

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 59

THE CHURCH IN LAODICEA

(continued)

"Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked..." (Rev. 3:17).

Laodicea was a notably wealthy city. It was the center of the banking interests of Asia Minor. Twice Laodicea had suffered severely from the ravages of earthquakes. In AD 17 it had been devastated by the same earthquake which laid waste Sardis and Philadelphia. At that time it received the same kindness and aid from Tiberius, the Roman Emperor, as these other cities had received. But in AD 60 it was again laid waste, and this time, although all aid and assistance was offered, Laodicea completely refused them, and preferred to rebuild its shattered city out of its own resources. Laodicea was *too rich* to accept help from anyone! Tacitus, the Roman historian, tells us, "Laodicea rose from the ruins by the strength of her own resources, and with no help from us." The Laodiceans were people who were so well off that they needed help neither from man nor from God! They were people who believed that money could buy anything; and they had so much of it they could

very well manage without God — so they thought. But the omniscient Lord of the church said to them in effect, “You are rich and prosperous, and are proud of your riches, and trust in them; but in the things that matter, the truly *spiritual things*, you are poverty-stricken — and you do not know it!

It seemed everything this city did resulted in wealth and the church itself was taken in by the spirit of materialism. There is no doubt about it — they preached the “prosperity doctrine”! A lot of very wealthy and influential people belonged to the church. Apparently these wealthy people gave liberally to the church and the church had everything. You talk about a beautiful building — they had it! They had the most beautiful stained-glass windows, the plushest pews, the most exquisite draperies and carpet, the finest musical instruments, the most polished speakers, and a choir that attracted people from miles around. In this super-wealthy city everything was the greatest! When the church members came to the Sunday morning meeting they drove up in a Rolls Royce chariot, or a Mercedes chariot, or some other expensive chariot.

The pastors of these people could come to church and not even trust God! All they had to do was pull a little harder and all the rich people would give more. They were able to finance all kinds of pageants and programs and so-called ministries. They weren’t really trusting God at all, they were smug in their own ability and using the deceptive methods of the world. I have been in meetings where the offerings were a circus! Preachers have made offering taking into an art, they pride themselves in what kind of an offering they can take, how they can push the right button, say the right thing, and the finances will come rolling in. The easiest way to do this is to convince people that the primary evidence of God’s blessing is in financial prosperity, having all their carnal and material needs and wants met, and the secret to this blessing is, of course, in their giving to *them*! God, they are told, will

then restore their “seed” to them a hundred-fold! There is some truth in that, but I do not hesitate to tell you that material prosperity is *not* the primary evidence of God’s blessing and favor! The true riches are the *spiritual, heavenly* things of the Spirit of God!

What is *spiritual*? What are *spiritual things*? What are *treasures in heaven*? What are the *true riches*? Let me simplify this for you. If sinners can have it or do it without God — it’s not *spiritual*! Someone says, “I’m spiritual because I fast.” Witches fast! Another says, “I’m spiritual because I prosper and give vast sums of money to this ministry and that.” Indeed! Mafia king-pins also prosper and give large amounts of money to all kinds of worthy causes that help and bless people, and the good they do is often more than the churches do with their money. You see, precious friend of mine, human nature is wont to equate spirituality with what we **do**, or with what we **possess**. No! A thousand times no!

Even the term “spiritual” indicates that it requires the power and ability of the SPIRIT, or that it is an expression of the SPIRIT. Therefore, when we walk in the Spirit and are led by the Spirit, what flows out of us is a dispensation of the life and glory and power and wisdom and nature and will of God Himself — *that* is spiritual! Sinners can’t do that! The carnal mind can’t produce that! The fleshly nature can’t generate that! Self-effort is eternally and completely unable to perform that! Answered prayer — that’s spiritual. Deliverance and transformation — that’s spiritual. Speaking the words of God — that’s spiritual. Loving your enemies — that’s spiritual. Blessing them that curse you — that’s spiritual. The peace that passeth understanding — that’s spiritual. Laying down your life for creation — that’s spiritual. Putting on the mind of Christ — that’s spiritual. Being led by the Spirit of God — that’s spiritual. Money can’t buy these things. The natural man can’t mimic these things. These are the *true riches*!

George Hawtin described the LAODICEAN CONDITION in these words: “It is hard to tell a rich man that he is poverty stricken. It is almost impossible to disturb the composure of one who thinks he has need of nothing, who never surmises for a moment that he is miserable and wretched, poor and blind and naked. Yet such is the condition throughout the world and the entire realm of professing Christendom. I well remember a precious old lady who, having grown hard of hearing, imagined that her family intentionally spoke in subdued tones so that she would not hear their conversation, but, when after much difficulty she was persuaded to go to the doctor to have her ears washed out, then she wondered why everyone in the house was shouting so. That is just the way God’s people are in this the hour of Laodicea! They are blind but think they can see perfectly. They have grown deaf to the true voice of God, yet they are positive there is nothing wrong with their hearing. They are full of religion and talk loudly of signs and wonders, but do not know that they are lukewarm in their love and relationship to God. Their works abound on every hand, but they are unaware that God has neither sent them nor required these labors of them. It is time, oh child of God, to seek the quiet of the wilderness where every voice of man is hushed and no one has opportunity to speak but God” — end quote.

