "best seller" throughout the ages to come! As the pen is mightier than the sword, so this book, above any that has ever been written by the finger of man, shall alter the course of history, and the dark covering that has been cast over the minds and the hearts of the people for generations and ages will be completely destroyed by the flood of transforming light and wisdom and knowledge and glory and power shining forth from the living pages of God's eternal and incorruptible BOOK OF LIFE!

The promise that our name will not be *blotted out* of the book of life reveals the great truth of that condition or state of being where one's walk in divine nature can no more be tainted, mixed, mingled, contaminated, stagnated, reduced, or lost in any way through the lower realms of the flesh — soul and body. No more can we stumble, make mistakes, offend, fall short, fail, miss the mark, or descend to walk out of a lower realm. OUR WALK WILL BE ALWAYS AND UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE POWER OF THE DIVINE NATURE OF CHRIST IN OUR SPIRIT! In this reality we will live continually and unfailingly in the victorious life of the spirit, soul and body united in the life of the spirit to express only that life which we are.

Preachers debate over the issues of "backsliding" or "losing one's salvation" versus the teaching of "eternal security." I do not hesitate to tell you, however, that this promise of Christ not to blot your name out of the book of life proclaims the **very highest realm of the truth of eternal security** — a walk in the perfection of Christ beyond sin, sickness, sorrow, fear, temptation, struggle, and death. Isn't it wonderful!

Ray Prinzing has written an encouraging word in respect to this beautiful hope. "When we have this deep delight, respect, desire unto the REVEALED WILL OF GOD TO US, then we read, '*and nothing shall*

*offend them.*’ No existing condition or circumstance, situation, or even a person, can offend us. NOTHING shall offend them! What a beautiful dimension of His grace is set before us in this word. Yet it is not to be some lofty vision to be fulfilled ‘in the sweet bye and bye’ of mythical religion, but that which He would work into us in these days. The word ‘offend’ from the Hebrew *mikshal* and the Greek *skandalizo* means ‘to cause to stumble’ or ‘a stumbling block.’

“We read that He is ‘able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy’ (Jude 24). This is not a barely making it in, as by the skin of our teeth, as the expression goes. It is being wrought in us triumphantly, gloriously, to His praise. Kept from ‘FALLING.’ Here the Greek word is *aptaistos* and means: to stumble, to fall. He is able to keep us from stumbling — being thrown off balance, and teetering on the edge of sin. There are so many things which can disrupt our sense of tranquillity, and when these things crowd in on us, we begin to stagger and flip-flop around until, spiritually speaking, we would look like a man trying to regain his balance after he had stumbled over a rock in his path. God is able to KEEP US CALM, COOL, AND COLLECTED — keep us from stumbling! And He is able to present us FAULTLESS unto Himself. If we are ‘offended,’ stumbling over something, it is a clear indication that there is something of self in us that has not yet been dealt with. We are not faultless as long as we continue to be offended, to stumble, be thrown off balance. But there is a place in God where ‘NOTHING shall offend them,’ and it is into this realm that we would be led” — end quote.

We can never know the power of Christ’s resurrection until we know union with Him. It is in union with Christ in God that brings the constancy of His life as our very own reality. There are a couple verses of scripture I would like to consider with you in closing this message. If you will let these gracious inspired words speak for themselves, you will be given to understand a mystery comprehended by very few men and

women who have walked the face of this planet. The following words of the apostle Paul are freighted with meaning and spiritual significance. “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence we also look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself” (Phil. 3:20-21).

The opening statement of this beautiful passage declares that “Our conversation *is in heaven*.” The word “conversation” is from the Greek *politeuma* meaning “citizenship.” It is not our words that we speak that are in heaven, but our citizenship — our habitation and residence with full civil rights. We are citizens of heaven! Our residence is in heaven! We have been raised up and made to sit together in the heavens in Christ Jesus! Heaven is the place of our birth, our nativity, our homeland, our sphere of living. We already dwell in heaven — **NOW!** God is SPIRIT, and heaven is the REALM OF THE SPIRIT, the SPHERE OF EXISTENCE in which God dwells. To be born of the Spirit, to be born of God, is to be *born in heaven*! To live in the Spirit is to live in heaven! To walk in the Spirit is to walk in heaven!

It will be worth our time to examine prayerfully just what is actually stated in the passage of scripture now under consideration. “For our citizenship is in heaven, *from whence we look...*” “We **look...**” I ask you to notice this particularly. “From whence **we look.**” “**From whence** we look.” It does not say, “from whence we *shall* look.” Nor does it say, “From whence *the Lord shall come.*” What it does say is, “From whence *we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body...*” It does not say at all that the Lord Jesus Christ shall come from heaven, although that is how our superficial reading and carnal mindedness has taken it! Nothing is said here about where Christ dwells, or where He is coming from. The



subject is not where Christ is, but where WE ARE and WHAT WE ARE DOING THERE!

Where are we? “Our citizenship (residence, homeland) *is in heaven!*” This beautiful passage shows the believer to be an heavenly man, positioned in the heavenlies — living out of the realm of SPIRIT. And what are we doing there? Why, bless your heart, from that lofty vantage point and exalted state of consciousness we are LOOKING FOR THE SAVIOUR to change our vile body! Just as a man may sit in a fire-tower steadily looking for the tell-tale signs of smoke that alert him to a forest fire, so WE SIT IN HEAVEN LOOKING FOR THE SAVIOUR TO CHANGE OUR BODY! The message is clear — we are not on earth looking for our Saviour to come crashing down from heaven. Rather, from our exalted seating in the height of heaven, in the high place of the Spirit, we look for this change, for we know the Christ there, we belong to Him there, we are joined in one with Him there, we are heavenly because He is. He will extend the work of salvation and exaltation to our members which are upon earth, to the body realm that still dwells in an earthly state, so as to present our whole being in the power of divine, incorruptible, and immortal life in the true sphere and home of that life above — a spiritual body!

Oh, yes! We are to possess a fully developed body which belongs to the celestial world! This change from mortality to immortality takes place as Christ arises from the inner, heavenly sanctuary of our spirit, coming out of heaven (spirit) within us to manifest in the visible world. We know our true spiritual and divine state in our heavenly life, and now soul and body are to be raised up into union in that heavenly life. As we find *Christ in us* as the source of our life, tremendous changes take place! Oh, the mystery of it! It is not from earth that we look for heaven to swoop down and change us; it is in heaven that we look for our outer man to catch up to our inner man. “**From heaven** we look for our Saviour to change our vile body!” Hallelujah!

This, my beloved, is that full salvation that includes the plentiousness of His incorruptible life, nature and power. It is the *full salvation* of the whole man, spirit, soul, *and* body, a victory so complete, so powerful, so divine and eternal, that there is NO POSSIBILITY OF EVER SINNING OR DYING AGAIN! These overcomers possess the very fullness of the divine nature! They are not merely “saved by grace,” but have totally laid down their own lives and completely taken up HIS. They are incorruptible in nature and immortal in substance. This, dear ones, is the TRUE ETERNAL SECURITY! These are they to whom the promise is given, “and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life.” When the process of redemption and salvation is completed in us and we are like Him fully, there will be NO MORE CHANGE, for we will dwell in the totality of being in that state of being as unchangeable as He is unchangeable, as eternal as He is eternal!