

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 242

THE HOLY CITY (continued)

“And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, *Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God*” (Rev. 21:9-10).

When you try to imagine a city coming down from heaven, don’t concentrate too much on the physical elements in the picture. To understand what Revelation 21 is telling us, we have to see the landing of the heavenly city as a symbol of something glorious. It symbolizes GOD INDWELLING A PEOPLE AND COMING IN THAT PEOPLE TO DWELL WITH, MANIFEST TO, AND RULE OVER ALL THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH! It is the last piece in a millennia-long puzzle that often made us wonder just what God is doing with this world!

How anyone can think that the holy city is some monstrosity floating down through the galaxies is beyond my comprehension. There are too many symbols connected with this city that reveal divine, spiritual realities. Let us make one thing very clear — the holy city is not a *place*, nor is it a *thing* — it is a *people*. We are not “going up to that beautiful city,” as Little Troy Lumpkin used to sing. This is not about the church system’s hymn book theology of heaven. This city is coming down from God out of heaven! Someone says, “But if it is coming down out of heaven, don’t we have to *go* to heaven so we can come back down?” The inspired words of Paul the apostle give a precise portrayal of the realm from whence this city descends. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings *in the heavenly places in Christ*: according as He hath...quickened us together with Christ...and *hath raised us up together with Christ... and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*” (Eph. 1:3; 2:5-6). The Greek literal says, “...who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings *in the heavenlies in Christ*,” that is, in the heavenly or spiritual dimensions that exist in Christ our Lord. The city coming down from God out of heaven speaks to me of a descending from the realm of pure spirit and coming into the realm of manifestation on the visible plane of the physical world. There is a people prepared of God to be visible to the men of earth that will have within themselves, in the heavenly, spiritual dimension of their lives, the answer to all the problems of the human family. This people is the expression of His Person and the outpouring of His glory!

With transfixed wonder John beheld the holy city, the bride of the Lamb, from atop a great and high mountain — a high and exalted place in the Spirit of God. If the city is literal then the mountain is literal. I can climb its slopes and touch its rocks with my hands. But the writer to the Hebrews informs us that “Ye are *not* come to the mount that *might be touched*...but ye *are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem*...” (Heb. 12:18,22). There can be no doubt that these inspired words reveal to us the great truth that the high mountain upon which the heavenly, or spiritual Jerusalem is seen, is the heavenly and spiritual mount Zion, the mount that *cannot be touched* by the flesh man! The old Jerusalem was a literal and physical city, the government of which was situated upon the earthly mount Zion. Can we not see by this that the Old Testament *type* was *literal*, whereas the New Testament *antitypical reality* is *spiritual*. The city is a *people*!

When the glorious city of living stones is unveiled in all of its unspeakable majesty and glory, then will the Spirit and the Bride say, “Come,” and the nations of earth will enter through its spiritual gates that they may partake of the leaves of its spiritual tree (the living word of God) that are for the *healing of the nations*. From God’s exalted throne upon which reign the *sons of God* (Rev. 3:21; 21:7) the water of Life (the quickening Spirit) will flow and the ever green tree of Life, bearing its twelve manner of fruits, will flourish on either side of the river for the spiritual nourishment of all nations who hitherto walked in darkness and in the shadow of death. Then shall its twelve gates be open for all who would enter, and never shall they be closed by day, and there shall be no more night.

In the book of Hebrews the writer’s spirit is enraptured with glory, his heart exulting in praise, as he beholds in spirit the transcendent glory of the spiritual mount Zion in contrast with the indescribable dreadfulness of the earthly mount Sinai. From his mouth and his pen pour forth the prophetic pronouncement: “*For ye are not come to the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: for they could not endure that which was commanded, and if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake: but ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of messengers, and to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel*” (Heb. 12:18-24).