A great deception has circulated among the Lord’s people for many years now, and that is the deception of abundant prosperity. Evangelists, television and radio hucksters, as well as other pulpiteers have encouraged the Lord’s people to believe God for wealth and prosperity and to seek for it earnestly. With great enthusiasm these preachers of “another gospel” have encouraged the Lord’s people to indulge themselves in the lust and greed for temporal things and for money and great wealth. The apostle Paul wrote of a similar condition which prevailed in his day, and warned the people of God with these words, “He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about...perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the

truth, ***supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.*** But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment *let us therewith be content.* ***But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts,*** which drown men in destruction and perdition. ***For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith,*** and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, ***flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness***” (I Tim. 6:4-11).

The modern “faith” message of health, wealth, and prosperity is the cardinal doctrine of the church of the Laodiceans! I do not mean by this that the Lord has not promised to heal, bless, and meet all of our needs. Of course He has! It is a matter of focus. The “faith” message, as preached today, would have us believe that salvation’s greatest benefits are *physical, earthly, material, and temporal*. Untold thousands of commitments to Christ have been motivated by the expectation of the “good life” to be had by all who follow Jesus! We hear exclusively of the wonderful, exciting, and miraculous “abundant life” that God is just waiting to bestow upon those who *only believe* — ***and*** send in their “seed faith” offering! It will be a great blessing to your spiritual life to realize, however, that the substance of true commitment to Christ is that “He died for all, that those who live ***should no longer live for themselves***, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf” (II Cor. 5:15). Jesus did not instruct His disciples to count their blessings, but to *count the cost* of their commitment to follow Him, for the route to mount Zion where we reign with Him first passes over mount Calvary where we lay down our life with Him. When one is delivered from the flesh appeal of the things of *this world* and finds Christ Himself as the substance and reality of life, it then matters not whether we drive a shiny new Lexus or a rusted old Ford Escort. The mark of our spirituality

will not be whether we clear \$100,000 after taxes or subsist on \$600 a month Social Security, for when CHRIST HIMSELF IS OUR LIFE AND ALL WE NEED, WE HAVE NEED OF **NOTHING!** When Christ becomes our only measure, value, and goal we are then an *overcomer* out of the church of the Laodiceans! Then we are truly *rich!*

The church of the Laodiceans loves our national hymn, but they prefer to sing it thus:

Oh beautiful for dividends

Of twenty-five percent

On oil and technology

On money freely lent

Oh blessed land of bumper crops

May riches be our fate!

Increase our wealth and save our health

American, the Great!

A brother wrote me, saying, "Someone sent me a videotape of a convention sponsored by a well-known prosperity preacher. I was so appalled by what was being taught I could hardly contain myself. It was blasphemy! One preacher boasted, 'I spent \$15,000 for a dog. This ring on my finger cost \$32,000. I live in an 8,000 square-foot house, but I'm going to build a bigger one — one Solomon would be proud of! When the people of my town see my big house and my Rolls Royce in the

driveway, they know there is a God in heaven!’ I wanted to weep because the entire time he spoke, people were running on stage and stuffing money in his pockets. They all claimed to be rich men. The tragedy was, the people loved it! They were being exploited by a perverted gospel.” Beloved, do not listen to this false gospel. It is satanic. It comes from the heart of men who are earthly minded, carnal, sensual, frivolous, jokesters, greedy for more. Isaiah the prophet has their number: “Yea, they are *greedy dogs* which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look their own way, *every one for his gain*, from his quarter” (Isa. 56:11).

If God has blessed you with the riches of this world, dear reader, humbly give Him thanks and use it wisely and for His glory. Oh, yes! God will meet your needs! He will bring you into true life and immortality! But do not make money and things the indicator of divine approval or the barometer of *spirituality*! To do so will cause your spiritual goals to be redirected into the senseless futility of human avarice. The pursuit of temporal treasures is a counterfeit gospel, cunningly designed to make you miss the truth and life of sonship. The daily pursuit of earthly riches is a pill of spiritual poison! Material prosperity is certainly enjoyable to the outer man, and I will not refuse any blessing God sends, but it is *not godliness* nor is it the sign of *any spiritual attribute, grace, or power*. The greatest blessing God can give you is the mind of Christ and the nature of the Father! The sons of God are not measured by what they have, but by *what they are*!

