

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 200

THE DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON (continued)

“And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, ***Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues***” (Rev. 18:4).

John was still physically on the earth as he heard another voice out of the heavens of the spirit, not the same voice he heard before crying mightily that Babylon is fallen, but another voice, that is, a different word than the first word — for this word is not directed to John personally, but to God’s people in general. It was a prophetic call to all true believers, to all who have an ear to hear the Spirit, to *come out* of “Babylon the great.” It was a call appropriate to John’s day, and it has been appropriate throughout the entire church age, and especially so at this present time at the transition of the ages. On more than one occasion in scripture, God has issued an invitation, addressed to a specific group, and introduced with the word “come.” Interestingly, of the many definitions of the word “come” in the dictionary, the primary meaning is “to move from a place thought of as *there*, to or into a place thought of as *here*.” It is just such an invitation that is given in our text!

The celestial call to “Come out of Babylon, my people,” is better understood when we clearly see that *the Lord’s people are in that mighty city of Religious Babylon!* This is a great mystery, and my prayer to God is that He may give all who read these lines the spirit of wisdom and revelation to perceive and see the true nature of all things. In the Old Testament it was God’s people Israel that was led away captive into the Babylon of that day. The captives there by the river Chebar were the Lord’s people! And the Lord’s people were *not themselves Babylon*, but they were in captivity *in Babylon*. It is here that we must distinguish between the Lord’s *people* and the *system* so many are involved in. The leading of the Lord in our lives has been two-fold. First, we seek to fellowship with all the Lord’s precious people, regardless of their level of growth and development in Christ. They are HIS and I do not hesitate to call them my brothers and sisters, and I am mature enough to relate to them right where they are. Just as I can play with my grandchildren without looking down my nose at them or denigrating them for their immaturity, so I can fellowship with any believer without putting on an air of superiority. At the same time, we cannot, DARE NOT fellowship the Babylon System that believer is in! We can and will fellowship anyone — but we *will not* fellowship their system! This means that much of our fellowship is confined to a “one-on-one” basis — after we get past those who refuse to fellowship *us* at all because they judge us to be heretics, separatists from the body of Christ, or something worse!

Let us now notice that even in Babylon God honors His people! God always honors the seeking heart and faith — even in spite of their weakness, immaturity, carnality, and the fleshly system they may be bound in. Somewhere along the line they have not fully walked with the Lord or they *wouldn’t be* in captivity in Babylon! Israel of old was there because of rebellion and idolatry! On far away Patmos John beheld in vision seven golden candlesticks. He also saw *in the midst* of the candlesticks One like unto the Son of man (Rev. 1:12-13). These are wonderfully significant words! The candlestick realm is the *church realm!* The One John saw was not in this instance seated upon His golden throne in the heavens. He was not standing in a rainbow before a waterfall, nor was He standing upon the dizzying heights of mount Zion.

Oh, no! He was standing *in the midst* of the seven golden candlesticks! He is standing *in the midst* of the churches! Now, we also know that there were some serious problems in the seven churches of Asia in the book of Revelation! There was sin, carnality, error, pride, the Jezebel spirit (spiritual harlotry, Babylon), the Nicolaitane spirit (hierarchy, elevation of the clergy, man's control), the doctrine of Balaam (compromise), lukewarmness, and so on. The Lord admonished and rebuked the churches for these conditions!

My beloved brethren, I am as much opposed to religion and man-made, organized, carnal minded, fleshly religious systems as any man alive today. This has been my passion since that blessed day when the voice of Christ first fell upon my ear bidding me, "Come out of her." At the same time I recognize the *church* as something beyond the system of man, something in the *spirit* made up of those who *in and by the spirit* are the Lord's people. Now, there are those who come out of Babylon and they appear to be "another church." Some even deny that those in Babylon *are* the church! Coming out of Babylon does not then ***make you the church***. All of God's people ***are the church*** by virtue of their union with Christ *in their spirit* — including those in Babylon! When God calls you out of Babylon you are His "called out" on a different or higher level than those in Babylon who have been "called out" of sin and alienation from God. But both are "called out" and all are "the church." The *people* are the church, the *system* is *not* the church. The truth becomes very clear when we consider the seven churches of Asia! Most of them were already living in some form of religious Babylon, yet they were the Lord's church whom He both praised and rebuked!. I thank God for the *church*, the seven golden candlesticks! It will greatly aid our understanding to see how the Lord Jesus, the Son of man clothed in the garment of His priesthood, with eyes of discernment like flames of fire, with burning feet of judgment like unto brass heated red-hot in a furnace, and the two-edged sword of His living word flashing out of His mouth, walks **IN THE MIDST OF EACH OF US AND ALL OF US** whom He has redeemed by His precious blood! Isn't it true that nearly all of us were *in the church systems* when we first heard *the Voice*? Was not the Lord walking in our midst *even then*, even in the midst of all the wretchedness of that harlot system and of our very own immaturity, ignorance, and carnality? Who can deny it!