There are beautiful pictures here of God’s dealings with His people on all levels of spiritual growth, development, and understanding. Some people get the idea that we think we are the only true people of God on earth, and that we have no love, appreciation, or concern for the Lord’s people in the church systems. Such is not the case! We seek to fellowship with all the Lord’s precious people, regardless of what level they are on. They are all HIS, and if we can break bread together, or if we can bless them in any way, that is our joy. However — we cannot, *dare not*, fellowship the false religious systems of Mystery Babylon! We *do* need to draw a distinction between the Lord’s *people* and the *system* so many are involved in. We can and will fellowship anyone — but we will not fellowship their carnal, man-made systems. This means that most of our fellowship with the believers about us is limited to a “one-on-one” basis, after we get past those who *won’t fellowship us* at all because they perceive us to be heretics!

Let us go back to the Old Testament and consider the types and shadows of God's economy among His people. Israel of old was God's chosen nation, His peculiar treasure above all the people of the earth. Israel was the visible expression of God's kingdom upon earth. Israel was the whole nation composed of all who were born there, irrespective of their stature, position, station, attainments, wealth, poverty, intelligence, sickness, health — all who were born there, from the blind beggar by the roadside to the king upon the throne, were citizens of God's nation and came under the care, order, law, and provisions of Yahweh. All who were born of the flesh in Israel were citizens of the kingdom simply by virtue of *birth*. In this more glorious dispensation of the Spirit, each and every son of Adam's race, who has been born again by the Spirit through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, are alike citizens of that kingdom which is called *the kingdom of heaven*, which is no longer a dusty little country thronging with peasants and cattle who inhabit houses of clay and stone and wood, but an eternal land, a heavenly country of a spiritual order, the inhabitants of which have been born *from above*, not of a corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever. In type the fleshly Israel represents all who, under the new covenant, are born into the family-kingdom of God by spiritual birth!

Let us UNDERSTAND! Israel was the whole nation, but Jerusalem was the capital city. All who lived in Jerusalem were citizens of the kingdom, but not all who were citizens of the kingdom lived in Jerusalem! And as that old order of the flesh was but a type and shadow of the new order of the spirit, in this new order the new Jerusalem, the heavenly Jerusalem, is the capital city, transcendent in glory, on the mountain of His holiness, beautiful for situation, upon the sides of the north, the city of the great King! The new Jerusalem is the capital city of Israel today, which is Christ's kingdom of blood-bought, quickened men and women in all stages of growth and development in Life. The new Jerusalem is a city of redeemed persons, but persons who have not only been born citizens of an heavenly country, but have ***moved onward and upward*** to dwell in the capital city of that country, a realm of surpassing beauty and glory, the inhabitants of which are the embodiment of the glory of God, holding in their hands the priesthood, temple, kingship, and government of the kingdom, and are the light thereof.

The apostle Paul makes it abundantly clear that there are two Jerusalems. *“For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the **two covenants**; the one from **mount Sinai**, which gendereth to bondage, which is Hagar. For this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to **Jerusalem which now is**, and is in bondage (to the law) with her children. But **Jerusalem which is above** is free, which is the mother of us all”* (Gal. 4:22-26).

Paul has here been drawing a comparison or contrast between Hagar and Sarah, and the children of the bondwoman and the children of the freewoman, which allegorically represent two covenants and the two Jerusalems. He states that there is a Jerusalem from below, which is physically here on this planet, the Jerusalem which now is and is in bondage with her children, which answers in allegory to Hagar and is fleshly, natural Israel under the law. There is a Jerusalem which is above, which exists in a higher realm, in the heavens of the Spirit of the Lord, and the Jerusalem which is above, being free, is not in bondage to external rules, laws, or administrations, and answers to Sarah and her children, the children of God through the new covenant, born from above by the Spirit. This Jerusalem is the mother of the heavenly Israel after the type and pattern of the earthly, and this is shown spiritually in the book of Revelation in the twelve gates bearing the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.

