

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 256

THE EPILOGUE

(It is finished....)

"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Rev. 22:18-19).

The warning against adding to or taking away from the words of this book is often misunderstood as a reference to the entire Bible. This misunderstanding occurs because these words from the book of Revelation stand also at the end of the New Testament canon of scripture. One brother said that many years ago when he was a young man away in school, living in a dorm, he would write letters to various people and he always filled them with scripture quotations. Before mailing each letter he would proof it four or five times to make certain that every i was dotted and every t was crossed, every colon, semi-colon, comma, and period was in its proper place, and every word was spelled correctly — because he didn't want to add to or take away from even one jot or tittle, lest God would add to him the plagues of the book of Revelation, or take away from him his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the blessings conferred in the book. Years later, when the Lord visited him and began to open to his understanding the true message of the kingdom of God, he saw clearly that that was not what the Lord Jesus was talking about!

Precisely because of misunderstandings like this we have urged that our interpretation of the Revelation begin first of all with John of Patmos and his intentions, and in John's day the New Testament had not yet been compiled; indeed, John was still in the process of writing letters which later became part of the New Testament. It was not until the second century after Christ that the New Testament was organized into the collection of books in the order we have them today. So the warning in our text is speaking only of what John wrote on Patmos. The words "this book" and "this prophecy" refer to the book of Revelation, not to the entire Bible or even the entire New Testament.

Our text is one that strikes fear into the hearts of many who have approached it. It is doubtful that in all the Bible there is any passage that was more frightening to me in my early days than this one! For many years the words written above were an enigma to me. It has come to me so powerfully, however, that these words are not referring to the understanding of the book. Men have

myriad theories and numberless interpretations of the events portrayed in this book. One thinks, for instance, that the "beast" was the Roman Empire, another that it was a particular emperor of the empire, another that it is an end-time European Confederation, another that it is Russia, or China, another that it is some historical or future personality such as Nero, Hitler, Gorbachev, or Saddam Hussein, and there are many others. The question follows — have those who have espoused such interpretations taken away from or added to the prophecy of this book? That's not what it's talking about! I don't think it indicates that if I missed the boat in some of my interpretation of the book the judgments of God will come upon me. It is not a matter of understanding or efforts at interpretation. It is a matter of adding to or taking away from THE SPIRITUAL PROCESSES IN MEN'S LIVES REPRESENTED BY THE WORDS OF THIS PROPHECY. It's talking about adding to or taking away from the REALITY.

Experientially entering into the Revelation of Jesus Christ is the only way that leads to life, perfection, and glory. That is how our name or nature becomes inscribed in the "book" of the "Life of the Lamb." Only by failing or refusing to yield and submit to the full and complete operation of the life of God within ourselves can our part in the "book of His life" be taken away from us. John describes in this book all the stages of growth and development in Christ and all the states of being through which God brings us on our way to perfection. Anyone who would produce other processes different from these would need to be corrected or suffer loss. If we subtract (take away) from the dealings and movings of God in our lives for our salvation, perfection, and maturity, the growth and development of His life within is stunted and diminished. If we try to skip some of the process on our way to the throne, we will come up short! That is the message.

If, on the other hand, we add to the words of the prophecy of this book, that is, if we add to the operation of the Spirit within our own human works, fleshly efforts, carnal methods, religious traditions, rituals, ceremonies, rules, laws, or any other thing not born of the Spirit, God will have to add unto us the plagues of this book, that is, the corrective judgments, strippings, purgings, and processings necessary to purge the error out of us, break our carnality, and deliver us from ourselves. God doesn't need our help! As we have said a thousand times, these are not external events; they are spiritual realities. So it is something far deeper than mere theories and conjectures about the meanings of the symbols. It's more than the literal words of this book, for the words are merely the symbol, the surface, the letter. The reality is found in what the Revelation of Christ does in the spiritual dimension of our lives! It is right there that we either add to or take away from the prophecy. The Lord has left no room for doubt that only as the things written in this book are fully appropriated, made 100% reality within our lives, only then can we truly lay hold upon divine, incorruptible life! If we try to cut corners, shorten the process, escape some aspect of the dealings, by-pass the processings, or substitute some other method and climb up some other way, we will surely rob ourselves of His perfection, life, and glory and incur even severer dealings in the process. That is the mystery!