In chapters two and three of the Revelation we see the seven conditions within the seven churches, good and bad, positive and negative, spiritual and carnal, commendable and reproachable. The Lord is right there in the midst of every one of those conditions! He walks in the midst of the churches, in the midst of their love, strength, patience, righteousness, truth, and faithfulness, and also in the midst of their weakness, faults, failures, fornication, false doctrine, nakedness, rebellion, and shame. The Lord is there in the midst of every condition! In the midst of images, crucifixes, candles, incense, holy water, ritual, and ceremony the Lord walks! In the midst of man-centered, flesh oriented programs and promotions the Lord walks! In the midst of organization, man-made structures, and grasping after men to draw them into the *system* and hold them in its clutches, the Lord walks! He condescends to come down right into the midst of all this religious foolishness and live and walk and move in their midst to bless men right where they are. What love! What matchless love! We cannot deny that He is there, touching men, saving men, delivering men, quickening men, healing, encouraging, strengthening, responding to heart-cries, answering prayers, *doing wonders*! I have witnessed "evangelistic crusades" where men were dangled over the flames of hell as a means of scaring them into the loving arms of Jesus, and when the frightened people ran to the altars screaming and crying out to God for mercy, He *was merciful*, for He was there and He met them there on that level, soothing their troubled souls and bringing salvation into their lives. What love! What humility! What condescension! What goodness! What compassion! Even the Psalmist recognized the great tenderness and faithfulness of the Lord to walk wherever we walk when he cried out, "*If I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there!*"

No wonder Paul the apostle admonished the saints, "*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that HE might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that HE might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish*" (Eph. 5:25-27).

Whatever work is wrought in our lives it is HE who does it! You will notice I put the emphasis on the word "HE" in the precious passage above. Oh, yes, place the emphasis on "HE," for this is the work of the almighty Christ of God! It is HE who loved us and gave Himself for us, it is HE who sanctifies and

cleanses us, and it is HE who shall present us to Himself a glorious church without spot, or wrinkle, holy, and without blemish. HE is the One leading His people! HE is the One who causes us to come out of Babylon! HE is the One who speaks from heaven, saying, “Come, and I will show you the whore.” If we have truly seen her for what she is, it is HE who birthed within our heart that blessed revelation. HE arranges the situation, HE determines the circumstances — HE is the One who CAUSES! When HE causes us to come out from Babylon, it is not to pick up the fruitless habit of wandering, nor to search for another group that is more to our liking, for that is not a “coming out,” that would only be exchanging one kingdom of Babylon for another. I do not mean by that that God will not *lead you* to fellowship others in a corporate way, but that is a different matter — when we are *led by the Spirit* we will be in the pasture where HE leadeth and where HE feedeth — not in a place we sought out by our own self-effort. God is leading a people out of the systems of man, out of the entrappings of Babylon. He is not exchanging one form of Babylon for another one — HE would bring us *out completely*, and then bring us INTO A WHOLE NEW DIMENSION IN HIM!

Make no mistake about it, HE WILL HAVE A GLORIOUS CHURCH, and it is the result of building — He is both the Author and the Finisher. There is a tremendous purging process on the horizon among the many groups and institutions of man, for although the systems themselves are Babylon, yet those within the systems are HIS PEOPLE. They may be but abused and brainwashed babes in Christ — but He will finish in them what He has begun! Oh, yes, there is a work begun, and salvation is a process, and those touched with His salvation are HIS, but in need of such purging and processing. The responsibility is HIS, for He is the One who has loved them and has redeemed them unto Himself, and line upon line Christ will work in each heart, every man in his own order, from glory to glory, until every man is made *complete in Him*.

God is now performing this great work in His **firstfruit company**, and we are experiencing what it means to be refined by fire, purged, purified, changed, transformed, and conformed to the image of the Son of God! For the called-out firstfruits the *place* is HERE, and the *time* is NOW! The work taking place in the lives of God’s sons in this hour is but the *first step* in God’s great redemptive, reconstructive, and restorative purpose. When God has finished His purifying, all who name the name of Christ will advance into heights and depths in Him! Mystery of mysteries, Christ *loved the church* and gave Himself for it that He might *sanctify and cleanse and present it to Himself* (as a bride) a GLORIOUS CHURCH without spot, wrinkle, or blemish. What anticipation this stirs in our hearts! The final vision of this glorious church is the NEW JERUSALEM COMING DOWN FROM GOD OUT OF HEAVEN PREPARED AS A BRIDE ADORNED FOR HER HUSBAND. And contrary to the teaching of some, this is not Israel, the wife of Yahweh — this is the church, the ***bride of Christ!*** The book of Revelation was not written or sent to Israel — it was written and sent to the church! The New Jerusalem is ***the ultimate reality of the church!*** Aren’t you glad!

There are two calls of the Spirit in relation to Babylon. The first is, “COME HITHER, *and I will show you...the great whore.*” The second is, “COME OUT OF HER, *my people, that ye be not partaker of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.*” “Come out!” Simple to say, but much harder to understand and do. It is impossible to do it in the flesh or by any human decision or self-effort. It is not first and foremost a *physical* departure, it is a *spiritual* departure! If you attempt this in the flesh you will only bring the spirit of Babylon away with you and raise it up again in your new endeavor. You must rise up in the spirit, as John, just to see her. “Come hither!” Arise from the lowlands of ignorance, deception, fraud, cunning, and trickery of man, from the soul encumbered with lies, misconceptions, misrepresentations, falsehoods, error, sense-knowledge, tradition, and static creeds and doctrines of men — arise until you ascend the mount of God from whose majestic peak you behold the Holy City, New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God, the city of *truth and life and reality and glory* built into a living form and expression through a people who live out of the heavens of *the spirit*. Ascend until you become conscious of THE TRUTH AS IT IS IN JESUS, THE ETERNAL AND GLORIOUS REALITY OF THE SPIRIT, THE OMNISCIENCE AND OMNIPOTENCE OF THE CHRIST WITHIN! Then, precious friend of mine, you will look with anointed eyes and quickly see and discern the difference between the *virgin* and the *harlot!* “Come hither,” saith Christ, “and ***I will show you!***”