It is a sad fact that the vast majority of busy, Laodicean Christians today have positively *no understanding of what the Father is doing*. While they sing and clap hands, dance and play with their gifts, and earnestly talk about the rapture and the far-away heaven of golden streets and mansions, where they will strum harps and shout throughout endless ages, they know nothing of God’s will, nor of His word, nor of His ways, nor of His wonderful plan of the ages, nor of His great purpose in

His sons and the restitution of the world and all creation. While they delight in propagating the grievous deception that the Lord wants nothing but prosperity for His saints, that they should seek and have the best of everything *this world* has to offer, together with the complete absence of problems, trouble, or tribulation of any kind, bringing God's people into bondage to the world and its transient and empty glory, thus hindering the development of many a saint — they know nothing of humility, brokenness, suffering, stripping, chastisement, purging, cleansing, refining, processing, and the resultant transformation and conformation into the image of the Son of God.

They know nothing of sonship! They know nothing of the groaning creation, and its hope of deliverance from the bondage of corruption! They know nothing of the Father's great and wonderful plan in bringing many sons to glory! They know nothing of reigning with Christ upon His throne in the heavens of God's Spirit! They know nothing of the heavenly mount Zion to which we are come, and where we now commune with our Father! They know nothing of the *spiritual blessings in the heavenlies* in Christ Jesus! They know nothing of God's merciful purpose for the government of the world by saints who *have His mind, know His ways*, and are acquainted with those purposes which were ordained in Christ our Lord before the world began and before the spirit of life was breathed into the clay we call Adam. They are having a hallelujah big time with their spiritual toys, completely oblivious to the great and important issues that really matter in this new and greater day of the kingdom of God upon earth. One of the sure marks of maturity is the ability to UNDERSTAND WHAT'S GOING ON!

Those who pursue the riches of this world and all earthly things as the sign of God's blessing and favor will awaken in the day of the manifestation of the sons of God with the same sense of emptiness and loss as the young man in a story I read. There was this girl who was very ugly — her face was her misfortune — and since she wanted to marry,

she found that she must fascinate. She gave out that her father was very wealthy. A young fish bit at the bait. He took her out for a Sunday afternoon lunch and drive. As they drove across town she pointed to a large office building and said, "That belongs to my father." "Indeed," said the fish, swallowing. "And that," again she waved her fair hand toward a large department store, "that too belongs to my father." Again the fish gulped. "And this," she indicated, as they passed a huge factory, "this is also the property of my father." This was almost too good to be true. The carp shut his eyes and popped the question. He was quickly landed; they were married; and then, as often happens, he woke up! Her face was not only her misfortune, it was her sole fortune! Those whose god is the riches of this world will likewise awaken in the day of the *manifestation of the sons of God* to discover that the ashes of all temporal things are the sum of their investment and the substance of their inheritance — their sole fortune! That's all they get! What unutterable loss! All the wealth of this earth is for those who belong to this earth, but if your treasures are in the heavens of God's Spirit then set not your affections on things on the earth, but seek those things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God!

Only God gives durable riches! True riches don't start with possessions — true riches begin in the heart. There are precious saints who don't have one copper penny to rub against another, but they are people possessing great and eternal wealth within themselves. They are rich in faith, love, wisdom, revelation, patience, righteousness, joy, peace, contentment, goodness, kindness, mercy, prayer, intercession, worship, discernment, and life. The true riches are set forth by the Holy Spirit throughout the scriptures. They are called the "riches of His grace," the "riches of His glory," the "riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God," the "riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints," the "unsearchable riches of Christ," and many other wonderful titles.

THE RICH WOMAN

The conditions within the seven churches of Asia are the “seed-plot” for the rest of the book of Revelation. All that follows the messages to the churches embodies the growth and development of those conditions, both positive and negative, and the Lord’s dealings with them throughout the age. These conditions existed in those literal churches to whom John wrote, but they have also existed in the whole church throughout the entire church age — only they have grown and developed into established doctrines, time-honored traditions, methods, movements, and great organizations with vast numbers and powerful influence in the earth.

Here in Laodicea we find the “seed” of a deplorable spiritual condition in which believers adopt the attitude, “We are rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing!” That represents the condition of self-sufficiency, self-satisfaction, self-righteousness, self-deception, and spiritual complacency and stagnation. “We have it all! We have everything we need! We now possess all God has promised! We have the purest doctrine! We have the *most ancient traditions!* We have the *full gospel!* We have the apostolic New Testament order! We have the nine gifts of the Spirit, the five-fold ministry, and spiritual worship! We have the *complete revelation!* We have the *deepest truth!* We are the one hundred and forty- four thousand! Our little group are the sons of God! We don’t need anything more! We have all the answers, all the truth; no one can add anything to us — we have need of nothing!” This, my beloved, is a *spirit*. It is the spirit of Babylon! You will find this spirit in the Roman Catholic Church, you will find this spirit in the Protestant denominations, you will find this spirit in the cults, and *you will find this spirit in the sonship message!* In

whatever realm or on whatever level you find it, my beloved, it is *still Babylon!*

The full development of this tiny seed in the church at Laodicea finally grows into a great whore who is also a great city called Mystery Babylon *“with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication...for all nations have drunk of the wine and the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are **waxed rich** through the abundance of her delicacies. How much she hath glorified herself, and **lived deliciously**, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow”* (Rev. 17:2,4; 18:3,7).