We become citizens of New Jerusalem by being born of the Spirit and then brought into a responsible place in the family of God, by the workings of His Spirit within us. The spiritual new Jerusalem is a glorious realm in God, far more glorious and spectacular than anything of the earthly Jerusalem has ever been! It is the *free city*, free from the old Mosaic law, free from the old Aaronic priesthood, free from the old fleshly Davidic kingship, and free from all of religion's traditions, regulations, creeds, liturgies, methods, systems, and bondages of men. And when the new Jerusalem realm has come from God out of heaven to be manifested in all its fullness here in the earthlies, with all her glorious kingdom parts fully established and spiritually fulfilled, she shall indeed be, in truth and in fact, "*the joy of the whole earth.*"

All of Jerusalem's children are born of the Spirit and led by the Spirit! One can be a spiritual Israelite and not be "led" by the Spirit, but one can never be a part of the governmental order of New Jerusalem and not be led by the Spirit, for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the full-grown, mature, manifest *sons of God*. And now in this heavenly light, power, and spirit they live as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, without the law and the bondages of religion, but in the Spirit and by the Spirit. And is not this the city that Abraham sought for, which hath foundations, whose *builder and maker is God*? Is not this the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God, not the old Jerusalem captured from the Jebusites, but the new city built up and made by God Himself *through the Spirit*? Is it not from among this people, born of the Spirit, filled with the Spirit, led by the Spirit, and grown up in the Spirit, that the Melchizedek Priesthood is revealed? Ah, little wonder that the apostle declared that in relation to the Melchizedekian Order there are "many things to say and hard to be understood" by those unspiritual ears that remain unquickened and uncircumcised by the Spirit of Truth. The *king* reigned in the earthly Jerusalem upon mount Zion, and the *priesthood* ministered in its temple upon mount Moriah — and now God's KING-PRIESTS in the new order of the kingdom of God occupy the high places of the heavenly Jerusalem! Oh, the mystery of it!

One of the chief errors made by believers of almost all persuasions is the common notion that all saved people belong to the same company, order, or rank in the kingdom of God. If such were true, then all the types and shadows of the Old Testament would be absolutely meaningless. Men like to imagine that *all* saints are "going to the same place" in God, that *all* are the bride of Christ, *all* have the mind of Christ, *all* are sons of God, *all* will rule and reign with Christ, and so on. To assume this is to frustrate the purpose of God in the lives of His people! Do not be deceived by the shallow thinking and senseless prattle of carnal minded teachers and preachers, nor by the childish understanding of baby Christians. There are many *justified* believers who have not been filled with the Spirit of God. There are many *Spirit-baptized* believers who have not grown up into the maturity of the knowledge, wisdom, nature, power, and stature of Christ. And nearly *all* believers fit somewhere *in between* those who are merely "saved by grace" and those who have been fully and completely CONFORMED INTO THE IMAGE OF THE SON OF GOD.

It should be clear to all that have eyes to see that the *Jerusalem people* dwell in a brighter glory than do the *Israel people* that dwell in the other parts of the land, even as *Spirit-filled people* dwell in a brighter glory than do *justified people*. New Jerusalem is the bride of Christ. A bride is one who is no longer a babe and no longer a child, but has developed physically, psychologically, and experientially, reaching a degree of maturity to be able to fulfill all the demands, requirements, and responsibilities of a wife. She is one who has fallen so intensely in love that her only wish is to yield herself to the high desires of her husband, giving herself completely and unreservedly to him as her lover, submitting her whole life to him as her head and lord. Oh! So many of the Lord's people know so little of what it means to *be the bride of Christ*! Evidently they suppose it to be some kind of "honorary title" conferred on them some day in the sweet by and by!

But I tell you that most saints who are today pressing on into the high calling of sonship to God started out earlier in their experience in a “brideship” relationship to Christ, intensely in love with Christ, submitted to His Lordship, and seeking only to fulfill His high desires.

