

The Contender



"CONTEND FOR THE FAITH WHICH WAS ONCE DELIVERED UNTO THE SAINTS" JUDE 3

The Contender
 CONTEND FOR THE FAITH WHICH WAS ONCE DELIVERED UNTO THE SAINTS
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Printed
 for Bro. Chad Bro. Kevin.

QUESTIONS
 I will go to where we hope to see some of this again. Let's hear each other's questions.

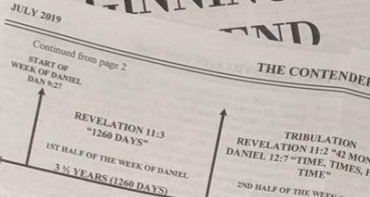
James C. Allen



Raymond Jackson

did touch on the nature and a few other things; and he was the one that really put the picture in the proper perspective, so that we have some insight of what to expect. It was his disciples just before He was crucified. He gave us a prophetic picture of the end times, the 24th and 25th chapters of Matthew together. He said everything as it falls right in and nothing is concerning it at the end time. We are going on right now specifically to the words of Jesus to have our hands clean as this, we

FROM THE PART BEGINNING- 105



In Search of Eden Part 2

Vol. 13 No. 6 August 1981

October 2017
 Revelation 10 No. 1
 Preached September 4-11, 2017

This is the day the Lord made, so let us rejoice and glad in it. Last Sunday on Thursday I mentioned this about not saying but I did not say you may see it by heart. "If you hear that, you are our cause there are things you have heard of it is going to be not think this message 107" about



Continued from page 1

holding it sideways and not recognizing me. He said, "Oh, that was there when you preached." Bro. Jackson's future minister. He who sat here in the church, for about four him seats back to me. They smack in, him and Billy Paul could hear it with the others.



Mystery cloud as seen in Life Magazine, May 12, 1963

restaurant recently where a man recognized me. He said, "Oh, that was there when you preached." Bro. Jackson's future minister. He who sat here in the church, for about four him seats back to me. They smack in, him and Billy Paul could hear it with the others.

THE FOURTH SEAL AND THE SEVENTH

Let me right test that fourth seal. (Rev. 6:7) I feel when he has opened the fourth seal, I have heard the voice of the fourth

The Contender



Raymond M. Jackson



Rev. Raymond Jackson
Faith Assembly Church

P.O. BOX 2348, CLARKSVILLE, IN 47131-2368

the Word Bride hath made herself ready

July 2018

without His word. A can... with a horn... of... that they...

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"CONTEND FOR THE FAITH WHICH WAS ONCE DELIVERED UNTO THE SAINTS" JUDE 3

Vol. 13 No. 6

Printed Voice of Faith Assembly Church

August 1981

In Search of Eden Part 2



Rev. Raymond Jackson

WE HAD A VERY FAVORABLE RESPONSE FROM OUR READERS WHEN WE PUBLISHED THE MESSAGE TITLED, THE NEW JERUSALEM. IT HELPED PEOPLE GET RID OF A LOT OF HAND ME DOWN TRADITIONAL IDEAS THAT HAD NO SCRIPTURAL FOUNDATION. WE SINCERELY PRAY THAT THIS MESSAGE WILL DO LIKEWISE. MANY PEOPLE HAVE GONE THROUGH LIFE QUOTING PHRASES THAT WERE SUPPOSED TO BE FROM THE SCRIPTURES, ONLY TO FIND OUT LATE IN LIFE, THAT THEY WERE NOT SCRIPTURE AT ALL IT HAS

BEEN THE SAME WITH THE GARDEN OF EDEN. PEOPLE TALK ABOUT THOSE CHERUBIMS WITH THE FLAMING SWORDS, THAT ARE GUARDING THE GATE, KEEPING US FROM ENTERING BACK INTO THE GARDEN WHERE THE TREE OF LIFE IS, AND THEY NEVER EVEN STOP TO THINK, WHAT IS THE TREE OF LIFE? NEITHER DO THEY NOTICE THAT THERE IS NOTHING SAID ABOUT A GATE. IT ONLY SAYS THAT THEY ARE KEEPING THE WAY OF THE TREE OF LIFE. THERE IS A WAY WHEREBY MAN PARTAKES OF THAT TREE OF LIFE, AND IT IS NOT A PLANT LIFE TREE, AS MANY CARNAL MINDS IMAGINE IT TO BE. WE HAVE ENDEAVORED TO SHOW BY THE SCRIPTURES WHAT THAT TREE OF LIFE IS, AND ALSO, HOW ONE MAY PARTAKE OF IT, AND WHERE IT WILL LEAD THAT PERSON TO WHEN GOD'S GREAT PLAN OF REDEMPTION IS COMPLETED. READ THE MESSAGE, STUDY THE SCRIPTURES, AND YOU WILL FIND THAT EDENIC PARADISE

OVER IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION AWAITING ALL WHO PARTAKE OF THAT TREE OF LIFE. IN THIS PRESENT LIFE. YOU WILL SEE ALSO HOW GOD WORKED CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE LIVES OF HIS PEOPLE TO GET THEM TO MAKE THE PROPER CHOICES ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS. THEN YOU WILL SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN PEOPLE GO AGAINST THE WILL OF GOD.

