

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 163

THE 144,000 ON MOUNT ZION (continued)

"And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand...these were redeemed from among men, *being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb*" (Rev. 14:1,4).

It is very clear from the above scripture that the designation "firstfruits" is drawn from the well-known offering of "firstfruits" under the Old Testament law of Israel, in which the first portion of any harvest was dedicated to God, in token that the whole belonged to Him, and was recognized as His. Hence it always implies that something of the same kind will follow it. If there was a field of wheat, the firstfruits, the very first of the ripened grain, would be offered up to God, following which the entire field of wheat would come to the same condition of maturity. In this signification it is often used in the New Testament in the *spiritual sense*: "If the firstfruit is holy, so is the lump;" "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit;" "But every man in his own order: a firstfruit anointed; afterwards they that are Christ's at His appearing. Then cometh the end;" "Epeanetus, who is the firstfruits of Asia unto Christ;" "Now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep;" "Of His own will begat He us...that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures." In like manner the mention of the hundred and forty-four thousand as "firstfruits" suggests that they are the first of an order, specially consecrated to God — with a great harvest to follow!

Notice further that these 144,000 are firstfruits for God and for the Lamb in the sense that they were purchased, as the Greek expresses it, *away from men*. In other words, there was a separation: the firstfruits were uniquely for the Lord. In its broad application it signifies a people set apart from men in general, separated unto God; but in a deeper sense it speaks of them being separated from the *Adamic nature*, from the *human consciousness*, and from the *soulical religious disposition*, for in the Revelation the symbol of "men" often refers to the state of the natural man within ourselves, as well as the whole race of mankind. So they are firstfruits, purchased away from *men*. This is also evident from the fact that these 144,000 "had His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads." And as such they are the opposite of "the small and the great, the rich and the poor, the free and the bond" who receive the mark of the beast on their right hand or in their forehead."

They are firstfruits — that means after this the full harvest will be brought before God, for the full harvest must come as well as the firstfruits. It is significant to note that here in the early verses of chapter fourteen we are shown a wonderful picture of the firstfruits. Then in the closing verses of the chapter we see a dramatic picture of the gathering of the full harvest! "And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and *reap*: for the time has come for thee to *reap*; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the *earth was reaped*" (Rev. 14:15-16). And then only a few verses later, in the fifteenth chapter, we see the fruit of this: "Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? For *all nations shall come and worship before Thee*; for Thy righteous acts have been made manifest" (Rev. 15:4).

Notice — the 144,000 are **first** — they are not *only*, they are **first**. They are not *better*, they're just **first**. They are destined to affect all mankind, for these are redeemed *from among men*, being the **firstfruits** (of mankind) unto God and to the Lamb. These are not the firstfruits of an elementary salvation, where men experience the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation to God. Oh, no! We have untold millions of these, and yet all mankind is still subject to the bondage of corruption. These are the firstfruits of the *finished product*, perfected, totally transformed, fully matured, incorruptible *sons of God*. That clearly is what we see in all the symbolism of their being virgins, following the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, standing upon mount Zion, redeemed fully away from the human identity, with no guile, and without fault. And they are the firstfruits of *that kind of men*! These will be responsible for bringing all mankind back to the Father, not just to Father's house, but with the Father's ring of authority, with the Father's garment of royalty, and the Father's feast wherein all men partake of the FULLNESS OF GOD! As the firstfruits are, **so shall all men be!** That is the mystery.

NO GUILF — WITHOUT FAULT

“And in their mouth was found *no guile*, for they are *without fault*...” Rev. 14:5).

In the past, some popular television evangelists and other well-known ministries have caused some embarrassment among Christians due to impropriety with women. Men claiming to be “servants of God” have been found guilty of adultery, rape, consorting with prostitutes, or engaging in homosexual activities. Perhaps the greatest sin in these cases is that these men did not come forward to confess their sins until “caught.” One wonders how sincere a confession can be after being “caught in the act.” Yet, when our text tells us that these 144,000 have no guile and are without fault the issue is not one of fleshly lust, but one of *deceit* — no *guile* in their *mouth*. How utterly awesome! The Greek word is *dolos*, meaning “deceit, subtility, crafty, a trick — a lie.” No deceit or trickery in their speech. These are certainly not the preachers who use every trick in the bag to raise an offering and fleece God's people of their money! The question is asked in Psalm 15, “*Lord, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in Thy holy hill?*” The answer is, “*He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.*” It is with this last characteristic that the 144,000 correspond, and they are upon God's holy hill of Zion with the Lamb. The King James Bible reads, “*They are without fault before the throne of God.*” The words “before the throne of God,” however, are not in the best manuscripts, and are dropped now by common consent of all translators as no part of the original. Even if we did not know this, we would suspect it, for those standing on mount Zion are not, in symbol, “before” the throne of God — they are UPON THE THRONE! Throughout the book of Revelation a clear distinction is drawn between those who stand “before” the throne and those who sit “upon” the throne. This clearly identifies the 144,000 as the same company as the manchild in chapter twelve and the four living ones in chapter four!