This is truly wonderful, because it means that if we are not experientially in the revelation process, if we are not personally experiencing and living these prophetic words and moving in the direction of greater unfoldment in harmony with them, then we are either adding to them or subtracting from them. There is no other way for us to go! This is the goal, the revelation. This last book of the Bible brings us to the place where we become the revelation, each one attaining as we yield under the mighty hand of God. We sometimes speak of having the courage of our convictions, but what we need to have is the courage of our revelation. We must have the courage to recognize

the revelation — the unveiling of Christ — taking place within us, to accept it and be it. If we depart from this God-ordained process within ourselves, then we shut ourselves off from the tree of life.

The book of Revelation is undoubtedly the hardest book in the Bible to understand. However, I also believe that once you grasp by the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God what it's really talking about, it is the most thrilling book of all! This book is the hardest to understand, perhaps, because it is communicated entirely by means of signs and symbols. "And He sent and signified (sign-i-fied, communicated by means of signs and symbols) it by His angel unto His servant John" (Rev. 1:1). When you come to this book you meet the most incredible characters. They sound like the kinds of things you would expect out of Alice in Wonderland or Star Wars. You meet animals and other creatures that you've never seen on this earth before, you meet dragons that dance across the stars, you meet seals that release horses whose hoof-beats thunder and echo around the globe, you meet a celestial woman standing on the moon, clothed with the sun and crowned with stars, you meet vials poured out of the sky, angels flying through the atmosphere, locusts swarming out of smoke from a pit arrayed like soldiers going to battle, trumpets blasting, a harlot riding a scarlet beast, a city 1500 miles across and 1500 miles high, and scores of other unusual and strange things. Oh, yes, it is an incredible book! Incredible, that is, to the natural, carnal mind!

Even though the book is puzzling to the natural man and bewildering to the carnal mind, yet the apostle wrote with blessed assurance to the enChristed these words of divine surety, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand" (Rev. 1:3). That is one of the most amazing things about this wonderful book — it is the only book in the Bible that promises a unique blessing or happiness to all those who will read it, and who truly hear what it is saying, and to those who keep, or have fulfilled within themselves, the things that the book has to say. The message is clear — if one reads this book and is not richly blessed and made extremely happy — then he failed to truly hear its message in the Spirit and by the Spirit! There are many other books of the scriptures that are much easier to understand, but they don't contain that promise! This book promises you before you begin that if you read, and hear, and keep what you hear **YOU WILL BE BLESSED!** Immediately that gives me a clue to what this book is about. Obviously this book is written to a people who will "keep" its sayings, who will have fulfilled within themselves its message, who will be enabled to experience in their very own lives the things it proclaims! How else could those who read and hear be said to "keep" all the things which are written in the book?

If the panorama of events that unfold within these pages is mere external events, historical events, or future literal world events, then how, pray tell me, can those who read and hear keep or fulfill **ALL THOSE THINGS**? If the things written in this book are fulfilled in Nero, or the Roman Empire, or the Jews, or the Papacy, or Germany, or Russia, or China, or the United States, or an end-time empire of Antichrist, then how under God's great heaven can all these things be fulfilled in those who read, hear, and keep these things! Can you not understand the mystery? It should be clear even to a child that the events of the Revelation happen within the experience of God's people!

Some people's interpretation of the Revelation says that the church disappears from the earth at the beginning of chapter four, and that after the church is out of the way — "raptured" — the rest of the book happens to that unfortunate world of unbelievers left on the earth. If that be the case, I'm not interested. I have heard that all my life and most of the people that preached it are now dead and none of it happened in their lifetime. So how could any of them, and the millions who lived before them throughout the church age, have kept the sayings of this book? How could I keep or fulfill any

of the things, much less all of the things, written in the book if the vast majority happen to other people while I'm sitting on a cloud eating prime rib or dancing on the streets of gold beyond the blue? I'm not concerned with events that transpire on the earth when I'm gone, however I would leave here. I cannot keep any of those things! The knowledge of those things would be of no benefit to me, nor would they serve any purpose to me, nor to any man that has lived from John's day until now.