You will understand a great mystery when you see that in the Revelation, in connection with the bride and the harlot, there are *four* companies. On the one side there is the sun-clad woman (the virgin bride of Christ), and then there is her child, the manchild (manifest sons of God). On the other side there is the great whore (the mother of harlots), and then there are her many daughters (the great city Babylon). Some precious people, because they have separated from some Babylonish denomination and have come out of the church systems of man *assume* that this was the “mother church” birthing them into sonship. This, my beloved, is a grievous *error!* No one is “birthed” into sonship by coming out of the church system! The “mother” of the manchild is ***not the harlot church system***, for she can only birth harlot daughters like unto herself! It is the ***virgin church*** made up exclusively of a people who have fled out of Babylon by revelation of the Spirit and have followed on to become truly *virgin* unto the Lord, now clothed with the living glory of Christ (sun), crowned with the twelve stars of God’s governmental authority, and having the cold, imitative, reflective light of the moon (ritual, ceremony, program, and creed) put under foot — this is the ***virgin church***, the ***glorious sun-clad woman*** — ah, this is the “mother” who births the manchild!

When the Spirit cries, “Come out of her, my people,” this is not His call to sons. This is His call urging a people to come out of the defilements of the harlotry of Babylon and be *cleansed* — that they might by the washing of regeneration and the miracle of sanctification become an entirely new creation — a virgin — unto Christ. And it is this *virgin company* that shall deliver to this sin-cursed world a *manchild*, a *male child*, a full redemption company of *sons of God*, overcomers, partakers of the divine nature, fully developed unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ, transformed in His pure and holy nature, imbued with His glorious mind, invested with His omnipotent power and authority, raised up in the power of His resurrection life, the many-membered “seed” of the many-membered “woman” which shall “bruise the head of the serpent” as he conquers sin and death within himself, dethrones satan, blesses and rules the nations, and liberates the whole vast creation from the bondage of sin, sorrow, corruption, and death. O how wonderful are these things!

As I mentioned earlier, to truly “come out” of Babylon involves more than merely physically leaving a system. First of all it denotes a heart condition — a paradigm shift within ourselves — by which our thinking, understanding, and experience take on an altogether new and different meaning, purpose, and goal. Our spiritual life now revolves in an orbit and around a center that is different from those around us and different from our own previous experience. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the ***Pattern Son***, was the first to walk this out and demonstrate it for all to see — hence He is called “...*the firstborn among many brethren*.”

As I have walked with the Lord for many years and the ever increasing wonder of the glory of God’s Christ has unfolded to my wondering spirit, I have come to realize that not only did our Lord *speak* in parables, but His *whole life* from the hour of His birth in Bethlehem to the day of His ascension into heaven was in itself a *parable* and a *mighty sign* of wonders which were to come in the lives of those apprehended to live and walk in that same blessed realm of sonship to God. His glorious life was a heavenly and divine life and those who have been born of His spirit and washed in His blood are called upon to walk even as He walked all the way into the fullness of God. In the light of this blessed truth I now declare that the wonderful life of the first-born Son was in itself a parable, expressly prefiguring the life, walk, experience, and destiny of all those holy sons of God who should follow after Him.

In this marvelous parable of parables, the life of the Son of God, is found this remarkable story of how His own family seized upon Him to take Him away by force because, said they, “He is mad!” The story is found in chapter three of Mark’s Gospel. “*And He (Jesus) went up on the hillside and called unto Himself those whom He wanted and chose, and they came to Him. And He appointed twelve to continue to be with Him, and that He might send them out to preach and to have authority and power to heal the sick and to drive out demons...then He went to a house, but a throng came together again, so that Jesus and His disciples could not even take food. And when those who belonged to Him (His kinsmen) heard it, they went out to take Him by force, for they kept saying, He is out of His mind, beside Himself, deranged, mad! And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, He is possessed by Beelzebub, and, by the help of the prince of demons, He is casting out demons*” (Mk. 3:13-22), Amplified).

“He is mad!” His kinsmen after the flesh said. And I declare to you that from the world’s standpoint, *the charge is true*. It is useless to denounce this as a libel, a bitter, blasphemous slander. They could not be expected to understand the strange things Jesus was saying and doing, and from their human observation *it was true!* Your favorite psychiatrist today would probably reach the very same conclusion. There was no alternative. Either He was the Christ, the Son of the living God, or He was beside Himself. A holy and divine and heavenly life is always a phenomenon. A life which lives and moves after the principles of the kingdom of heaven is always a wonder. The world knoweth it not. It is either supernatural or weird. For what is being beside oneself? What is madness? It is **eccentricity** — ec-centr-icity — having a *different center* from other people! Webster defines eccentricity as: Not having the same center, as two circles; not having the axis exactly in the center; out of the ordinary; deviating from the norm, as in conduct; unconventional. Here is a man, for instance, who devotes his life to collecting objects of antiquarian interest, old coins perhaps, or old editions of books, or perhaps nothing more sensational than stray dogs or cats. His center is odd, his life revolves in an orbit of his own, his center is different from those around him, therefore his friends say, he is eccentric.