Our Lord said the church would say, “We’re rich! We’re rich! We’re rich!” In due time the whole church system began to build cathedrals with pillars, domes, and altars overlaid with gold; it gathered the greatest collection of the arts, with paintings and statues lining the corridors which are the envy of the world’s greatest museums; it amassed fortunes of billions of dollars in real estate and businesses of all kinds, and owns its own banks, possessing vast storehouses of money; it is rich in political power, and is able to lobby in all quarters of the political arena, and the politicians, because of its votes, will acquiesce; furthermore, it has its adherents entrenched in the highest positions of the greatest governments of the world! “We are rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing!” But when the Lord hears it, He says, “You are poor, you are poor, you are very poor, so poor that you are poverty stricken! Your gold and silver is but dust of the earth, and you know not; you have no idea what the *true riches* are!”

There is a truth beyond all this. Mystery Babylon is like Israel of old who was *rich* in covenants and promises, rich in the word that was brought to her, rich in scriptures and revelations, rich in prophets and teachers who were raised up in her midst to speak the truth under the anointings of God, rich in revivals and movings and manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Oh, yes! Babylon is, indeed, a very RICH WOMAN. As a friend has pointed out (and I am indebted to this friend for many of the thoughts in the next couple pages), she is rich by the hand of God, and is not merely pretending to be rich, as is seen in Hosea 2:8 where the Lord Himself affirms that He is the source of her wealth. Babylon is not, however, aware that He is her supply, and therein lies her ultimate undoing, for the Lord said,. *“She did not know that I (the Lord) gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold...therefore will I return and take away my corn in the time thereof and my vine in the season thereof and will take away my wool and my flax given to cover her nakedness, and now will I discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers and none shall deliver her out of my hand.”*

Babylon is a rich woman — but it is with these very riches from the hand of God that she has prepared her own idols, having held the truth in unrighteousness and changed those riches and truths of God into a lie. This is what the Lord says in this passage, *“She did not know that I gave her corn (spiritual truth) and wine (joy and rejoicing) and oil (anointing and power)...which THEY PREPARED FOR BAAL.”* Another translation renders it, *“Wherewith they prepared Baal.”* The living truth God gave has been perverted and turned into a static creed and dead doctrine, an empty ceremony, a lifeless ritual; the joy has been orchestrated by man into pageantry, feasting, sports, programs, and pleasures; and the anointing by which God raised up life-giving ministries in the body of Christ has been institutionalized into a system of man-made organization and hierarchy. All has become a lifeless *idol*, an *image* of man’s making, bowed down to and worshipped in place of

the living God! Ah, they have taken what God gave and have *prepared Baal!*

Deceived by the very riches that were given to bring her to God, Babylon exalts herself because of that which she possesses, saying within herself, “I sit as a queen.” Now, I am well aware that the highest meaning of Babylon does not mean the organized church system but is, rather, a condition in the mind and heart of man, which means that we have all, at one time or another, and perhaps even until now, been partakers of her. But on the visible plane, in its outworking by actions, it does refer to the organized church systems of man. All that the church system possesses was given her out of the anointing of God, imparted to her through anointed men, through those who walked the paths of the Spirit — and these men of bygone generations she admires! Nothing has changed, however, since the days of Jesus when He said to the religious leaders, “You garnish the sepulchers of the dead prophets — but kill the living ones!”

The anointed Word has been set in concrete in the church system, and like the *rephaim* — the physicians of no value who *embalmed* Israel (Gen. 50:2) — so has the church system EMBALMED THE CHRIST — fixed Him in a *static position* so that He can move no further. Holding the very *form of truth*, the church system denies the essence and life of that truth...and yet ***boasts of her wealth!*** But the Lord says, “Because thou sayest, *I am rich* and increased with goods (doctrines and forms and ritual and eschatology charts) and have need of nothing (not even the anointing) and *knowest not* that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked...” Because of all this, “I will spew you out of my mouth!”