Therefore, the message of the book of Revelation cannot be centered in world events at the end of the age, nor can it concern events that transpire after the saints have flown away to that bright glory world above. It cannot have to do with the world and its masses of unregenerate men. It can only concern saints who are able to read what it says, hear with the spiritual ear, and become glad partakers of the blessed realities it proclaims. The book was not addressed to the national Israel, nor to the Jews, not to the kings of the earth, nor to the people left after the "rapture." Oh, no! It was addressed to and sent to — the churches! This is a book that, wherever I stand throughout the age of the church, has a blessing for me. And this book is speaking to me if only I can hear what it says! And if I do hear, what it says will be gloriously experienced, inwrought, and outworked THROUGH MY LIFE! Aren't you glad!

Now honestly, if this book is entirely about an age that has not yet dawned, do you think that the poor persecuted Christians in Asia in John's day would be the least bit interested in it? Come with me to the churches in that long ago, come with me into their midst as ambassadors of the apostle John who has been banished to the desolate slopes of the isle of Patmos, and let us share with them the message of this fantastic book, which promises them a blessing in the midst of their persecution and pain. When we get there where all these persecuted people are meeting together, and will lose their lives, and we with them, if we are caught meeting together, and we take out of our briefcase a long chart showing how the church age will last for another 2,000 years, and we begin to lecture about the Antichrist and his covenant with the Jews in Israel in the last days at the close of the church age — do you think that is going to be a blessing to these dear saints? Are they going to somehow be able in some mystical way to keep or have fulfilled within themselves the things we are telling them about? NO WAY! You see, beloved, when I come to this book the first key to understanding is the great truth that it is addressed to ME! It is addressed to YOU! And it is not a book to be just read and heard, but a book to be EXPERIENCED!

The book of Revelation is a book that is written for kings and priests. It is not intended for the world to understand, nor will it be understood by carnal Christians. To be a king-priest doesn't mean that we will walk around in splendid robes and all who meet us on the street will bow their heads and genuflect, acknowledging that we are great and mighty ones. God isn't interested in recognition! At the very outset the book is addressed to a particular class of people: "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass" (Rev. 1:1). The term "servants" here does not mean servants as contrasted with sons, but sons who are servants as was our Lord Jesus Christ. There has never been a greater servant than King Jesus! "Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. And many were astonished at Thee; His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men: so shall He sprinkle many nations; and kings shall shut their mouths at Him: for that which had not been told them they shall see; and that which they had not heard they shall consider" (Isa. 52:13-15). "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them... but ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that

doth serve...I am among you as he that serveth" (Lk. 22:25-27).

The main thrust of the book of Revelation is directed to the overcomers and the overcomers are the kings and priests that rule and reign in the kingdom of God. "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works (that is, submits to my processings) unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father" (Rev. 2:26-27). "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on (over) the earth" (Rev. 5:9-10). "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them...and they...reigned with Christ a thousand years...and they shall be priests of Christ, and shall reign with Him" (Rev. 20:4-6). "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son" (Rev. 21:7).

If you read the book of Revelation and the book begins to speak to you, that is a good indication that it is for you. The book cannot and does not speak to the person it is not intended for. Even then, the understanding of the book does not come all at once, you don't open the book at chapter one, verse one, following on to verse two, three, and so on, figuring it out verse by verse as you go along, each event falling into place and making sense. Oh, no! It doesn't work that way. As you seek the Lord in the book different parts will speak to you that are for you at that appointed time. The book will be revealed in your experience as you grow and progress into God. In my own experience the very first thing the Holy Spirit opened to my understanding was near the close of the book; then other things were opened piece by piece, a little here, a little there, in various parts of the book, like putting a puzzle together. It was only after many years that the entire puzzle began to fall into place and the full picture emerge. The wisdom of man is foolishness with God. The wisdom of man would seek an understanding of the book verse by verse and chapter by chapter, in the letter of the Word. But the wisdom that comes from above teaches it experience by experience! Don't try to understand it by figuring it out, but pray for obedience, that you might apprehend the ways of the Lord. Pray that your mind and heart will come into that relationship with God where the Spirit of God can reveal. Then the book will begin to speak to you out of your relationship to the Father. Instead of mere head knowledge the message of the book will begin to apply to your life in the power of kingship and priesthood.