Having truth in the inward parts, no lie was found in their mouth. True sons pray with the Psalmist of old, “*Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer*” (Ps. 19:14). And the apostle James tells us that “*If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man*” (James 3:1). The word of these sons of God is a *sure word*, and such a word is possible because it comes out of a state of being which is “**without fault.**” The word in the Greek is *amomos*, meaning “blameless, without blemish, without spot.” It bespeaks the qualification first of Him who is “*the Lamb without blemish and without spot*” (I Pet. 1:19). Ah, this is the same Lamb standing upon the mount Zion! And now He is able to bring all who follow Him to that same state of having no guile and being without blemish. He is truly able to “*present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy*” (Jude 24). What anticipation this stirs within our hearts! He that is within us is mighty, and He is abundantly able to do this! As Ray Prinzing once said, “If ever a victory testified to the capability and success of the Redemptive process, this company, which stands with the Lamb upon mount Zion, is a living manifestation of that triumph!” Their temple has been so thoroughly cleansed that the mouth has become a channel for the words of God.

It will be useful to us to note that many translations read that in their mouth was not found (the) LIE, rather than the word “guile.” Furthermore, the Greek text is clear that “they are blameless” **with regard to the LIE**. The lie is believed as a result of not receiving the love of the truth (II Thes. 2:10). The overcomers who repudiate the lie stand on mount Zion, just as those who are unable to enter into the holy city, New

Jerusalem, are those who “make a LIE.” The *truth* has ever been the mark of God’s children, and the *lie* the mark of the devil’s children. To the scribes and Pharisees Jesus said, “*Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it*” (Jn. 8:44). God is “*a God of truth, and without iniquity*” (Deut. 32:4). He is a God that “*cannot lie*” (Tit. 1:2). And to those who follow the Lamb it is written, “*But you have not thus learned Christ, if indeed you heard Him, and were taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus (namely) to put away from you the former manner of life, the old man which is corrupt...and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and to put on the new man which according to God has been created in holiness and righteousness of truth; wherefore, putting off THE LIE, speak every man truth with his neighbor*” (Eph. 4:21-25). I have used this translation because it correctly translates the Greek text which reads, “putting off THE LIE,” rather than “putting away lying” as the King James Bible renders it.

Read that passage again, carefully, and you find that here **THE LIE IS THE OLD MAN AND HIS DEEDS**. This is fundamental! Throughout the book of Revelation “men” in most cases refers to the Adamic man, the natural man, the men who cry for the rocks and the mountains to fall on them and hide them from the face of Him who sits upon the throne; men who have not the seal of God, men who die of the bitter waters, men who seek death and cannot find it, men hurt by the sting of the scorpions, slain men, men upon whom fall grievous sores, men scorched by the sun, men upon whom great hail falls, men who blaspheme God because of the plagues, men whose flesh is consumed at the great supper of God. Oh, yes! The man who does not receive the knowledge of the truth and the love of the truth, does believe *the lie*; not merely a lie, but *the lie*.

The message is just this: Christ is “the truth,” the old man is “the lie.” With a lie Satan deceived our first parents by offering them a godhood in independence from God Himself — and that lie has lived on in the human race from that day to this. There they were, spiritual beings, in the image of God. Yet Satan promised them that if they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they would be *as God* in a way that God had deliberately withheld from them — in the knowledge of good and evil. This sounded *so spiritual*, it was designed to make them *more like God*! Who wouldn’t want to be more like God? This had to be a great revelation because it inspired men to be more God-like! After the woman and the man partook of that realm of sense-consciousness, self-determination, and fleshly wisdom, God Himself acknowledged that they had indeed become “*as one of us, to know good and evil*” (Gen. 3:22). Yes, they had become AS GOD! They had assumed a state of GODHOOD! The only problem was that it was a godhood in the wrong realm! It was a godhood of *independence from the life of God*, not a Godhood through *union with God*. Man became a self-created god, a self-centered god, truly the *god of this world*, but not the expression of the divine nature. The Spirit of God which had been in union with man’s spirit fled, and man’s spirit sank low into the hidden depths of his being.

Man took on a distorted, corrupted consciousness, accepting himself as something other than his true being. And that, my friend, is THE LIE! It is not the truth about God and it is not the truth about God’s purpose in man! Paul made this crystal clear when he said that the *old man IS the lie*! That is not who you are! All the reasoning of the carnal mind, all the self-hood of the natural man, all the vanities of the human personality, the ego of the human nature, the lusts, desires, plans, purposes, ambitions and grasping of the flesh man is part and parcel of THE LIE. Paul stated it so plainly, and I give it as it is in the Greek text: “*Who changed the truth of God into THE LIE, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator*” (Rom. 1:25). Every man who lives in self-centeredness, walking after the understanding of the carnal mind, obeying the lusts of his flesh, driven by the impulses of the soul, is fully deceived by *the lie*! He *thinks* that is *reality*!

Adam is *the lie*, and our Lord Jesus Christ is *the truth*! What a man thinks himself to be in the Adamic life and nature is the lie; what a man knows himself to be in Christ is the truth! The grandest of all truths is that CHRIST IS THE IMAGE OF GOD! If you want to know what God had in mind when He said, “Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness,” you have only to look at Jesus Christ. **That is what God meant!** “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are *lost* (who know not *who* or *where* they are): in whom the god of this world hath *blinded the minds* of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of CHRIST, WHO IS THE IMAGE OF GOD, should shine unto them” (II Cor. 4:3-4). “In whom we

have redemption through His blood...who is THE IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD, the firstborn (prototype) of *every creature*" (Col. 1:14-15).