Let me reiterate again, it is important to realize that her confession is not made of a lie: it is based on truth. She is not pretending to be rich — she ***is*** rich — rich in covenants and promises, rich in oil and wine, rich in doctrines about Christ and salvation, rich in

word, rich in a history of holy men, rich in revivals and movings of God. But even in her wealth she is poor and wretched and naked and blind because she holds the **husks** which have long ago been emptied of the corn! She treasures the alabaster box, little realizing that the essence has dissipated into the air long before this time.

As prophesied in Hosea, however, because “she did not know” that there was the need for the constant renewal of her riches, God stripped her naked as the day she was born and has set her in a wilderness. “So he carried me away in the spirit into the *wilderness*: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast...and upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” (Rev. 17:3-5). Babylon dwells, spiritually, in an arid, parched, desert land! There is little life there! But God did not send her into the wilderness without first **saving the living water** by pouring it into His called and chosen remnant!

Paul had this to say about God’s people of old, and the same principle is applicable to the Lord’s people of today: “Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for: BUT THE ELECTION (REMNANT) HATH OBTAINED IT, and the rest WERE BLINDED. According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear until this day. And David saith, Let their *table* (the table God spread for them) BE MADE A SNARE and a trap and a stumblingblock and a recompense to them...” (Rom. 11:7-9). The message is clear — the **very riches** which the Lord’s people in Babylon received from the hand of God becomes her downfall, for her own perverted *form of truth* blinds her vision so that she cannot recognize THE ANOINTED when He comes! Isn’t that what happened when the firstborn Son, Christ the Head, came into the world? Reasoning, always reasoning, from their intellectual grasp of scripture, as to what manner of Messiah should appear, as to what God expected from men — so that when the fulfillment of all that God

required appeared in human form, when the Son of God appeared before them in the flesh, their eyes were blinded to Him *by the very scriptures that had promised His coming!* Because they held that truth in the unrighteousness of a carnal-minded interpretation. How dreadful is the thought! And yet, the Babylon of this great day will likewise not recognize the COMING OF CHRIST AND THE REVELATION OF GOD IN HIS SONS!

A careful examination of the Greek that surrounds the passage in Romans concerning “holding the truth in unrighteousness” reveals that it means “to fail to come into union with that truth.” They held the truth, all right, but they held it ***independently of the Spirit!*** They exercised it apart from the presence of God — and walked in their own limited carnal understanding. Jesus said, “Everyone that hath learned from my Father will come unto me.” Ah, that is the key! They had learned the truth, that is, the scriptures — but they had not learned it ***from the Father,*** else they would have recognized and come to Jesus. They had learned it from *their fathers*, but not from THE FATHER! When a man is taught by the Father, side by side with the teaching of doctrine, God cripples him so that he may learn not to hold the doctrine independent from God Himself. In fact, truth is not really truth at all when separated from the anointing, for it is the ***Spirit,*** John says, that beareth witness, and the ***Spirit is truth*** — not the form of doctrine. Doctrine spoken apart from the anointing and life of God, and spoken apart from the inworking of that into the man, is not truth at all, though its facts may be quite accurate. The Spirit is truth! But the Pharisees had no such knowledge. They walked in the spirit of Babylon, the great whore who arose from the tiny little seed in Laodicea, which says, “I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.” Oh, how I thank God that He has delivered all who truly walk with Christ in His sonship from that spirit! Thank God, a remnant is being saved!

I mentioned earlier that this spirit of “I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing” is found not only in the Babylon of the church system, but can also be found in those who profess to walk in the truths of reconciliation, sonship, and the kingdom. Paul Mueller hit the nail right on the head when he wrote, “God has an elect remnant in the earth at this time who have grown spiritually beyond the Lord’s assessment of the Laodicean church. They are truly and sincerely living and doing only and always the pure and perfect will of their Father in heaven. But it appears that many others, who claim to be sons of God, continue to live and walk in the old order of the past. They are all the Lord said they were in this passage. They are lukewarm, spiritually speaking, regarding the will and purpose of their Father. They will also speak in glowing terms, telling us of all the spiritual gifts they have within themselves. Their testimony really is, ***‘I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.’***”

“Some claim to have great spiritual riches and treasures within them. Their boastings are abundant and constant; it is as if some of them are trying to outdo the others in making their empty claims. Truly the name-it-and-claim-it crowd is alive and active today! I have heard some of them say, ‘I am walking and living in Tabernacles!’ But their lives reveal the truth that they are really walking and living in the old order of Pentecost, for they continue to do all the old things of the past that pertain to the obsolete church order. Others might tell us that they are living and walking in the kingdom; yet they still manifest and show forth the impure traits of their bodies and minds. Some may say that they have all the fullness of God within them, or that God’s work within them is finished, and they have need of nothing more. But are they not all saying, ***‘I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing,’*** just as our Lord said they would?” — end quote

GOLD TRIED IN THE FIRE

“Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to *buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich*” (Rev. 3:17-18).