There is more! Not only have we come by our walk in the Spirit to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, not only have we come to the heavenly Jerusalem, but we have also come unto *mount Zion*. Again we go back to consider the shadow. Israel was the whole nation, Jerusalem, the capital city. All Israelites were alike citizens of the kingdom, but not all Israelites dwelt in Jerusalem, the city of the great King, where stood the magnificent temple of God, the priesthood, the kingship, together with all the governmental administration, and the glory. And while Jerusalem comprised a people of surpassing honor and glory and relationship with God, yet in all Jerusalem there was only one who, with his household, and his associates, *dwelt on mount Zion*. He was the king! Zion is the name of the ancient citadel of Jerusalem. It was captured from the Jebusites by David after he became king. From that hill David and the kings of Israel reigned gloriously, and the ark of God rested there all through the reign of David which was forty years. Mount Zion was the highest pinnacle of glory and power attainable in Israel!

That Zion, however, was only a faint shadow of **THE ZION TO WHICH WE ARE COME!** David was king over natural, fleshly Israel under the old covenant. Christ is King over the spiritual Israel of the new covenant! David dwelt on the natural mount Zion. Therefore Christ dwells upon the spiritual mount Zion! (Rev. 14:1). And this spiritual mount Zion is composed of those who reach the very highest pinnacle attainable in Jerusalem: those who, like king David of old, are “a *man* (manchild) after mine own heart, which shall fulfill *all my will*.” (Rev. 14:1-5). This mount Zion company is the ruling class, the overcomers who sit with Christ in His throne. They *are the throne* in the new Jerusalem! They are the kings and priests unto God, after the order of Melchizedek, those who have attained to the highest position of honor and might and true greatness in the kingdom of God. It comprises those who are such as have gone all the way with their Lord, who have climbed the mount with Him, who have followed the Lamb as a sacrifice whithersoever He goeth, and shall now rule with their Lord upon His throne over God’s infinite realm for evermore. Isn’t it wonderful!

THE CITY COMING DOWN

“And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, *descending out of heaven from God*” (Rev. 21:10).

One of the beautiful symbolisms given us in the book of Revelation is this one of the holy city “coming down from God out of heaven.” When John said that this city comes down from God out of heaven, he wasn’t talking about coming down past Mercury, Jupiter, and Mars. He meant not that it would settle down over the mount of Olives or any other geographical location. In the Bible a city represents a government, and the “holy” city is a righteous government. It is not a man-made government. It doesn’t have a “Democratic,” “Republican,” “Reform,” “Labor,” or “Conservative” party. It emanates from God, out of the celestial or spiritual realm, that is, out of the heavens of the Spirit of God, and is established on earth through a heavenly, spiritual people. We often think with such carnal minds! We hear of a city “coming down from heaven” and imagine it appearing one night in the sky. Jesus once asked the Pharisees whether John the Baptist’s baptism was “from heaven” or from men. With the same carnal reasoning we could picture John’s baptism somehow mystically floating down through the sky and landing in the Jordan River! Of course, that’s not what Jesus meant. When He spoke of John’s baptism being “from heaven”

He was simply asking whether it *originated with God*, or whether it originated with men. May the blessed spirit of revelation grant us the clarity to see that this city shall never rule until it has in all truth *become* the “holy” city, prepared, adorned, and “made ready.” Oh, yes, she is *being prepared* and *being adorned*.