We will only understand the majesty of man in God's image when we see that Jesus Christ is the express or *exact* image of the Father's Being, the perfect imprint and very image of God's nature (Heb. 1:3-4). The allusion here is to the impression made in ancient times by a seal on molten wax; and as the image made on the wax is the exact representation (though on another substance) of the die, so is Christ the precise representation of the Father in human flesh. And thus He was able to say, "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father." The life of Jesus is the life of God transmuted into the form of our human life, so that we may see, touch, hear, know, understand, and experience the very being and nature of God in human terms. The natural mind cannot understand such a truth as this, but this is what God meant when He said, "Let us make *man* in our image, and after our likeness." CHRIST is the image of God and God meant for every man to look and speak and act like Jesus Christ! And that is *the truth* as it is in Jesus! Anything less than that, accepted as the normal human state, is *the lie*!

As we consider the wonderful advent of man created "in the image of God" we can only conclude that is a SPIRITUAL MAN brought forth out of the very spirit-substance of God almighty, and bearing His own divine nature, character, attributes, and power. The "image" of God is the nature of God reproduced in man. Thus the spiritual man is the true image of God! The divine nature was best and fully expressed in the man Christ Jesus who shined upon mortals the truest revelation of God and lifted man's sights higher than their poor thoughts would allow. Jesus revealed to men their true origin, heritage, and destiny. He came to show man what man really is, was intended to be, and through redemption and so great a salvation shall be — THE IMAGE OF GOD.

We are birthed into this carnal Adamic realm of life, which is really death, not knowing what our original and true state was, who we are, why we are here, or what God's purpose is for us. So because we do not know we assume that carnality, sin, and death is our true heritage and destiny. We accept our state of being in the Adamic identity; after all, we are "just human." We believe *the lie*! Not only do we believe it, we live it! We are captives of a nature that is controlled by a law — the law of sin and death. So the Adamic identity is unable to be anything other than it is, for it is a lie, and cannot receive the truth. No matter how much Adam wants to be godly, no matter how often he goes to church, no matter how many scriptures he learns or resolutions he makes, he always fails, for he is living out of a lie.

Even most of God's people today do not realize that the Adamic nature, human ego, and the carnal consciousness, need to be totally consumed by Christ. Christ is our true identity, not the human consciousness. The Adamic life is the lie that keeps us bound and limited. The carnal mind knows that it cannot live as Jesus lived on the earth. It knows that it cannot be pure and holy, it cannot love unconditionally, it cannot love its enemies, it cannot conquer sin and death, it cannot possibly multiply the loaves and fishes, walk on water, heal the sick, or raise the dead. Yet because we have not fully *unbelieved* the lie, and because of our hunger and thirst after God, we keep trying to perfect human nature and purify the human consciousness, in order to please God and be more like Him. Then we feel condemned, because we cannot do or be that which we desire!

When your eyes are opened to see that Christ in you *is your true life*, then you realize that all the struggling you have done in Adam is to no avail. The idea that you can somehow perfect the old man is part of the lie! Once we learn the truth as it is in Jesus we are able to focus our attention on the reality of the Christ Life within. This is not mere head knowledge. This is a paradigm shift! This is understanding that Adam is a lie, so we now embrace the truth. We repudiate the lie! The truth is that Christ IS OUR LIFE! Forget Adam. He is just a corpse! In reality, he is not even there, for he is *the lie*. The more we turn our attention away from our Adamic consciousness and focus our attention on Christ within, the more the new man, who is the image of God, will arise in our consciousness as the power of our life. It is not by trying to discipline Adam, it is by focusing on Christ! CHRIST IS THE TRUTH! Christ is the wisdom of God and the power of God! Embrace the truth and there will come a mighty transformation! Can you hear what I'm saying? If Adam no longer motivates me, if I'm not driven by the natural desire to be godly, if there's nothing in me any longer that tries desperately to be godly, if I am no longer trying to make myself better, always making resolutions, always confessing sins, but I simply rest in HIS ability within to do that in me

which I cannot do, and He begins to arise within me replacing all my good, carnal, natural desires, replacing everything with the Law of His Life, and He fills my temple with Himself and His glory, then *who am I*, what is my true identity? CHRIST IS MY LIFE! You see, my beloved, **THAT IS THE TRUTH!** This is what we are coming to. This is what the world is longing to see, God *manifested in humanity!* That is the image of God in man!

These sons of God upon mount Zion are *without fault* — in their mouth is found *no guile* — no lie, no deceit, no false confession, no acknowledgement of Adam, no admission of being “just human,” no declaration of a mistaken identity. These stand upon mount Zion with the Lamb who is without spot or blemish, He who is the truth, and they are *like Him*, entirely *like Him*, they are *as He is* in this world, new creation men, sons of God, the body of God’s Christ. In their mouth is no guile, for CHRIST IS THEIR ONE AND ONLY CONFESSION! Oh, the wonder of it!

“These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.”

These are redeemed from “among men,” and the men whom they are redeemed away from signify that there is *another man* in the earth today. This man is the man of THE LIE — A FALSE, DECEIVING MAN! For “guile” is always found in the mouth of this man! Only the 144,000 are found to have “no guile” in their mouth!