“Buy of me gold” means to *pay the price* for the divine nature of our Father to be brought forth in our lives! “Tried in the fire” means that His nature has become an experiential reality within us. It speaks of an intimate, direct encounter with God that causes all that is contrary to His nature to be consumed by the all-consuming fire of His Spirit, resulting in our spiritual growth and maturity in Christ. Our Lord has called upon His elect to buy of Him this gold tried in the fire, that *we may be rich!* Now we know what the *true riches are!* The riches of which He speaks are not the riches of the world, either of money, material things, or of stature, position, fame, or self-glory. The riches of this world corrupt the spiritual man and prevent a manifestation of the true Life of God. The gold that we are to buy of Him represents a life that has been tried and tested, even as gold is refined, to bring forth the qualities of the Christ life within all who are His called and chosen ones.

The gold of which our Lord speaks is symbolic of the divine nature and the divine life of those who put on the Lord Jesus Christ. The gold of the realm of the Spirit represents the spiritual riches of the saints, for Christ said that we should buy this gold tried in the fire, “that thou mayest be *rich.*” Therefore gold represents our true wealth! Jesus pointed out to the multitude gathered at His teaching, “A man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth” (Lk. 12:15). The gold of the realm of the Spirit is the true riches! The man who lives and walks in the attributes of God is a rich man indeed!

Bill and Elaine Cook published a dream that the Lord had given to Martin Paulet. He wrote, “I looked and I saw something coming down

from heaven. The Lord said he was giving this to me. It appeared to be **a large block of gold** coming down to me. The size was seven by five feet by three feet high. As it came down, I discovered it shone like it had light in it. It reminded me of the transparent gold, ‘...and the street of the city was *pure gold*, as it were *transparent glass*’ (Rev. 21:21). It was impressed upon me that this was *very valuable*, so I chipped off a piece about one inch by one inch by ¼ inch, and called some jewelers together for an evaluation. The jewelers offered me a million dollars for this small chip of gold. I replied, ‘Oh, that’s not enough,’ for I knew the value was greater than that. They then offered me *ten* million for it and I went home without selling it and knowing the true worth. As I pondered this before the Lord, He made me to know **the gold block He was giving me was none other than His nature**. This is such a valuable thing He is giving us. It is *more precious* than gold! His nature in us is more valuable than all the gifts and miracles He has given us. It is greater than *any gift* He has *ever* given us!” — end quote.

Speaking of the day when He would bring His kingdom and show forth His glory in the earth the Lord said through the prophet Isaiah, **“I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a MAN than the golden wedge of Ophir”** (Isa. 13:12). The MAN the prophet speaks of is God’s Christ, Head and body, the *new creation man* in the image and likeness of God! A man is growing to maturity in this day; it is the manchild company, the sons of God, or the body of Christ. This corporate man will be made more precious than fine gold by the Lord Himself, for He dwells within them in all the fullness of His divine life and glory. The reference to the “golden wedge of Ophir” is to the source of the finest gold available in that day, which was the gold of Ophir. From the mines of the land of Ophir in Arabia the Israelites obtained the most precious and highly refined gold in the days of Solomon. This gold was for the temple of God! The temple of God today is a living temple of *living stones*, raised up a *spiritual house*, the dwelling place of God from which He rules in kingdom authority and ministers to creation

through His king-priests after the order of Melchizedek. The temple of God is the same as the body of Christ, the sons of God, the MAN who is ***made more precious than fine gold!*** When the Lord completely delivers us from the old fleshly nature of sin and mortality we shall then *fully become* that MAN that is more precious than the finest gold of Ophir. That MAN, totally delivered from the bondage of corruption, shall then be the deliverer of creation! He shall show forth the spirit and power of reconciliation, restoration, and transformation to all mankind, bringing deliverance to the whole, groaning creation.

Even as gold is purified by fire, so are we purified by the fiery trials the Lord sends into our lives. Like the intense heat that causes the impurities to rise to the top of the molten gold, so the many tribulations we face in life, and the blazing fire of God's dealings that accompany them, draw from us those things that pollute the pure nature of God within our spirit. One pass through the furnace is never sufficient to remove all the impurities in gold, neither can we become pure in one season of testing. God allows us to be tested and tried by the Holy Ghost and fire for however long it takes because He wants us to be pure vessels to manifest His glory. Those who hunger and thirst for Him will not be devastated by this fire, but purified. They are those who heed the apostle Paul's warning to examine the materials with which we are building as the temple of God is raised up within us, for "every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be *revealed by fire*; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is" (I Cor. 3:13).