Much of the book is rooted in the symbology of the Old Testament. You find there the temple, the sacrifices, the worshippers, the sea of glass, the ark of the covenant, mount Zion, the candlestick, the altar of incense, the city Jerusalem, the prophets, the priesthood, the archangel, the serpent, the trumpets, and many more. None of these are literal for all are symbols, and now by the spirit of wisdom and revelation all these things begin to relate to your experience, your life, and your walk in God. You cross over the thresholds of spiritual reality where all that was natural and external to Israel under the Old Testament now becomes spiritual and internal as the revelation of Jesus Christ in the saints. The symbols of the Revelation appear to be highly complicated, and to the carnal mind they are. How crude and presumptuous is the darkness of the carnal mind that would lift its voice in pretentious wisdom to understand the deep mysteries of God. We must consider such mysteries with reverence and godly fear, remembering above all else that God has willed that we be partakers of His mind. I have no hesitation in saying that just as surely and truly as the mind of the Father dwelt in that firstborn Son, Jesus Christ, so also that same mind that dwelt in Him will dwell in all that blessed company becoming sons of God. The deep mysteries of God, the unfathomable

riches of wisdom and knowledge hid in Jesus Christ cannot be discovered by the natural man or the carnal mind, but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit. The secret then is not in studying, burning the midnight oil, pouring over musty volumes searching out information, but the divine secret that unlocks all the depths of understanding of divine things is walking in the Spirit. The same Spirit that inspired the book reveals the book, opening the precious truths of the kingdom of heaven to the sincere and seeking heart.

The visions of the book of Revelation are very systematic and each of the keys to the book testifies of itself. The idea that we are kings and priests suggests that our ministry is to bring people out of an old world into a new world. Noah was commissioned by God to bring his family out of an old world into a new world. He established a new age and a new order in the earth. When we come to the book of Revelation there is so much that looks like judgment, retribution, and destruction poured out in apocalyptic and cataclysmic fury upon the earth — the grass, the trees, the rivers, the seas, the mountains, the valleys, the cities, the nations and peoples — but these are mere figures for the passing away of a realm of life, a sphere of existence, the system, order, society, and institutions of the fleshly mind and the Adamic life. Ultimately the judgments of God must be experienced within us, or they accomplish nothing purposeful or redemptive in our reality. The Spirit is speaking of the coming into being of a new heavens and a new earth within ourselves. Changing the outer heavens and earth will contribute nothing to regenerating and transforming men! Putting old men into a new heaven or a new earth will only sow the same old seed of corruption into the new. That's what happened when Noah came out of the ark! The old wicked world had perished, but the problem lay in the fact that the same old seed of wickedness was still lurking in the nature of Noah himself, his wife, his sons, and their wives. God is raising up in the earth a new people of a new covenant, with a new mind and nature, a new spirit, a new heart, a new temple of God, a new city of God, a new habitation of God, a new revelation of God, a new and divine order of God within men. Once we see these great principles the warfare that takes place, and all the judgments, begin to make divine sense!

Vast multitudes of believers are still looking for Armageddon over in the Middle East. But it is not unlike the conflicts that arise in a home as parents raise their children. There are problems, commotions, corrections, disciplines, judgments, and sometimes open hostilities and warfare. But there is also love, forgiveness, compassion, mercy, admonitions, blessings, prayers, and sacrifices. What makes it all worthwhile is the finished product — children that grow up with love and respect for their parents, and with purpose, ability, wisdom, values, integrity, understanding, maturity, and responsibility in the world. God is raising up and bringing forth a new life in the land, a new people, a new world, a new kingdom, a new creation in Him. And what conflicts, what dealings, what purgings, strippings, refinings, processings, and judgments take place within us as our corruption meets His holiness and the old passes away and **all things are made new!**