There passes across the pages of scripture a character who is awesome and appalling. This menacing figure is mysterious; he is hazy and he is enigmatical. Sometimes he is the shady character of a man. Again, he is an evil influence. Then again, he is an angel of light. There is actually no crystal-clear, cameo-cut presentation of him. He moves on the borderline of the natural and the supernatural. John, in his epistles, calls him by the name “antichrist.” This does not mean, of course, that only John refers to him. Jesus, Paul, Peter, David, Solomon, and many other of the writers of the Bible speak of him. He has many names in scripture, and, as most crooks have aliases, antichrist has more aliases than any person I know of! Also many figures of speech are used in scripture to speak of him, to set him before us, and they occur again and again. One of these is found in II Thessalonians 2:1-10, where he is called “the man of sin.”

*“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that **man of sin be revealed**, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now restraineth (the man of sin) will restrain, until he be taken out of the way. Then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming”* (II Thes. 2:3-4, 7-8).

In these verses it is interesting to note that the “falling away” and the “man of sin” should be so LINKED TOGETHER! Indeed, these two realities have been with us a long, long time. The first person in recorded history to “fall away” from the truth and from his place in God was Adam; we have all heard of the “fall” of Adam! Of him it is written, “by one *man sin* entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all *men*, for that *all* have *sinned*...for by *one man*’s disobedience *many were made sinners*...” (Rom. 5:12,19). Can we not see by this that Adam himself was a MAN OF SIN. The natural mind is very dark and without understanding. Only the Holy Spirit can give men light. My earnest prayer is that the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God shall shine as a beacon light to guide our footsteps and illumine our pathway as we now go back to the shadowy mists of man’s beginning on earth and trace the dilemma, mysterious and sinister, that has bedeviled his path from the dazzling glory of Eden on down to the dreadful darkness of this present time.

When Adam fell we fell with him. Because one man sinned, we all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Can we not see by this that in the Adam-nature lies the very root of the MAN OF SIN? In fact, every Adamic man has been a “man of sin”! Truly, *Adam is the man* who made the earth to tremble, that shook kingdoms, and made the earth a wilderness, for it was to him and to him alone that these terrible words were spoken: “Cursed is the ground (earth-realm) for thy sake” (Gen. 3:17). When God formed man He placed him in Eden, a kingdom of peace and righteousness and power; but when Adam sinned, he and all

his descendants were cast out into a wilderness of sin, suffering, and death. Now poor, sin-laden mankind, darkened in mind and impoverished in spirit, is forever spending money for that which is not bread and laboring for that which satisfieth not. As one has pointed out, vainly they imagine that their thirst can be quenched by partaking of the stagnant waters of earth's fleshly cisterns. Like lost sheep they wander through the wilderness of life seeking satisfaction and finding none. Place after place they roam in their pitiful search for the fountain that satisfies, but find it they never can until at last they come to Christ. They fill the bars and nightclubs to buy wine and strong drink that can do no more than dull their senses, unleashing their passions and rage. They throng the places of pleasure in their unending longing to satisfy the thirst that is within them. They fill their lives with the vanity of things and more things, only to find that all they have attained rises to mock them in the end. This is the way of the world. No satisfaction can be gained from its fountains, for all its potions are libations of death.

Yes, my beloved, within the Adam-nature lies the root of the "man of sin" who brought this dreadful condition and we are all too aware of the inbred power of sin. "I am *sold* under sin," Paul lamented, "for by *man* came *sin*," he said again. Sold under sin means he was a slave to it, and we all know the meaning of this bondage and slavery, and our hearts cry out with Paul, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:24). As it has been stated, "We literally weep these words from hearts that are weary of sin!" The spirit of Adam, the man of sin, is within every man. The unvarnished truth is that he dwells within the saved man as well as the unconverted. Some will deny this, but deep within their heart they know better.

Is not this what Paul meant when he wrote, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin *be revealed*, the son of perdition: who opposeth and exalteth *himself* above all that is called God; so that he *as God* sitteth in *the temple of God*, showing *himself* that he *is* God." This is precisely why, after the first few holy years of the early church, there arose such an apostasy, a "falling away" of such a dark and dreadful nature that that church, once glorious, actually *became* the swaggering, filthy harlot, rich and increased with goods and having need of nothing, drunken with the blood of saints, riding in pomp and arrogance upon the back of the bestial system of this present evil world.

The principle never changes! Adam "fell away" from his pure walk in the Spirit to become the "man of sin" in that dawning day. The hearts of God's people in the early church "fell away" from the love of the truth and the simplicity that is in Christ, so that the "man of sin" became revealed in the temple of God. This has been the course in dealing after dealing, revival after revival, move of God after move of God. It sounds strange, but it is true...and it is just as true in our day! God brings a people out of some form of religious Babylon, they desire the liberty of the Spirit in their midst, they throw off the bondages of man's domination, of rules, programs, and creeds, they profess that they want Christ to have His Lordship in their lives, and for a while they so walk; but, ere long, the unsanctified *man of sin* arises in their hearts, in the very *temple of God* which they are, and pursuing the vision of God, following the Lamb whithersoever He goeth becomes burdensome to their flesh, and someone cries out, "Give us a leader, someone who will tell us what we are supposed to do, someone who can organize this thing, get everyone properly involved and committed, and make the church *grow*." And after every fresh moving of the Spirit of God in the earth, as men settle in to the new thing God has done and revealed, sooner or later SELF exalts HIMSELF in the temple of God, and men begin to set up a pattern of church life and doctrine and ritual very much like the old ways they were accustomed to in their former bondage, and there is a reoccurrence of THE FALL once again!