This was the pronouncement concerning the firstborn Son of God by His kinsmen after the flesh and by the religious leaders of Israel. Jesus wanted nothing of the religion of the scribes and Pharisees. He held nothing but contempt for the organized religion of that day, for the blinding traditions of the learned and prestigious Rabbis, the distorted and false doctrines of the Pharisees who walked about with the most imposing and pretentious titles, clothed in elaborate and gorgeous vestments, loving the chief seats in the synagogue, and binding upon the people heavy burdens, grievous to be borne, with all sorts of rules and regulations. Because He was a SON, Jesus’ center was in nothing of earth, nothing of the physical world, nothing of the external order, nothing of man-made structures. Unlike other religious teachers He gives us no detailed instructions about what we are to do or not do; He does not tell us either to eat or drink, or to refrain from eating or drinking certain things. He does not tell us to carry out any ritual observances nor to keep certain days and seasons. He built no church buildings nor did He initiate any building programs, but He did say, *“The hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father...the hour cometh and now is when true worshippers shall worship the Father IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH”* (Jn. 4:21-23).

Jesus did not establish any form of ecclesiasticism, or any hierarchy of officials, or any organizational structure, but He did say, *“Be not ye called Rabbi (Teacher, Master, Doctor): for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters (leaders): for one is your Master (Leader), even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant”* (Mat. 23:8-10). Can we not see by this that the blessed realm of **sonship to God** is an UNSTRUCTURED REALM for it is not of earth (form), but of heaven (essence); not of external or physical things, but of Spirit and Truth. Jesus never concerned Himself with external structures of organization, buildings, programs, choirs, ceremonies, nor any other carnal thing. He ministered LIFE, REALITY, SPIRIT, AND TRUTH AND SET THE CAPTIVES FREE. Period. He was unusual. He would not follow the methods and techniques of either the world or religion. He would not go with the multitude. And men were expected to go with the multitude! What the multitude thought, said, or did, were the right things to have thought, said, and done. Anyone who thought, said, or did differently, his folly be upon his head, he was beside himself, he was mad! And none of those things were of any consequence to Jesus!

Now all this was very eccentric. It was living on new lines altogether. He did God’s will. He pleased not Himself. His center was to one side of Self. Therefore He was beside Himself! From the standpoint of the world, religion, and the flesh it was simply madness. Think of this idea of His, for instance, of starting out into life with so visionary an idea as that of *doing good* with *no strings attached* — no offering plate, no books for sale, no monthly newsletter informing about all the triumphs and needs of the work, no gadgets offered to those sending in a love offering, no special blessings or prophecies pronounced on those who “obeyed God” in contributing \$50.00 or more to the Kingdom work, no brochure on how to make out your will and leave your estate to the Lord’s ministry. Jesus did not operate in worldly methods and techniques. Yes — they had a money bag, and obviously people supported the work, but it was done spontaneously under the direction of the Holy Spirit, not any promotion of man. Man was not His center,

God was His center. His trust was not in God's people, His trust was in GOD HIMSELF! His God and Father was His source of life and supply.

Yes, Jesus was eccentric. He had a different center from other people. From the world. From the world's viewpoint He was beside Himself, mad. Think of this absurd notion that He had come into the world to usher in a kingdom in which God's will would be done on earth as it is done in heaven and that God's mind would direct all things and God's life would quicken all things and bring all men and every nation under the blessedness of heaven's perfect order. It never ceases to amaze me how deep-seated and deep-rooted within the masses of Christianity are all the things which Jesus denounced, and how scarce are the *realities* which He spoke and manifested in the world. Because the average Christian today has been brought up with a CENTER OTHER THAN CHRIST he is totally unable to think except in terms of established orders, sects, denominations, creeds, assemblies, doctrines, meetings, communions, baptisms, programs, outreaches, campaigns, pastors, choirs, rituals, ceremonies, vestments, offerings, tithe envelopes, drives, conferences, elections, board meetings, committees, Sunday Schools, Seminaries, church buildings, fellowship halls, stained glass windows, robes, special numbers, special speakers, and the list could just go on and on and on! Think of it, beloved, Jesus used not one single one of any of those things! And yet He turned the world upside down! He had a different center. It was the right center. And it is the same center for every *son of God*! After men have spent a whole lifetime of this feverish "church activity," how many people are there who have taken time to wait on God long enough to HEAR HIM SPEAK AND DIVULGE HIS WILL TO THEIR SEEKING HEARTS? I declare to you of a truth that any man or woman who will *purge himself from these things* and take the time to seek God and God alone, hungering and thirsting after God's mind, God's heart, and God's eternal will — that man will find himself drifting away from all these aforementioned things and from there on THE MIND OF CHRIST will be his program, his quest, his eternal joy.

I can tell you of a certainty that every man who lives like Christ produces the same reaction upon the world as did the first-born Son. This is an inevitable consequence. What men thought of Him, they will think of you and me. The servant is not above his Master, nor the disciple above his Lord. If they misunderstood Him, they will misunderstand you. If they persecuted Him, they will persecute you. A son is simply different from other people! Time has not changed the essential difference between the spirit of the world and the spirit of Christ, nor between religion and reality. They are radically different! And from the world's standpoint and from religion's standpoint sonship is eccentricity! For what is sonship? It is the projection into the world of a people who live out the very same LIFE OF CHRIST that Jesus lived. The LIFE OF CHRIST is not the historical story of a man who walked the earth two thousand years ago. The LIFE OF CHRIST is the very spirit of Jesus lived out in those who are members of His body, called to the high calling in Him. This is what makes the sons of God eccentric. There is no sanctioned place in the world as yet for a life with God and *only God* as both its source and its goal.