New Jerusalem is indeed the “holy” city, the city of holiness. This is not a city of exterior holiness, or a religious holiness. This is the power of holiness when men’s hearts are sanctified completely unto God, because God is taking and separating unto Himself a peculiar people, dedicated, reserved, and committed as a bride completely and only unto Himself. If our holiness is a matter of what we wear or do not wear, or what we eat or do not eat, or what we drink or do not drink, or where we go or do not go, or what we do or do not do in an exterior way, then the light that we shed forth upon the people will cause them to be occupied with what they are wearing, eating, drinking, and doing. But if our holiness is a separation unto God, a commitment to do the Father’s will, if we are sanctified and walk righteously in the sight of God, holy in attitude, holy in emotion, holy in desire, righteous in relationships of mind and spirit, soul and body, then the people who come to our light will not be occupied with *things*, but with serving and glorifying God, with a separation and dedication unto GOD HIMSELF. And when the Lamb’s wife has made herself ready, she will come down out of heaven, bringing the heavenly life to be manifested to men. Her origin is divine, her nature, her character, is heavenly — “out of heaven from God.” One is reminded of the scripture, “As IS the heavenly, such are they also THAT ARE heavenly. And as we have borne the IMAGE OF THE EARTHY, we shall also bear the IMAGE OF THE HEAVENLY” (I Cor. 15:48-49).

My beloved, John said, “And *I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*” “**And I John saw the holy city.**” It must be a personal experience, “And I Preston saw the holy city,” or “I Jane saw,” or “I Sam saw,” “I Richard saw.” It has to be individual, you must see the city for yourself, for it is a spiritual reality which can only be known by the spirit of revelation. John saw no physical “rapture.” He did not see us going out into space somewhere. God is going to perfect His elect right here upon earth with a divine life that comes out of God from heaven, and they are going to reign upon the earth. Paul said that we have received the “firstfruits” of the Spirit. And of the outpouring of that firstfruits we read, “And suddenly there *came from heaven* the sound of a rushing mighty wind...and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.” Heaven came down that day in the lives and experience of men. Behold, the tabernacle of God is *with men!* And He shall dwell *with them!* It’s not about us “going to heaven,” my friend. It’s about heaven coming down to earth in the lives of men. That is the power and the glory of the kingdom of heaven on earth!

Yet millions of Christians vainly imagine that they are going to a city up in the sky to live there with Jesus forever. It’s not in the Book. Multitudes believe that somehow they will escape the “Great Tribulation” by being raptured, snatched up to heaven. The testimony of scripture is just the opposite of man’s childish superstitions. God has always come to man! In the sacred mists of that long ago Eden the Lord God came down and walked and talked with Adam. In another place we find that the Lord appeared on the plains of Mamre and walked and talked with our father Abraham. God came down on mount Sinai in flaming fire and smoke before the face of the whole assembled nation of Israel, and gave them His law. God instructed Moses to build the tabernacle in the wilderness so that He could have a dwelling place in the midst of our Israelite forefathers. In the days of Solomon the Lord came down to dwell in the temple prepared for Him upon the mount Moriah, and the glory of the Lord so filled the house that the priests could not stand to minister because of the overwhelming power of the divine presence. Long centuries later “the Word was made flesh, and *dwelt among us*” (Jn. 1:14). And now He has come again in mighty Spirit-power!

The great mistake of the churches today is that they instruct their people that if they will just live in some kind of holiness here on earth, and endure the misery, pain, sorrow, and trouble for seventy years, then they can die and go to heaven. And then they run on and on talking about the Christians “spending eternity” in that far-off heaven! I do not say that men do not return to God in the spirit when their bodies die, but I do say that “spending eternity” out there somewhere in the blue is *not* what God is after, nor is it what salvation and redemption are about! God told Moses, when He took him up on mount Sinai, and showed to him the body of heaven in its fullness — He told Moses that the body of heaven which he beheld in the spirit was a *blueprint*, and then said to Moses, “If you will reproduce in the earth the image of what you saw in the heavens, I will come down and live in the midst of you.” The message we are called to proclaim in the earth in this hour is not that God wants us to come and live with Him in some far-off heaven somewhere, but the message is that if we will reproduce in that earth which *we are* the *pattern* in the heavens, God will come and live with man. As soon as the tabernacle was finished, made *according to the pattern*, the glory cloud of the Shekinah descended into the most holy place and the majesty of the Lord filled the house. And I tell you today, my beloved, THAT IS THE TYPE of what God is really after! If you will prepare Him a place in that tabernacle which *you are*, **He will come!** And just as that tabernacle of old housed the presence, life, and power of God, and stood in the midst of all the congregation of Israel to reveal God to all, and speak to all, and bless all, so shall the new Jerusalem city of God’s called and separated elect settle in the midst of the earth to reveal God, and speak as God, to reconcile, bless, deliver, and transform all the peoples of the earth. Aren’t you glad!