That *man of sin* of whom Paul spoke is none other than the old Adamic-nature, the self-life ego of the natural man and the fleshly mind sitting on the throne of a man's life, usurping the throne of HIS LORDSHIP in our own temple, setting himself up in self-will against the Father's will, making himself to be, instead of the Spirit, the owner and master and captain of our lives, showing himself that *he is God in the temple of our being*.

Tales of fiction and the most absurd imaginations of childhood furnish no parallel to the extreme notions of some of God's dear children who have naively swallowed the carnal interpretations of natural-minded and tradition-ridden theologians of the religious systems of man. Untold millions of Christians have lived in mortal fear of the arising of the dreadful *man of sin*. He is supposed to be a world political leader,

sinister and tyrannical, the incarnation of Evil, the very offspring of the Devil, and the ruthless enemy of the Jews. He is to be revealed after the supposed “rapture” of the church to heaven, and will make his headquarters in Jerusalem. He will set himself up in a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem and declare himself Almighty God. His manifestation marks the beginning of “Daniel’s 70th week,” according to their teaching. The Scofield Reference Bible, Blackstone and other authorities? in general, subscribe to this view although there is almost unlimited speculation on details.

There are many fallacies in the popular interpretation of this scripture. First, Paul is addressing the “brethren” in the church of his day, rather than the Jews. The “brethren” would not be affected if they were to be “raptured,” and no warning was given to the Jews who are supposed to be the “victims” of the man of sin! In II Thessalonians 2:7, Paul said that this mystery of iniquity “doth *already* work.” This statement cannot fit in with something that is to happen some two thousand years later! After Paul warned the brethren about the man of sin he exhorted them to *stand fast* and hold the teachings they had received (vs. 15). This would be non-sensical advice if it was not meant to be heeded for two thousand years! Furthermore, absolutely *nothing* is said in this passage about any rapture, great tribulation, seventieth week, world political leader, or the *rebuilding* of a Jewish temple. Every bit of that is pure myth, legend, superstition, folklore, and fairy tales!

Oh! may God give us spiritual minds to discern Paul’s true *spiritual meaning* as he identifies and lays bare the roots of this man of sin and declares, “For the mystery of iniquity doth already work.” Iniquity — the Greek word here means *lawlessness* — without law. And while it is true that we are no longer bound under the old laws of the ministration of death written and engraven in stone, the handwriting of ordinances which was against us, which has been taken out of the way, nailed to His cross (II Cor. 3:6-11; Col. 2:14), we are not now lawless, for in the heavenly realm we have been brought into relationship with the higher and greater law — THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS! (Rom. 8:2). The laws of Moses were natural laws designed for natural men, but God is now bringing His elect into complete harmony with HIS SPIRITUAL LAWS, so that as heavenly and spiritual men we are ordered aright in His ways. How difficult can it be to understand that the old man — the Adamic man, the carnal mind, the flesh nature — *does not* and *cannot* obey the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus or any other spiritual law of God! It is impossible! That is the “mystery of lawlessness” that was already being manifest in Paul’s day, only a few decades after the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus had been released into the body of Christ. As to the laws of the spiritual realm of the kingdom of God the Adamic man is a worker of iniquity — *lawlessness*! That is a great discovery for God’s people, even today!

Jesus touched on these higher laws of the kingdom when He said, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that *doeth the will* of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work *iniquity — lawlessness!*” (Mat. 7:21-23). There are two classes of people which immediately stand out in this passage of scripture, THOSE WHO DO THE WILL OF THE FATHER, and THOSE WHO WORK LAWLESSNESS. I think we know, at least in a measure, what Jesus means when He speaks of those who do the will of the Father, for these are they who have been so dealt with by God’s mighty hand that they have surrendered their own will into HIS WILL. These have been taught His laws, His commandments, precepts, ways, purposes, and will by the Spirit and they delight to do them! These are those sons of God who say with Jesus, “I am able to do nothing from myself — independently, of my own accord; but as I am taught by God and as I get His orders — because I do not seek or consult my own will — I have no desire to do what is pleasing to myself, my own aim, my own purpose — but ONLY THE WILL AND THE PLEASURE OF THE FATHER” (Jn. 5:30, Amplified).

It is this other group, the WORKERS OF LAWLESSNESS, that we would briefly consider. These are not the ungodly who aren’t even aware that there is a kingdom to be received, for such, being dead in trespasses and sins, must first be awakened into spiritual consciousness, and then they can hear the gospel of the kingdom, and be led therein. But these are religious folk, even religious folk who claim to be filled with the Spirit and have power to do great and mighty things for God, even prophesying, casting out devils, and performing signs, wonders, and miracles, and they cry, “Lord, Lord,” claiming His Lordship. Yet He says to them, “I never knew you!” The word “knew” in Greek denotes to “know intimately, as a husband *knows* his

wife through intercourse.” “And Adam *knew* Eve his wife, and she conceived...” (Gen. 4:1). So Jesus says to these, “I did not know you intimately, you did not receive the *seed of my word* into you.” They are out busily “doing” great things “for” God, they know that HE is supposed to be LORD in their life, the message of HIS LORDSHIP has reached them, and they even claim it, but they still continue to take their own way, creating their own plans, designs, programs, methods, and means, *in His name*, but it is *their way* rather than God’s, as they seek to operate in the kingdom on their own terms. “Workers of iniquity” — without law! These work according to their own designs and purposes, their own plans and objectives, and forget, forsake, cast aside, disannul the laws of God, the ways of His Spirit, the principles of His kingdom. They boast in their works, for they have prophesied, cast out devils, held large meetings, touched many lives, and done mighty things — BUT NOT AT THE FATHER’S COMMAND NOR IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS WAYS!