Gold fully tried in the fire is *pure gold*. The gold of the tabernacle in the wilderness was required by the Lord to be *pure gold*. The gold in Solomon's temple was also *pure gold*. The gold of the New Jerusalem is likewise described as *pure gold* (Rev. 21:18,21). That is what God is after! To be "pure" means to be "unmixed, single, free of anything that adulterates or taints; containing nothing but its own reality." *Pure* water

is water without any contaminants; *pure* air is air free from any pollutants; *pure* gold is refined until it contains no tinge of alloy, no trace of impurities, no residue of dross. Under the law of Moses people were not permitted to wear garments of wool mingled with linen. Not that there is wrong in either one, but *the type* is meaningful, for wool is derived from animals while linen comes from a plant. They were not to plow with an ox and an ass in the same yoke, for an ox is a *clean animal*, but an ass is *unclean*. God was showing that there are things that are not to be mixed! Flesh must not be mixed with spirit. Truth must not be mixed with error. Righteousness must not be mixed with unrighteousness. The will of our Father must not be mixed with the will of man. The activities of the people of God must not be mixed with the methods and ways of the world and of Mystery Babylon. The ministry of the Outer Court and the Holy Place must not be mixed with the ministry of the Holiest of all! Purity of heart means that the old Adamic heart is put off; the old religious heart is put off as well! There is singleness of vision, purpose, hope, and motive; the mind of Christ which is the nature of the Father is its only reality. This is what sonship is all about!

The Lord has promised to purge, refine, and remove *all mixture* from the lives of those who become His kingdom of priests, called and chosen to restore creation unto God. The word is sure, "The Lord...shall suddenly come to His temple...and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi (His priesthood), and purge them as gold and silver..." (Mal. 3:1-3).

In this wonderful process of refining the miner first mines the ore out of the darkest depth. The miner has it in his mind that he will go after the ore. Now, it's not easy to obtain the ore. The ore is in inaccessible places, and it requires great effort and endeavor for the miner to obtain the precious ore. The refiner then goes after the ore. The ore doesn't go after the refiner! I have never heard of an ore searching for a refiner! You never will. It's the refiner who goes after

the ore. Someone says, "I sought the Lord." Well, that's how it appeared to you, my friend, but the truth of the matter is the Lord sought you! He sought you in the darkest depths of the flesh and the bestial system of this world, and He brought you forth and made you His. It was HE who did it!

The ore is now the property of the miner who mined it, but the mixture is there. Both gold and silver are found in nature, but not in their pure form. They come mixed with, or imbedded in, various kinds of rock, minerals, and metals. No jeweler would want to work with natural gold with bits of rock or sand in it. Nor could such impure stuff be beaten into thin sheets. And no one likes a ring that turns their finger green! No, silver and gold as they are found in nature do not have, in themselves, much usefulness. They must first be separated from all the impurities that naturally accompany them. And the process for doing that is called *refining*. Our lives, dear ones, are like that! We are spirit, soul, and body — and within our spirit, which is the offspring of God, there is so much that is worthwhile in us, but in our outer life of the flesh and the carnal mind there is so much that is worthless. There is so much that is of God, and so much that is of self. There is part of us that is out of heaven, and part of us is of the earth, earthy.

So what does the great and eternal Miner have on His hands? He has a mixture! And that is why there has to be a furnace of fire. The ore which we are, in that mixed, raw, unrefined state, brings no pleasure at all to the Refiner, nor does it fulfill any useful purpose in His plans. Of these He says, "With them I am not well pleased." Our Father in His sovereign purpose sees us, but He cannot use all that He sees. The ore is wonderful relative to its pure precious metal content, but it is disgusting relative to the impurities that are mingled therein. He is unable to use us in that condition of mixture, so He comes to us as a refiner's fire. And immediately we wonder what is happening! What is happening is that HE is appearing, and I might add, He is showing up in a

form that we did not expect. Yes, 'tis the same Jesus, the lovely Saviour who so graciously saved us by His grace, dug us out of the darkness and depth of the earth, but He comes now, not to forgive and bless and coddle and wink at our carnality, but He comes as a refining fire, to purify the sons of Levi. He comes now because He has a *great purpose for us!*

The Lord, when He comes to His temple of living stones and purges the sons of Levi, or His kingly priesthood, He first of all purges out *one man* — old Adam! He comes to cleanse us from the carnal, Adamic mind, nature, and ways. He comes as a consuming fire to burn out of us all that is contrary to the righteousness and wisdom and purposes of the Lord. He is coming to each one of us in this new day of the kingdom of God and is purging the old fleshly nature and worldly ways out of us. On a corporate level He is also coming to those who have received the call to sonship and is separating out all who *talk* the kingdom but do not *walk* the kingdom. Only the ones who have completely surrendered to His will, and have walked in His ways, and have obeyed each sound of His voice, who have clean hands and pure hearts, will remain to reign with Him.