God makes war because He loves us. Because He has a wise and wonderful plan and purpose for us! All that appears in the book of Revelation as devastation and destruction is but a picture of God's love, correction, and instruction that is consuming the ignorance, self-will, and foolishness within the heart of a child. The more you love your children the more you will reflect upon how to confront them and deal with them in order to change them from their immature and sometimes rebellious state of being, to bring them to a higher and wiser state of being as mature and responsible citizens. Your purpose is not to destroy them, but to eradicate their childish and selfish and destructive ways and bring their minds and emotions into captivity to the obedience that leads to nobility of life, wisdom, understanding, and skill. The childish mind sees correction and instruction

as its enemy — the child will huff and puff and chafe and resist under the chastisement, because he cannot see the mature and experienced purpose. Children can't see why they have to go to bed, why they have to take a bath, why it is necessary to share, why they can't go here or there and do this or that, why they are forbidden to hang out with certain friends, why the homework must be done first, why there are chores and responsibilities that cannot be shirked, why they must keep their room clean, why they must always obey their parents, and a hundred things more. They fail to perceive the beauty and blessing and purpose of the life you are preparing them for, or the molding of their personality you are working in them, or the realm you are bringing them into. The reason you make war with them is to raise them up into a wonderful adult life that will be abundant with possibilities and rich in rewards. You are shaping their characters to be honored among men, to be leaders, to have and provide for their own families, to hold their heads high with accomplishment, purpose, and dignity. When the course is finished they rise up and call you blessed and eternally thank you and honor you for your steadfastness, faithfulness, care, concern, and indefatigable persistence in guiding them to that beautiful world.

Can we not see by this that if the judgments of the book of Revelation are merely God's method of punishing and destroying the wicked people and godless nations and corrupt systems of earth, then they are not redemptive at all and have little bearing on the glory that is to follow. Even the sweet little Christians that long to make heaven their home are for the most part immature, unperfected, and filled with carnality and corruption. If this were not the case all the churches today would be perfect in every way! There would be no sin in the camp, no preacher running off with his secretary, no strife resulting in ugly church splits, etc. But once the understanding dawns that in order to reign with Christ in His kingdom all the things in this book must be kept, that is, experientially fulfilled within by those who read and hear the prophecy of the book, then we know with divine certainty that the great purpose in the judgments is to prepare our hearts for the revelation of His glory in us. The judgments do not merely make way for the city of God, rather they produce the city of God!

Multiplied thousands of elect saints in this hour have received the call to sonship and been appointed to be kings and priests in God's New Day — but before that there are mighty conflicts, the Lamb warring against the beast! The Lamb nature birthed within by the washing of regeneration now declares war on the beastly character of the carnal mind and the flesh nature. This is the supreme message of the Revelation! It is the story of God's dealings with sons (and ultimately with all His people) to bring them to perfection in maturity, to the very throne of the universe as overcomers in Christ. How do I know this? I know this because the subject of the book is **KINGSHIP AND PRIESTHOOD!** I know it because the book is addressed to the **SERVANTS OF GOD** and sent to the **SEVEN CHURCHES**. I know it because every single thing in the book is to be kept, personally experienced, by those with a spiritual ear who **HEAR THE MESSAGE OF THE BOOK**. All the promises to the overcomer speak this great and eternal truth!

It is the mind of man that keeps the world in continual turmoil. It seethes and bubbles and boils and erupts like a vast cauldron and the wisdom of man is powerless to help it. The earth abounds in forms of godliness, yet justice and equality have taken wings and righteous judgment is scarcely known. In spite of plenty, hunger stalks the earth because of the mis-rule and greed of covetous men. Men both in church and out of it are lovers of pleasure far more than lovers of God. For six thousand years man has struggled with various political and economic systems to bring about a sort of Utopia, but the human mind and the fleshly nature, prone as they are to self-interest, self-will, greed, lust, arrogance, bigotry, and violence have at last usurped all the idealistic dreams

and have filled the earth with corruption and evil. The natural man can never deliver the world or bring a reign of righteousness.