Rather than ministering out of the law of the spirit of life, much of their ministry, teaching, praying, prophesying, miracles, etc., are but a cloak to conceal a servitude to the same old flesh and ego of the carnal nature as they seek a following, to make a name for themselves, and build a kingdom, to usurp control over other men’s lives, and use various gimmicks to fleece God’s people of their money to support their grandiose schemes and programs to save the nation or convert the world. They will prophesy or lay hands upon anyone they think will follow after them, or fill their coffers with money, and forget the admonition to “lay hands suddenly upon no man” (I Tim. 5:22). The point is clear, all our so-called spiritual works, if done outside the word and anointing of the Spirit, which is the law of God’s life, if done out of our own zeal and initiative, and not under the leadership and control of His Spirit, become a manifestation of lawlessness. Such can never be partakers of the kingdom which God holds in reserve for those who become ONE IN HIS WILL. To these, when the time comes to rule and reign upon the throne with Christ, He will say, “Depart from me...ye lawless ones!”

Have you noticed, precious saint of God, that Paul does not say of the man of sin that he *comes on the scene*, or that he *comes to power*, or even that he is *born* — but that he is REVEALED! He does not say that he seizes power, or that he marshals great armies, but simply that he is REVEALED — IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD! Revealed — the Greek word is *apokalupto*. *Apokalupto* is a compound word composed of *apo*, meaning “off” or “away,” and *kalupto*, meaning “to cover up.” Thus *apokalupto* means to take the cover off, to uncover, unveil, disclose, or reveal. It implies the drawing away or removal of everything that veils, or hides, and therefore it is always opposed to concealment or secrecy, as in the following passage: “There is nothing *covered* that shall not be *revealed* (uncovered)” (Mat. 10:26). Our English word “revelation” has become for many a word that signifies a strange belief or some far-out-doctrine, which should be handled as something delusive and dangerous, and avoided if possible. But this is just the opposite of the biblical meaning of the word, and the consideration we need to give to that which is revealed. That which is uncovered is no more a mystery, nor can it any longer be a threat. It is open to view, whether positive or negative, and can be considered without fear since it is no longer shrouded in darkness or mystery. Since *apokalupto* means to reveal, or unveil, there must be something to uncover or which may be uncovered. That something must be *present* or it cannot be uncovered; and it must be hidden from sight or not understood or it cannot be disclosed.

The whole world has been waiting for the man of sin to be born and to appear on the world scene, and now by the grace of God we are discovering that he has been here the whole time, yet unperceived, not understood, or seen; but now he is being uncovered, he is being *revealed* as the Lord makes known to His apprehended ones the awful depths of our own carnal minds, self-will, and inherent sin — faithfully and relentlessly purging, refining, crushing, and stripping us of all that pertains to the self-ego and mistaken identity of Adam’s nature.

The moment you understand this great truth, you will also be able to grasp the fact that the destruction of the man of sin comes *at the time he is revealed*. “And *then* shall that Wicked be *revealed*, whom the Lord shall *consume* by the spirit (word) of His mouth, and *destroy* with the brightness of His manifest presence” (II Thes. 2:8). This man of sin within will do everything in his power to conceal his identity, for his discovery is his undoing! He is hidden, not to God and Christ, but to every man who is not walking in the spirit. As our lives become exposed to the life and light of Christ the man of sin *is revealed*, uncovered, exposed — then to be dealt with, destroyed, consumed by the bright-burning of the Day Star

arising within our hearts. If the cunning, craftiness, subtleness, deceitfulness, treachery, and wickedness of your own carnal mind, even the religious mind, is being uncovered, revealed, exposed by the Spirit's dealings, and you find it abhorrent, and are distressed and horrified by it, then know, beloved, that **THE HOUR OF HIS DESTRUCTION IS AT HAND!** The order is: **REVEALED... DESTROYED!** Glory!

There is a story about a little piece of wood that once bitterly complained because its owner kept whittling away at it, gouging it and making holes in it. But the one who was cutting it paid no attention to the stick's protests. He was making a flute out of that piece of ebony, and he was too wise to stop when the wood complained so bitterly. The man said, "Little piece of wood, without these rifts and holes, and all this cutting, you'd be just a stick forever — a useless piece of ebony. What I am doing now may seem as if I am destroying you, but instead it will change you into a flute. Your sweet music will charm the souls of many and comfort sorrowing hearts. My cutting you is the making of you, for only thus can you be a blessing in the world."

The meaning of this little parable is clear: That flute, whose music blended so sweetly in the orchestra, was made a flute only by the knife and file that filled it with rifts and holes which seemed to be its very destruction. But the purpose of the master was *the cutting away of the outward form, so that breath could flow through it*. The breath upon the wood created a melodious sound which made it an instrument to the praise of God. Ah, the Lord is shaping us, my beloved, cutting away the denseness of our outer shell of human consciousness with it darkened understanding, making rifts and holes in the way that seems right to the natural man, that the in-breathed spirit of life from God may sweep through our earthen vessel, producing the image of God, that His glory might be revealed in creation. Isn't it wonderful!