John saw the city descending from God, and it *is* descending from God. With every message of God that is preached, the Holy City is coming down to earth. With every person that is *born from above*, thus becoming a citizen of that city, it is coming down to earth. With every saint who receives the anointing of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, the Holy City is coming down to earth. With every member of God’s elect who grows up another step into perfection, into the image and likeness of the Holy One, the Holy City is coming down to earth. With every revelation that comes to us from the Spirit of God, taking us onward into the perfect fulfillment of God’s great plan and purpose in our lives, the Holy City is descending to earth. As the principles of the kingdom of God — righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost — are established in our lives, the Holy City is coming down from God out of heaven. When the nature and character of our heavenly Father are *formed in us*, and His precious mind rules our hearts, the Holy City is descending to earth. With every victory over sin and sickness, over limitation, darkness, and death, the Holy City is descending to earth. Beloved, it will continue descending with the development of the body of Christ into its full stature. All of this that *makes us the city* comes down from God out of heaven! That is the mystery. It will descend and descend and descend until the prayer that Jesus taught for sons is fulfilled: “Thy kingdom *come*, Thy will be done *in earth* as it is in heaven.”

This great city, the heavenly Jerusalem, that started coming down on the day of Pentecost, shall continue to come down from God out of heaven. That is, it shall continue to descend from out of the divine consciousness and life of the Lord into the receptivity, consciousness, and experience of His people on earth. It shall persist until all that dwell upon the earth shall walk in its light and enter in through its gates. Then shall the whole earth be filled with the glory and the knowledge of the Lord. Even now the new heaven — THE NEW MIND AND SPIRIT — is descending into our hearts, our nature, creating within us a new earth for the tabernacling of God. Everything that God sends down out of heaven is infinitely good and glorious. Two thousand years ago He sent Jesus as His best gift, and all the world has been blessed by that gift. When He brings heaven down to us we know that He is bringing His best. Every good and every perfect gift *cometh down from above*. A king once gave a diamond to one of his friends, and the friend

said, "Sire, this is too great a gift for me to receive." But the king answered, "It is not too great a gift for a king to give." In like manner, if the full manifestation of the life and glory of God in you, His elect, seems beyond what you deserve or are capable of, remember! it is NOT TOO MUCH FOR GOD TO GIVE AND DO!

Another aspect of this "coming down" of the city of God is expressed by Terry Crisp who wrote: "Why is it that this Great City is coming DOWN OUT of heaven? It's because of the burdened appeal of creation! Beloved, there is coming a GLORIOUS CHURCH in these days, a church which has been caught up to the highest heaven, to the very throne of God...but who, because of the *spirit of sonship* in their hearts, will not be able to ignore the groaning of the prisoners! They will come down from the heavenlies in High Priestly attire, bearing their gem-studded breastplate, which is the burden of mankind upon their hearts...with deliverance, with power, and with authority, to set the captives free! Imagine, if you will, a church so virtuous and bright that the nations of the world will walk in the light thereof, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory and honor to it, submitting themselves to her authority, and seeking wisdom from her mouth!"