Let all who would be followers of the Lamb upon Zion's holy mount know that sonship is no milk-and-water experience. It is a *fire*! It is a *sword*! It is a burning, consuming heat, which must radiate upon everything around. The transformation from the world and from the religious systems of man to the *Christ-life* is so remarkable that when one really undergoes it, he cannot find words in common use by which he can describe its revolutionary character. He has to recall the very striking phrases of the New Testament: A new *birth*, a new *mind*, a new *heart*, a new *man*, a new *creature*, a new *creation*. His very life, the old Adamic life, has been dissolved and re-crystallized round a new center! Let a man depart from iniquity, let him depart from the myriad traditions of religion and make CHRIST AND CHRIST ALONE the center of his life and he will soon discover that the impression his friends receive from him now is the impression of eccentricity. The change is bound to strike them, for it is radical, it is central. They may even say what they said of Jesus, "He is beside himself, deranged, *mad*!" Or they might even say, "He is possessed by *Beelzebub*!" And it cannot be helped. We have a different center!

Many precious brethren are perplexed that we no longer find any desire to fellowship with them in their religious ceremonies, rituals, and sacraments; in their so-called "holy days" and festive seasons, in their carnal programs, in their static creeds and petty doctrines, in their fleshly board meetings and organizations. They wonder why we don't run from meeting to meeting, to hear every preacher, and teacher, and prophet,

and healer, and miracle worker who passes through town. I do not want to beat around the bush in what I am saying, but I want to speak my earnest convictions with clarity and assurance. I find that even the Christian bookstores with their endless shelves of books filled with spiritual Pabulum, if not with spiritual nonsense, have become a stench to my spirit. I tell you of a truth that I find the vast majority of Christian radio and television, with their showmanship, religious racketeers, and confusion of tongues to be nothing more nor less than ambassadors of the kingdom of Babylon. I sometimes refer to them as the BBN — the Babylon Broadcasting Network. These things satisfied once, but now I have tasted of the fruit of a tree more delicious, satisfying, and life-giving than all — CHRIST HIMSELF! I have changed centers.

Every saint of God and every group of saints who are moving on in God, had to come out of the Babylon that they discovered themselves to be in. Every one had to come out of the system that is death, that had a stranglehold on their spiritual walk and progress in God. We have had to come out of confusion, and we do not count ourselves as being out completely as yet, but we have come as far as He has led and enabled. There is still some confusion in the experience of many, but the light is shining brighter and brighter unto the perfect Day! All through the ages, God has had a few who heard His voice and came out of the Babylon of their time, but today His voice has become as the sound of many waters and those marching to Zion as an army of many troops. We ourselves are in contact with dear ones in many nations of the world who have been sovereignly separated *unto Him* for His high purposes in this important hour. It is indeed wonderful!

GO YE OUT TO MEET HIM!

When God created man male and female in His image, He revealed the great truth that He is Himself male and female in His attributes and nature. In spiritual maturity we enter into relationship with God in each of the facets of His being. We may truly become both the bride of Christ and the sons of the Father within ourselves, just as He is both male and female within Himself. Can we not see by this that *brideship* bespeaks the spiritually feminine relationship of intimate love and reverential obedience to Christ, whereas *sonship* embodies the spiritually masculine characteristics of strength, authority, power, and dominion to rule and reign over all things. Let us never become so over-balanced in our zeal to become *sons of God* that we despise the marvelous reality of being the *bride of Christ*!

The simple but sublime truth is that ***the way to sonship i-s brideship!*** This is why the Spirit has given us in Revelation chapter twelve the example of a glorious sun-clad woman giving birth to a remarkable man-child who is destined to rule all nations with a rod of iron. This wondrous woman is a corporate body of the Lord's people, and her illustrious man-child is likewise a corporate body of saints. This graphic picture reveals the blessed truth that it is the relationship of *brideship* that *births* the realm of *sonship*! The sons come from the bride. Jesus said, "*I am the way...no man cometh unto the Father but by me.*" Can we not see by this that relationship with Jesus *leads* to relationship with the Father. Your relationship to Christ as a bride will forerun your relationship to the Father as a son. Brideship is the harbinger of sonship! It is through intimacy of fellowship and vital union with Christ, made ONE IN HIM IN LOVE, that we are prepared to find our place ***in Him*** in that mighty strength, power, authority, glory, and dominion over all things as the sons of God. This is a true and divine principle in the kingdom of God which I trust no earnest saint of God who reads these lines will miss!

This speaks to the heart. Our Lord prophesied of this, our day, "*Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom*" (Mat. 25:1). It is not our purpose to explore the identity of the bride, or who were the five foolish virgins, or the five wise ones. May our hearts rather be seized, my beloved, by this one compulsion — to detach ourselves from religion, from present things, from self and its demands, from the world and its pressures, from ALL — to ***go forth***, in the spirit of our minds, in the affections of our hearts, to meet CHRIST THE BRIDEGROOM! It is not a question of going forth from one physical location to another; it is not a matter of soaring away into the skies to join Jesus on a cloud; it is not geographical at all, but deeply ***spiritual***. It is the out-going of the heart to be uniquely joined in union with our Head and Lord. It means such a detachment from *this world* that our one goal, our sole aim, is Christ; we are going forth to meet HIM!