The Psalmist alluded to this process when he penned these inspired words: ***"He weakened MY strength in the way; He shortened my days"*** (Ps. 102:23). It is in bringing us to the end of ourselves, that we are prepared to rise up solely in **HIS STRENGTH**. It is the subduing of our will that brings us to the place where we fervently pray, "not my will, but Thine be done." In ways which *He* knows best, He strips His sons of every prop of the flesh, removes their self-made reputations, demolishes their personal kingdoms, dries up the fountains of their own soulish religious activities, and tenderly and carefully draws them aside into a separated walk where He unfolds truth and works it deep into their being. God has endured with much longsuffering the rule of the man of sin in the temple of His body, all the self-seeking of carnal men, who have presumed to speak and work in His name, and while they have usurped their positions and made their claims, He has secretly and silently prepared His own little flock of disciplined ones to whom He shall give the kingdom! These are called to stand with the Lamb upon the mount Zion, having the Father's name written in their foreheads, and in their mouth is found no guile, for they are without fault!

Call to remembrance here that the man of sin "exalts *himself* above all...so that he *as God* sitteth in the temple of God" (II Thes. 2:4). It is so tremendously important that we understand just what Paul meant by his use of the term "temple of God." The popular teaching is that Paul was speaking of a future rebuilt *Jewish temple* in the city of Jerusalem. But a careful study of *every* reference that Paul made in his epistles to the "temple of God" reveals that he ***never*** applied this term to the Jewish temple! When the New Testament speaks of the complete, *literal* temple, the Greek word *hieron* is used. This word is used seventy-one times in the New Testament in reference to the temple at Jerusalem. On the other hand, the word that Paul used for temple is *naos* which refers not the complete, literal temple complex, but to the Most Holy Place or the Holy of holies — the ***dwelling place*** of God! And the dwelling place of God is now **THE CHURCH WHICH IS HIS BODY!**

It cannot be temporal or transient as were the temples of Israel which were all destroyed in turn. The true temple, which is Christ's body, is eternal in the heavenlies! It is not earthly nor does it belong to the earthly realm, but to an heavenly, for the people that comprise this holy temple have been "redeemed away from men." It is not of corruption, but of incorruption. Paul wrote of it thus: "The temple of God is holy, which temple **YE ARE**" (I Cor. 3:17). "Know ye not that your body **IS THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY GHOST WHICH IS IN YOU?**" (I Cor. 6:19). "For **YE ARE THE TEMPLE OF THE LIVING GOD**; as God hath said, I will *dwell in them, and walk in them*" (II Cor. 6:16).

Would God that all the saints might see that God's purpose from the foundation of the world has been the building of a spiritual house, a holy temple, an eternal abiding place in which He can be at home, and in which place He and His creation can meet. It is a temple made up of living stones. Every stone is a redeemed person and every stone is a person upon whom the mighty hand of God has been laid in dealing. More than three thousand years ago Solomon built a magnificent temple of stone and precious materials. He overlaid it with gold and adorned it with silver. So wonderful was it that the Queen of Sheba stood transfixed at the sight. But the temple built by Solomon was only an ephemeral foreshadow of the living temple which Christ would build by the Spirit — a temple not made with hands!

The beautiful temple in Jerusalem was a type and shadow of good things to come (Heb. 10:1; Col. 2:16-17). Praise God, we are living in the days of those good things to come, a full realization of which causes us to bow our heads in awe and wonderment. These fulfillments are so astounding that to many they will seem fantastic. As with the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, so the temple of old was made according to the pattern of the true tabernacle which Moses saw in the mount, and in spite of all teachings to the contrary, there will never be another temple built to take the place of, or to serve the same ends as, that which passed away with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. That temple was only the shadow of better things to come: merely the natural type of the spiritual reality which Moses saw in the mount and after which he patterned the shadow. So wherever we see a reference to a temple of the present or future, it *must* refer to "the true sanctuary, and the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Heb. 8:2), and to "the temple of God which is holy, which temple YE ARE" (I Cor. 3:17).

Furthermore, there is only one such tabernacle, or temple. The scriptures nowhere tell of two, or three, or one hundred, one away off somewhere in space where Jesus is ministering, another in Jerusalem built by the Jews, and another spiritual temple composed of living stones. There is but ONE temple, ONE great High Priest, and ONE royal priesthood. So when the priests of old served "unto the example and shadow of heavenly things" (Heb. 8:5), those heavenly or spiritual things were the same heavenly or spiritual things that Moses saw in the mount, and the same heavenly or spiritual things unto which we have now come. We "*are come* unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the *heavenly Jerusalem...*" (Heb. 12:22). This is not something found out beyond the Milky Way somewhere; this is the heavenly and spiritual reality fulfilled within a heavenly and spiritual people right here upon earth! Let us never forget that fact!

Listen to the words of Peter as he presses this golden truth home to the understanding hearts of the saints. "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To Whom coming, as unto a *living stone*, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, *ye also*, as *lively stones*, are built up a *spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices*, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 2:3-5). This superb gem of revelation vividly reveals just what the temple of God really is. Not a temple of dead stones, but of living stones, each stone a spiritually living person. Not covered with glittering gold, but overshadowed by God. Not adorned with silver, but founded upon Christ, the chief corner stone. Not fashioned with glittering gems, but with the eternal jewels of His very own nature, glory, and power!