The world must be delivered up into the hands of a new and different and higher race of men who can in turn lead all men into the power of regeneration and transformation. It is not a new system the world needs — it is new men! Systems have no power to change the hearts of men, and only a new heart, a new mind, a new nature, a new spirit can make all the wrongs right. The message of the Revelation concerns the dealings of God by which He raises up that superior race of men, men in the image and likeness of God, men filled with the mind and wisdom and power of Christ, men impregnated with the nature and spirit of the Father in heaven. These are the manifest sons of God. These are the manchild who shall ascend the throne and rule all nations with a rod of iron. These are the overcomers of whom the Lord Jesus Himself testifies in the closing chapters of the Revelation: "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." The book of Revelation is the divine drama of God's dealings with His sons throughout the age to make them kings and priests for the salvation and deliverance of the whole world of mankind. We must never overlook that fact!

The great truth that is wide open to our understanding is this: No trial that we pass through is merely a trial — it is a battle with God! Some day you will understand that if you are truly called to sonship. The only problem we have is our problem with God. If there was no issue of our will and our ways versus God's will and God's ways, the test would cease to be a test for there would be no need to prove us, no controversy or conflict, no doubt or hesitation, no question of the outcome. The issue in which we are tested would not even exist — swallowed up in the blessedness of a full and unfailing obedience. There are areas of our lives where we still obey God because of the threat of punishment or of reaping what we sow. That is the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil! In those areas we are yet under law, untransformed in mind and heart, not acting out of divine nature. There remains a struggle between our will and God's will, between our way and God's way.

I tell you, my beloved, the Lamb will make war with us! Don't worry about the Lamb making war with Russia, China, or Iran. Oh, no! He will pour out into our earth the seven vials of His passion! The wrath of the Lamb will be revealed from heaven — the redemptive judgments of God. It is His great all-consuming love revealed in Christ! It gives us a new nature, the divine nature. It creates in us a new mind, the mind of Christ. It corrects us, instructs us, and beats and burns out all the foolishness in the hearts of God's children until they become sons of God with sonship righteousness, sonship love, sonship maturity, sonship responsibility, and sonship power. It brings us to the full stature of His purpose and to the beauty of all His ways, no longer trapped in the childish mind that still wonders if God is going to spank us. "Behold! I make all things new. Behold! the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they (all of them) shall be His people." That is the thrust of the book of Revelation! That is what I trust has been made real to our hearts through these years of meditation and study in this blessed book.

As you read the book of Revelation with the illumination of the Spirit it will speak to you within yourself. You will find yourself experientially in one of the seven churches, with its characteristics either positive or negative; or you will see yourself in the seals, or in the vials of wrath; you will discover yourself in the glory of the bride or in the shame and judgment of the great whore; you will lie in bed with the wicked Jezebel, or stand with the 144,000 virgins upon mount Zion; you will be refined in the blazing inferno of the lake of fire and brimstone, or you will drink

deeply of the river of the water of life; your flesh (nature) will be served up as food for the vultures, or you will be clothed in fine linen, pure and white, and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Ah, yes! You are there, my friend, in every verse and every line. Only the Spirit of God can show us these things, and finish the work, that we may become THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE EARTH!

EVEN SO COME, LORD JESUS!

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen" (Rev. 22:20-21).

And so it is, as we come to the end of the book, we hear for the last time the voice of our Beloved saying, "Surely I come quickly." John could only give one whole-hearted response, "Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus!" He is not "coming" because the work is finished — He is reminding us that the work can only be accomplished by His coming within us. In faithfulness He will come, and come, and continue to come until all things are made new in us and everywhere. We have seen the panorama of events — awesome, stirring, frightening at times, and inspiring, hopeful, challenging, and filled with joy unspeakable at other times — all combining to fulfill their purpose and bring to an end the old creation, that there might be a "new heaven, and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." His promise is to come and accomplish this. To which John responds with expectation and joy, "AMEN!" So be it! Let it all happen! We present ourselves as candidates, for the end result is so desirable and glorious, we do gladly yield ourselves under the mighty hand of the coming Christ! When we say "Amen" to God's call He says "Amen" to our sonship.