Brideship means “falling in love” with Jesus Christ our Head and Lord. It means being truly virgin in our desires towards the Lord; it means walking in the spirit, following hard after the Lord, seeking Him with all of our heart, keeping ourselves unto HIM and unto HIM ALONE; it means once and for all forsaking all others, especially any partnership with the wanton harlot, Mystery Babylon; it means renouncing the schemes and plans and ambitions of the carnal mind and our love of the world and the desires of the flesh; it means to have no other love and no other god before Him, no master that rules our life, no lord that dictates our actions, no reserved areas of our being. To those apprehended ones quickened by the Spirit in this hour I proclaim — THE HEAVENLY BRIDEGROOM COMETH! Listen! Have not the ears of your spirit been opened to hear the joyful cry, “*Behold, the Bridegroom!*” Harken! Has not your heart been deeply stirred and moved within you to hasten to obey the urgent command, “*Go ye OUT to meet Him!*”

There are two voices abroad in the land today. Each of these voices purports to be the voice of the Spirit of God. One of these voices rings out loud and clear, “*Come out of her, my people!*” The other voice issues forth from the mouths of men who profess to be Spirit-filled, tongues-speaking, Holy Ghost anointed leaders, teachers, apostles, and prophets of the Charismatic Movement, exhorting the people, “*Stay in her, my people!*” “Stay in your denomination, for, after all,” they croon, “the Holy Spirit will make you a *better Methodist, a better Baptist, a better Presbyterian, a better Catholic — a BETTER BABYLONIAN!*” You will have to write a very large book, my brother or sister, if you are going to convince me that this voice is the voice of the Holy Spirit, for it requires but little of the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God to discern which of these voices is the voice of the Spirit and which is the voice of the beast which has two horns as a lamb, but *speaks as a dragon*. The voice which urges people to remain in Mystery Babylon is unquestionably the voice of rebellion and blasphemy against the clear word of the Lord! “Come out” *never means* “stay in!” I have no hesitation whatever in declaring to you that God is not today in the business of blessing, renewing, or perfecting Mystery Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. He *is* in the business of *calling out* a people for His name, that is, to take His name, to *be a bride unto Him*. He *is* in the business of gathering together unto HIM. He *is* in the business of washing, cleansing, and sanctifying the *virgin bride of Christ*. He *is* in the business of building and preparing and adorning the HOLY CITY, NEW JERUSALEM!

There is a place in the spirit where saints may dwell in union with Christ. There is a true temple, not made with hands, eternal in the heavenlies. There is a church which is the *true church*. It cannot be seen of men, for God is building it in the heavenlies of His Spirit. There is a realm where Christ is all-in-all. There is a “place by me” where we stand upon a rock and behold His glory (Ex. 33:21). There is a path that no vulture’s eye hath seen (Job 28:7). There is a church of the firstborn whose names are written only in heaven (Heb. 12:23). There is a church which is the *bride of Christ* (Eph. 5:21-33). It has always been an enigma to me to find that a truth so plainly set forth in holy scripture should be so confused and misunderstood and misinterpreted by the people of God. That the church is not only the body of Christ in the symbology of a *masculine body* from the neck down to the toes, but is in truth also the *feminine body* of Christ as Eve was the body of Adam — his wife — is as clear and obvious in the word of God as the sun blazing in the cloudless noonday sky.

So we are told that in this, our day, shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins. Virgins are pure and undefiled: not the common run of Christians who have defiled themselves with every lover-idol they can find and have departed from a walk in the Spirit of God and slithered off into the ditch, there to slop and flounder around in error and deception and ignorance and fleshly religious activities of every kind. These ten virgins took their lamps and went forth to meet the Bridegroom. Not very many people who name the name of Christ are doing that! Not very many know who or what the Bridegroom is, and therefore do not know where or how to meet Him. Not very many Bible students even suspect that the coming of the Bridegroom is different than the coming of the King, or the coming of Christ in other dimensions. Not knowing who or what the Bridegroom is, they therefore cannot know how to go forth to meet Him. The vast majority of Christians, unfortunately, are busily preparing themselves to go “UP” to meet the Bridegroom! All their fuss and stir will be in vain. For no one will ever go “UP” to meet Him! There is not one scripture in the entire Bible that speaks of being “caught up” to meet the Bridegroom or to “eat the marriage supper in the sky.”

The preachers have the coming of the Lord all muddled because they cannot with their carnal minds distinguish the difference between the facets of His coming. They know nothing of the distinction between His coming as King and His coming as Bridegroom, and His coming in many other ways and forms. To their unenlightened minds there is but one single coming of Christ where He crashes down through the clouds of earth's atmosphere. Most saints today are not preparing to meet the Bridegroom, but are trying to fix themselves up so that they will be all ready to be whisked away into the clouds instead. But not so with the virgins! They are in the right place at the right time, and all looking for a very blessed event — the coming of Christ as the Bridegroom. And they are spiritually intelligent enough to know that no one will ever go “up” to meet the Bridegroom! They know, anticipate, and understand the cry that is made at the midnight hour, ***“Behold, the Bridegroom cometh — go ye O-U-T to meet Him!”*** (Mat. 25:6). In order to meet the Bridegroom, one must go “out.” And “out” does not in any way indicate UP! The great truth that the Holy Spirit would now make real to our hearts is just this: the only way one may go “out” to meet the Bridegroom is to “come out” from among the world and the flesh and the harlot churches with their idolatries and miserable distortions of truth, to be JOINED UNTO THE LORD in intimacy of fellowship and vital union!