How can anyone be placed in a position of authority and power in the kingdom who has not come to the place of exhibiting only His nature? He will purge the sons of Levi, the kings and priests of His kingdom, disqualifying those He cannot trust to do His will and cooperate completely in the administration of His kingdom. The ways of Babylon and all the soul-possessing demands of the insipid church systems must be purged, the attributes of the carnal mind must be cleansed, all self-hood must be burned out, and all desire to make a name for ourselves and to gather men around ourselves rather than to Christ must be consumed. Thank God, HE IS DOING IT!

Ray Prinzing has written, “Kenneth Wuest, in his translation, calls the fiery trial ‘the smelting process.’ A fiery ordeal, a smelting process —

why? Because it will both purify us, as well as reveal what degree of quality has been attained therein. We become so involved with the exterior happenings of the trial, how our flesh hurts, etc., that we forget the actual purpose is for the *inner processing*, until we are of a *pure spirit* before Him. When suddenly we become aware of ‘what spirit we are of’ in some of these happenings, it sends us back to our knees in repentance and beseeching God to purge out these unholy traits. HE already knows what is in us, but the fires certainly expose us to ourselves! Sometimes we bow low in praise because we see what He has wrought, and are amazed at our own reaction to a situation — of the calm, the peace, the rest we have in it all. Then we also have those other times when the agitation of our spirit reveals that there are vast areas within that still need to be dealt with, purified and cleansed, until ‘ALL that is within me (can) bless His holy name’ (Ps. 103:1). Yet in all this working, praise God, we find in Him NO CONDEMNATION — just that continual drawing upward and onward, being assured that HE who hath begun in us this good work, will also bring it to a successful conclusion in His own time” — end quote. What a word!

“He shall **sit** as a refiner and purifier of silver...” He **sits** — this is a process that requires time, this is something that is important to Him, something He must patiently sit and preoccupy Himself with, not a work to be rushed or accomplished in one grand sweep of His hand. To us it becomes very monotonous, for it seems the process will never end. He SITS! From the moment you were sovereignly apprehended by the Spirit of God to be a part of His specific workings in this new kingdom day, the Lord Jesus Christ has been obsessively preoccupied with purifying and refining what you are as His kingdom instrument in the earth. He examines the ore, ugly, shapeless, not representative at all of that beautiful vessel He has in mind; but there it is, just a hunk of jagged, dirty ore, with too much alloy. He moves to change that, and under the crucible you go!

How long will this continue? I would like to promise you some respite, but I dare not. The inspired Psalmist declared, “The words of the Lord are *pure words*: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, PURIFIED SEVEN TIMES” (Ps. 12:6). Seven is the number of spiritual completion and perfection. It reveals the great truth that God’s own nature will be produced in the fire. He will heat up the furnace until you have been perfectly cleansed and purified, nothing remaining but HIMSELF. That which the Lord is receiving unto Himself cannot be of an inferior quality to Himself. The gold — ah, it is HIM! That is the value of your *spirit*, my beloved! How marvelous is the grace by which He has birthed us out of His own Spirit — making us “partakers of the divine nature” (II Pet. 1:4). It is like the grades in school, the farther along you go the harder the lessons become.

In olden times, the refiner of gold and silver would sit over the burning crucible until the dross and impurities in these metals were completely consumed. Not until he could see his face mirrored in the molten metals did he declare them to be pure. So too with the Lord’s called and chosen elect! The Holy Spirit brings to light and deals with every aspect of our lives, consuming all that is alien and opposed to God’s nature and character, until the image of His Son Jesus is formed and mirrored in us. Only then will we be able to offer Him those offerings and render Him that service which is pleasing and acceptable in His sight. The Lord never removes or destroys something without replacing it with something better. The better, in this case, is THE PRICELESS VALUE OF THE GOLD ONCE IT IS TRIED IN THE FIRE!

FIRES FOR GLORY

In the fires of our affliction,

All predestined for our good,
We can see the fourth man walking,
Forming now a son of God.

Lest our souls fall in that furnace,
Be consumed by sorrow sore,
He has sent the Holy Spirit,
Our deliverance to insure.

He knows what will purify us,
Knows the way, has gone before,
And He planned this fiery furnace,
Not an end — but as the DOOR.

For our body, soul, and spirit,
As a substance to refine,
From these fiery trials and sorrows,
Shall emerge, with glory shine.

Not a golden, evil image,

As some heathen king did mold,
But a precious Holy Image,
A reflected son of God.

So wait my soul, wait on His workings,
Wait my spirit, patiently,
Wait my body, for the changing,
Rising up triumphantly.

In the ages yet unrolling,
We shall still His glories share,
For the plan of God is ceaseless,
His salvation making bare.

Mortal minds cannot receive it,
This supernal plan so great,
One that covers all the ages,
Ending sin, and fear, and hate.

So we give Him all the glory,

Knowing fiery trials now,
Will present us in His likeness,
All is well, that He allows.

Irene Lindsay