"Amen" is the word Jesus used when He spoke a deep mystery or revelation which He would impress upon His hearers. The word is often translated in our King James Bible as "verily." "Verily, verily, I say unto you." It is "Amen, amen, I say unto you." It is the word used by pious Jews in Jesus' day when they responded to the synagogue prayers. It means, among other things, "It is so!" or "So let it be!" It is an expression of faith confessing that God is in control and will bring it to pass. It is the glad surrender of a son to the Father, offering himself that God may fulfill it all in and through him. "Amen" is more than a word — it is a person. How wonderful are the words of our Lord early in the Revelation when He says, "These are the words of the Amen" (Rev. 3:14). The word also means more than "It is so" or "So be it." When one makes a statement or promise and adds "Amen," he is saying "I'll back it up; everything I've said, I'll be faithful to." In Bible days people didn't usually make written contracts; they made oral agreements. When they completed the agreement, they would say to each other, "I'll keep my side of the bargain." It was like an affirmation or an oath. The parties involved knew that they must be faithful to their oral contract and carry out all the things they had agreed to do. They pledged their very word and nature to it. So, "Amen" means a commitment. It means, "I'll be faithful to this."

Jesus is the Amen! This can mean nothing other than the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ Himself is the fulfillment of all that is written in the Revelation! As it is also written, "For all the promises of God in Him are Yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us" (II Cor. 1:20). If we are ever to lay hold upon and appropriate the promises of God in our very own experience it will only be in Christ that we will experience them, for the promises are in Him, and in Him they are Yea and Amen, for HE is the "Amen," the "So be it!" Christ is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption. He is made everything unto us, for He is all! In Him all things were created and by Him all things are held together. In Him all things are ours. Whatever men need today

can be found in God's Christ, for He is the AMEN! Christ says, "Amen!" John (and you and I) says, "Amen!" And thus in our union in Him all things shall be fulfilled!

When the Lord Jesus calls Himself the Amen, it means that He is the divine "Yes" to all God's will and purpose, and to the prayers of God's elect as they pray according to His will. When the revelation of God speaks within you it is the spirit of Christ in your heart that witnesses, "Amen!" The spirit of Christ loves to do within you that for which He indwells you — to accomplish God's will on earth. When you step forward to do God's will and to become God's will Christ within you is the Amen — not the word, but the POWER. He is the divine impetus, the force, the vision, the encouragement and the strength to see it through to the conclusion. Hallelujah! Amen and Amen!

CONCLUSION

Almost two thousand years ago, John, the son of Zebedee, apostle, prophet, seer, author, lover of God and servant of Jesus Christ, passed from this life to stand with the "great cloud of witnesses" in the heavens of God's Spirit. How he died or where he was buried no man knows for sure. I saw what was supposedly his tomb near Ephesus, but it is only according to tradition and legend. But this all men know, our hope in Christ is richer and brighter because he lived and walked in the Spirit of God. Before he lay down to sleep after a long life he had bequeathed to the world five priceless manuscripts, a Gospel of love, three matchless letters, and the drama of the Revelation. Taken together or taken singly, they constitute a valuable contribution to the revelation of God unto mankind. The seer of Patmos, the apostle of Love, was fittingly honored with the privilege of writing the closing words to our canon of scripture, and in behalf of all the sacred writers to pronounce the final benediction, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

We bring our study to a close. Have you ever read a book that held you enthralled? Now and then a volume falls into my own hands which is so captivating that I am loathe to lay it aside even at the hour when I should be asleep. Sometimes, after finishing a book, I have leafed fondly through its pages, dipping into its chapters here and there as though an unsatisfied thirst was still calling for fresh draughts from its springs of truth. Something like that is my feeling today. Incredible as it seems, we have been more than twenty years expounding from these visions of John! Yet I have a strange feeling of loneliness as though parting from an old friend or leaving some rare Caribbean Island scene. I should like to go through its chapters again! By no means have we exhausted its messages. We have only touched the high places. But now we must go on — to have it fully written in our hearts and experienced in our lives until we stand in the full measure of the stature of Christ — ourselves THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST!

Tetelestai... The End.

J. PRESTON EBY