One cry of the book of Revelation is for us to *“Come up hither”* into a higher realm of life and glory. The important truth for us to understand now is that in the Revelation there is both a coming **out** and a coming **up**. “And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, *Come out* of her my people, that ye be not partaker of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues” (Rev. 18:4). That very word came to us in great power by the Spirit many years ago during the time of a sovereign move of God in our midst. We were obedient to the word we heard from heaven and hasted to *come out* of the old order church system, and out of the whole religious order of man. God began in us a process of complete and total restoration of His truth, His ways, His will, His purpose, His life, His mind, His heart, and the things of His Spirit!

Then, after He called us out of the religious systems of man, and had consumed the spirit and ways of those systems out of our minds and hearts, we heard another Voice as of a trumpet talking with us, inviting us to *“Come up hither”* to a higher spiritual realm. When we came up to a higher place in the Spirit, He then said to us, *“I will show thee things which must be hereafter.”* Then we were immediately in the Spirit and saw *“a throne set in heaven (or in the realm of the Spirit), and One sat on the throne.”* When, at our Father's invitation, we ascended in the spirit into the **throne zone**, we beheld the Lord seated upon His throne of majesty and power. And what a revelation that was! Yet here is the wonder of it all — not just to see God in Christ seated upon His throne, but to comprehend the deep and eternal significance of His invitation to us to “Come up hither.” Not just to *see Him* upon the throne — but to *join Him*! Thus His word comes: “To Him that overcometh will I grant to *sit with me in my throne*, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne” (Rev. 3:21). Ah, beloved, experiences like this teach us the wonderful fact that the book of Revelation is not meant to be *understood* — it is meant to be EXPERIENCED!

The reason we must go “out” to meet the Bridegroom is because He is Himself “out.” The message of the Gospels is very clear — all things related to Christ are OUTSIDE of religion. In that day Judaism was the religious system of God's people. But when Jesus came everything concerning Him took place outside of that system. In plain language, Christ had nothing to do with religion — not even that religion which was purportedly based upon the holy scriptures. The birth of Christ was apart from the religion of the Lord's people. God did not send the angel Gabriel to king Herod's palace, not to the company of priests, nor to the members of the Sanhedrin, nor to the leaders of either the Pharisees or Sadducees. God sent His messenger to a dusty little town in a despised Province, Nazareth of Galilee. Everything related to His birth was outside Jerusalem, outside the temple, outside the priesthood, outside the scribes and elders and all the religious sects; it had nothing to do with the organized religion of the day, although that religion had originally been founded according to God's holy word.

When the Christ child was found He was found outside of religion. He was not found by any priest, nor by any Levite, nor by any scribe, nor by any Pharisee, nor any so-called holy people. We are all familiar with the account of the heavenly star appearing in a pagan land to people who were not even worshippers of

Yahweh. But they found the Christ by the star! We know also how the band of heavenly angels appeared to lowly shepherds attending their flocks at night, and how startled and wondering they hastened into Bethlehem to find the new-born Saviour. When the hour arrived many years thence for Jesus' ministry to begin, He was introduced to Israel outside any of the religious orders. John the Baptist, born a priest, departed from the organized priesthood and took up residence in the wilderness. He lived in a wild place and appeared to the cultured as a wild man wearing camel's hair and eating wild honey and locusts. He was not in the temple, he had no altar to offer sacrifices, his ministry was entirely apart from the religious system of the priesthood. This was the pioneer of the kingdom of God, the forerunner of the Christ. Christ was followed outside of religion. Who were those who surrounded Him, who made up the multitudes that thronged the valleys and the mountains? The high priests? The scribes? The Pharisees? The Sadducees? The Essenes? The elders of Israel? NO! They were fishermen, tax-gatherers, sinners, prostitutes, unlearned people, the poor and sick and needy, the common people who heard Him gladly and were transformed in mind and heart and body by the wisdom and power of the gracious words that flowed from His anointed lips.

As John the Baptist and Jesus and His disciples and the multitudes who followed Him, we are going out and away from the kingdoms of men! Out from self-will and from our own preconceived ideas and religious understanding! Out from the doctrines of men and the traditions of the elders! Out from man's organization and promotions! Out from the prophets who preach for hire! Out from the shepherds who deceive and fleece the sheep! Out from the healers who heal for gain! Out from the hireling ministry that incessantly cries, "Money, money, money, money!" Out from bondage to the merchandisers, the dove sellers, the book vendors, the CD peddlers (for a price), the religious profiteers, who masquerade as prophets of God! Out from the confusion of Babylon, from man's laws, man's rules, man's heresies, which have no power to set you free! To those blessed ones walking about the city looking for HIM whom their soul loveth I now say, "BEHOLD, THE BRIDEGROOM COMETH! Go ye O-U-T to meet Him!"