Notice further that the saints of God are the *holy priesthood* of this spiritual temple, offering up *spiritual sacrifices* BY JESUS CHRIST. Now, we all know that Jesus is the High Priest ministering in the true tabernacle not made with hands. And where is that true tabernacle where Jesus, the High Priest, ministers? Not out in space somewhere! Would it not be the very same temple where we, the royal priesthood, minister, offering up spiritual sacrifices by Jesus Christ? Would not the priesthood and the High Priest minister in the *same temple*? If we offer up spiritual sacrifices in this spiritual temple, and do so by Jesus Christ, then would not Jesus be in this temple where we offer up the spiritual sacrifices? And would He not be the High Priest in the heavenly and spiritual temple? Oh, yes! Our Lord Jesus is the High Priest of the temple of God WHICH WE ARE! Mystery of mysteries! Wonder of wonders! He ministers in the house of God, whose house "we are." There is no temple out in space. YE ARE THE TEMPLE OF THE LIVING GOD! And it is in *this temple* that the "man of sin" has been revealed, uncovered, exposed — *consumed*, and *destroyed*! Aren't you glad!

If you are one of the many who believe that the temple of God is the harlot church system of man, or a future Jewish temple in Jerusalem, I must tell you that neither qualifies as THE TEMPLE OF GOD. That

swaggering, drunken, idolatrous harlot called *Mystery Babylon* is not the temple of the living, holy God! The temple of God is a ***holy abiding place*** which God is raising up for Himself to dwell in in all fullness. That is why the “man of sin” must be revealed and destroyed out of this temple! And let us not forget that God never will vacate this temple. God will never vacate this heavenly and holy and spiritual temple to return to a paltry temple made of earth by the unsanctified hands of men. To do so would be to set aside and deny the Christ of Calvary, and to render that “once for all” sacrifice of the Lamb of God impotent and of no avail. There will never be another sacrifice for sin offered (Heb. 10:10-14). There will never again be a temple for the offering of such sacrifices! The “shadow” has forever passed away!

It is in this heavenly and spiritual temple of glorified sons that God and creation shall meet. The living stones of this temple are members of the body of Christ. They are sons of God and members of HIS FAMILY. By adding them to Himself God is expanding Himself, as a man by fathering many sons expands his family and himself. By God’s family of sons the holy temple of the Lord will fill the universe with HIMSELF, for the saints are the fullness of Him who filleth all in all. From this temple of sons, and by the royal priesthood of this temple, our God will reconcile all things unto Himself and rule the universe in righteousness for evermore.

For two thousand years it has been rising on the foundation of the apostles and prophets and the flaming words of the prophet Malachi are even now being fulfilled: “THE LORD, WHOM YE SEEK, SHALL SUDDENLY COME TO HIS TEMPLE. Behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a ***refiner’s fire***, and like ***fuller’s soap***: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall PURIFY the sons of Levi (the royal priesthood), and PURGE them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness” (Mal. 3:1-3). Praise God! He is reigning within His called and chosen elect, to dethrone the man of sin (self-ego, Adamic mind, flesh nature) which sits in the very temple of God, proclaiming HIMSELF as god, and striving for his own will and way. That SELF is being de-throned is evident as more and more of God’s elect come to that place of experience where surrendered we pray, in spirit and in truth, “not my will, but THINE be done!”

The man of sin is the man of THE LIE, just the opposite of the 144,000 on mount Zion in whose mouth is *no guile* — ***no falsehood*** — ***NO LIE!*** It is this “old man” who is “the lie” that is destroyed by the brightness of Christ’s manifest presence. The truth of this is magnified by the words of Paul, and I am giving the literal translation: “Then will be exposed the LAWLESS ONE, whom the Lord Jesus will consume with the breath of His mouth, and annihilate by the appearing of His manifest presence; whose presence (the man of sin) is according to the energizing of the adversary, with all power, and signs, and wonders of ***falsehood***, and with all ***deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that are perishing***, because they received not the ***love of the truth***, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them a ***strong delusion, that they should believe THE LIE***: that they all may be ***judged*** who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness (the state of the old man)” (II Thes. 2:8-12).

The message is clear — when man turns to and trusts in the flesh he becomes possessed of a strong delusion (mistaken identity) and believes THE LIE — that’s how it is in the Greek — in order that all those may be ***judged*** who believe not THE TRUTH. ***Christ*** is THE TRUTH! ***Adam*** is THE LIE! The mind of Christ is THE TRUTH! The carnal mind is THE LIE! The word of God is THE TRUTH! The voice of the serpent is THE LIE! And all who believe the lie will be judged. Oh, yes! Yet, praise God, how blessed the knowledge that God’s judgments are never unto eternal damnation, for all the judgments of God are *redemptive* and *corrective* — to correct that which is wrong, to eradicate the error, to restore men into life and wholeness, into righteousness and truth, into praise and glory.

The 144,000 are the ***firstfruits of this redemption*** — they know who they are, they have been raised up into the life, nature, mind, wisdom, knowledge, glory, and power of the Son of God — they stand tall in their true identity, they confess only that which is true in Christ and in them — therefore in their mouth is found ***no lie***, for in Christ the image of God they are WITHOUT FAULT! It is indeed wonderful!