The world is to be won for God; there is to be in all the earth a transformed society; in the end the earth will become heaven! Death will be abolished and sin and sorrow will flee away. Paul Mueller once wrote, "The heavens, including the great and mighty glory of the Lord that is in the heavens of God's Spirit, will indeed fall in torrents upon the earth. That will be showers of blessing upon a world steeped in sin and death. And the skies also shall rain down righteousness, as the word of the Lord has declared. Yet, it is not from the literal heavens or the literal skies that righteousness shall pour down to the earth. It is from the spiritual heavens where His righteousness shall be poured out to the earth, thus transforming this earth and all the people of it and in it into His pure and holy righteousness and the glory of the Lord. It is the new Jerusalem and all its spiritual parts that comes down from God out of heaven to the earth. It is not individual believers who are seen coming down from God out of heaven to the earth; it is a *company* of saints, the hosts of the Lord, who are seen coming from the spiritual heavens. The new Jerusalem includes the spiritual realms of the throne, the temple, and the city. So also are the saints called of God and joined to one another in each realm according to Father's call on their lives. When those heavenly messengers of the Lord come down from God out of heaven to the earth, they do not come as individuals. They come together, in holy union with one another, by the Spirit, as an anointed and transformed *spiritual body*. When we climb this last spiritual mountain to ascend the holy, heavenly hill of the Lord, in the Spirit and by the Spirit, we will lose our own personal identity and will find ourselves and our new identity *in Christ*. And when we are fully in Christ, we will no longer be seen as individuals, but as spiritual members of an ANOINTED BODY OF SAINTS, according to our high calling in God."

One thing is crystal clear. The city "descends" out of the high places of the Spirit to bless and minister salvation unto all the ends of the earth. The bride of Christ and the sons of God are not some country club elite who dwell in a high, holy, and glorious realm detached from the unutterable sorrows, dense darkness, and desperate needs of mankind. Oh, no!

I have no desire to be like the fishermen in a parable I read. It seems that it came to pass that a group existed who called themselves fishermen. And lo, there were many fish in the waters all around. In fact, the whole area was surrounded by streams and lakes filled with fish and even the great ocean full of fish was not far away. And the fish were hungry. Week after week, month after month, and year after year, these, who called themselves fishermen, met in meetings and talked about their call to fish, the abundance of

fish, and how they might go about fishing. Year after year they carefully defined what fishing means, defended fishing as an occupation, and declared that fishing is always to be a primary task of fishermen. Continually they searched for new and better methods of fishing and for new and better definitions of fishing. These fishermen built a large, beautiful building called “Fishing Headquarters”. It became the primary training center for fishermen. One thing they didn’t do, however — they didn’t fish!

In addition to meeting regularly, some spent much study and travel to learn the history of fishing. They lauded the faithful fishermen of years before who handed down the idea of fishing. Some also said that they wanted to be part of a fishing party, but they felt called only to furnish instruction and fishing equipment. Others felt their job was to relate to the fish in a good way so the fish would know the difference between good and bad fishermen. Others felt that simply letting the fish know how loving and kind they were was enough. After one stirring meeting on “The Necessity of Fishing,” one young fellow left the meeting and went fishing. The next day he reported he had caught two outstanding fish. He was honored for his excellent catch and scheduled to visit all the big meetings possible to tell how he did it. So he quit his fishing in order to have the time to tell about the experience to other fishermen.

Imagine how hurt some were when one day a person suggested that those who don’t catch fish were really not fishermen, *no matter how much they claimed to be!* Yet it did sound correct. Is a person a fisherman if year after year he never catches a fish? The message is just this — claiming to *be a son of God*, and talking about *delivering creation from the bondage of corruption* is not enough! We can attend all the sonship meetings, seminars, and conferences; we can read all the sonship books, articles, and newsletters; we can fellowship with one another and share all the deep insights and beautiful revelations of sonship — but until what we are learning becomes experiential within us, in the spirit, compassion, and power of sonship, and then begins to flow out to touch, bless, reconcile, deliver, and transform lives around us — we are still just theoretical, *armchair sons!* There must come a moment when the power of sonship like the rays of dawn begins to shine out from us, dispelling the darkness that hangs as a pall over mankind. That is why the city **MUST COME DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN TO ENLIGHTEN, HEAL, AND RESTORE THE WORLD!** Let it begin in us today, my beloved, in whatever measure the life of sonship has been raised up within us!

To be continued...

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