No man will ever go out to meet the Bridegroom until the ears of his spirit have been opened to hear that joyful cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom!" I would point out that it is in the original, "Behold, the Bridegroom," not, "Behold, the Bridegroom *cometh*." Many Greek scholars agree that the word "cometh" is an interpolation — an insertion into the manuscript by the scribes. If I tell you that the Lord is coming, I am putting the emphasis upon that coming, not upon HIMSELF. "The Bridegroom is here!" that is the cry. And it is a very solemn and yet blessed thing, and I am sure I seek to awaken my own soul to the reality of that cry — "He is here!" Suppose someone came to the door and cried, "He is here, go ye out to meet Him;" would we not drop all and go? It means an appointed place of rendezvous. We have no word in our language to express it properly. Let me assure you, precious friend of mine, that that place of appointment with the Bridegroom has to do with an attitude, a mind, a condition, a state of being. And it is right here within ourselves, where our soul bows low in surrender to the spirit and the bride-soul enters into union with Christ the Bridegroom within our spirit!

Some speak of the Lord *coming* because everything here about us is confusion and trouble. When the Lord comes, say they, He will settle all and solve everything. But I want to settle myself — to here and now be divested of everything that is unsuited to Him, that I may know Him in His coming, in His manifest presence. The apostle says, "*...that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ...I am jealous over you...for I have espoused you to one husband.*" I covet that preparation, to be washed and cleansed and presented to Christ, a part of that glorious church which is without spot or wrinkle or blemish.

I say to all as far as our message can reach: Listen! Do you not hear the cry which rings over the land? Listen! Soon it will swell to a mighty chorus. Listen! High above the cry of battle; high above the deafening roar of the grinding wheels of business; high above the clamorous voices of a pleasure crazed world; high above the rantings and ravings of the hucksters of religion. Listen! It is the Voice which cries: "Behold, the Bridegroom!" The Voice of the Spirit of God is calling you to lift up your eyes to the heavenly hills to behold the Bridegroom who sits in the heavenly places of the glory of God, enthroned within your regenerated spirit. Behold, the Bridegroom! Oh, my friend, forsake the bawdy harlot and let us arise and go forth unto the Bridegroom. Many tens of thousands of voices re-echo the soul-stirring cry until it passes in its mighty power, from pole to pole, from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth, rousing all the elect of God to abandon all and follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth!

Before closing this article, once more I would quote the challenging words of George Hawtin, “With all my heart I believe that the days are few for the people of God to escape from the power of Babylon, but escape they must if they are to avoid being partakers of her sins and receiving of her plagues. There is only one way to escape Babylon’s hypnotic power. It is in strict obedience to the command, ‘COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE.’ This obedience is not difficult. Leave great Babylon behind, as Abram did in the long ago, and go unto HIM without the camp, bearing His reproach. Draw nigh unto God and He will draw nigh unto you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up” — end quote.

Have you done it? Can you say that you have gone out to meet the Bridegroom? For a number of years now a cry ever increasing in its intensity has been going forth to the Lord’s listening saints — and, thank God! untold thousands have heard the trumpet call and gone forth to meet Him. Many others think they have come out — perhaps they have physically, but often their mind is still in the clutches of the old traditions. So wrapped in the grave clothes of creed and doctrine and delusion, there is a long process of coming OUT, to where we truly enter into UNION with the Bridegroom, becoming ONE IN HIM — one in His mind, will, nature, and purpose.

Each one who is truly virgin towards the Lord will cry with the Shulamite, “Draw me and we will run after Thee” (S. of S. 1:4). We know that we are helpless in ourselves, and He alone can do this. “I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have **I drawn thee**,” saith the Lord. Each one of the virgins who run after Him must be drawn by God’s personal dealing and working in the soul; and as each one yields to the Bridegroom’s drawing, they will all find themselves in the company of those who go forth to meet the Bridegroom. The word reads: “Draw ME and WE will run after Thee.” ME and WE! The drawing of God is upon each elect member who will make up the bride and bring forth the manchild. His hand is cutting and shaping each living stone for the habitation of the Spirit, which He is building for Himself. It is as each soul is drawn, that all run after Him; it is as He perfects each one, that all come forth in perfection; it is as each one is put into the purifying fires, that the gold in each life comes out pure and shining, and the glory of God shines out from the whole. Oh, the wonder of it!

Oh! let the ones that hear these lines know Revelation speaks;
Your mysteries are unfolding now: give ear unto the meek.
The proud and haughty will not hear the word you now proclaim;
They — like the Pharisees of old — hold fast to what is vain:
Tradition of theology, philosophy of men — will fight against the truth of God
Until the very end.

But — blessed are they who flee “her” walls,
Yea, blessed are they who weep: for God has heard, He bent His ear,
And He shall span the deep.
And everywhere His river flows, a healing shall be borne...
Oh! Marvel not — for great is He — His wonders to perform!

Tw’as not His choice to make a name — tho nonetheless He knew
That He was King of kings supreme — but He was like the dew
Which falls when men behold it not — even now it speaks anew;
Will you believe His word can speak — THO YOU’RE NOT ON A PEW?

*Hail to the **woman who’s elect!** THE LADY OF GOD’S PLAN!*
*Woe to the **woman faked in gold!** Her treasures are of man!*
*Hail to the **Lady!** God’s elect! who in His footsteps trod.*
GRACE BE TO YOU ABUNDANTLY...Grace be to you FROM GOD!

— Carlene Appleby

To be continued...

J. PRESTON EBY