As we continue our search for Eden. Let me remind each and every one of you, that this Bible is a very important book. There are any answers to be found, they will be found right there, within its pages. That is why the devil tries so hard to get people out of it. He succeeded once, when the church went into the Dark Ages, under Roman Catholicism dogma. The priesthood taught the people that it was the written word of God, but, that it was not all the word of God. That left room for them to add their traditions, which they called the word of God also. Their traditions became accepted as the word of God, and they were handed down from generation to generation, for centuries of time. The only thing is, many times their traditions would not stand up to, and meet the present conditions. That would require them to make a change in what they called, the word of God. On the other hand, if you know how to read the Bible, it has the answer for every condition of every age. It is infallible; and it remains the same forever. God who is perfect, does not change His mind; therefore he does not have to change His word concerning His great plan for mankind. Men fail God, but God never

fails man. He is faithful to honor every promise and provision that we can find written in His word whenever we meet the condition that precedes it. But, Saints: Listen to me; He is not obligated to honor every word or promise that someone else may make, or may have made, regardless of how many people hold it to be the word of God. Now when you come to the written word of God there is the ever present problem of men interpreting it in the light of their denominational traditions, so you still do not have anything that God is obligated to. But, when it is revealed to you by the Holy Ghost, you have something that will stand the test. You can stake your life upon it. I do not claim to be the only one who hears from God, or that is able to get a true revelation from God's word, but what He reveals to me is what I endeavor to present to you. I am not trying to build anything for myself; I am only trying to be faithful in my work on God's building. That is why I go into so much detail on what I preach; I want to make it as easy to understand as possible. In other words, I do not wish to make statements that can be taken ever so many ways, and just leave them hanging there without trying to clarify what has been said.

NOAH'S DESCENDANTS

We ended part one of this message, speaking about how the serpent seed attributes came across the flood of Noah's day, and are now present in every living soul upon the face of the earth. Therefore let us pick up right there, and continue our journey on through time, in search of Eden. We

pointed out the fact that the whole earth is populated from the only three sons that Noah had. All the Chinese, all the Japanese, the Indians, the Russians, the Jews, the Eskimos, and every other race of humanity upon the earth, came from those three sons of Noah. In the beginning, they all spoke the same language and had all things in common, and they got their heads together, and said, We are multiplying into a great host of people; if we are not careful, we will become scattered over the face of this earth, and never see each other again. Let us build a huge tower whose top may reach into heaven, and make a name for ourselves before such a thing happens. Those are my own words, but you can read it in the 11th chapter of Genesis. God created the earth and all things therein. He created the man Adam, took him a wife from his own body, placed them in the garden of Eden, and gave them a command. They were to Be fruitful, and multiply, and REPLENISH the EARTH. He also gave them another command, Do not partake of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. If Adam and Eve had not failed God by disobeying His command, you would never have had the events of Genesis 11. There never would have been a flood. There never would have been a serpent seed element of mankind, and there never would have been any fear of being scattered, in the minds of people. They would have multiplied, filled the earth with sons and daughters of God, and the whole earth would have been one great paradise. No one would have had any reason to search for the garden of Eden.

GOD'S PERSUASIVE METHOD

Adam and Eve did fail God, and their disobedience brought about a condition that caused God to destroy all mankind except Noah and his family, and the commission, or command, to be fruitful, and multiply, and REPLENISH the EARTH was passed on to them. There was nothing said to them about the tree of knowledge, for all mankind was partaking of that tree ever since Adam and Eve were driven from the garden. Their responsibility was to repopulate the whole earth, and they were not doing it. They were multiplying, but they did not want to leave their familiar surroundings. They were so much in agreement upon what they were doing, that even the Lord said, nothing they imagined to do would be restrained from them if they were allowed to continue as they were. They had agreed to build this great tower that would reach into the heavens. They had journeyed from the east to a plain in the land of Shinar, but they were all sticking together, not willing to be separated from each other. Now the Lord did not send someone to tell them to stop building their tower and spread out upon the earth; He just changed their language. They could no longer communicate with each other. Can you just imagine this great community project where all the people spoke one language and had all things in common, then suddenly, one morning they all show up for work as usual, but to their astonishment they could not understand each other. They had mass confusion. I do not believe the Lord had to shake them and give them a shove, to get them to spread out

then; I believe they began to say to those that could understand them, Let's get away from this crazy bunch of people; they are all acting very strange. Naturally, God did not confuse the language between family members of a household; that would have been defeating His own purpose. Some families spoke a certain language, other families another, and so on down the line, and these certain families got together, and began to spread out upon the face of the earth. Now they were fulfilling God's command; they just needed a little persuasion. In other words, God broke up their playhouse. Instead of living in an apartment 40 or 50 stories up in their great tower, they went out to unfamiliar land and made a new start, just like the pilgrims and pioneers that – made America what it is today. Building that tower did not necessarily mean that they were rebelling against God's command; they probably thought they were doing it for God. It is the same way out in the world today; many of those people who are involved in building great sky-scraper church buildings and schools, think God is going to be so proud of them for their efforts, when many times, what they are doing is an abomination to God. He has more delight, and receives more honor and glory from little groups that meet in small storefront buildings, have a true revelation, and worship Him in spirit and in truth, than He does from man's great efforts with his hands.

ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD

As the various tribes of people began to spread out and find them a place to settle, the bounds of their habitation were set according to their dialect. Those who could speak the same language hung together. The years passed, the population kept expanding, and there came the time that God looked upon, and considered a man named Abram whom we know as Abraham. Abram was a descendant of Shem, and it is from this line that all the semitic people upon the earth came. When God first spoke to Abram, he was dwelling right there in the Euphrates valley, within the geographical area of the garden of Eden, in a city called Ur of the chaldees. We do not actually know much about Abram's life, before God called him, whether he actually knew how to please God, or whether he just had a concept and a desire. Nevertheless God spoke to him, and said, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee." We all know the story, how that in the months and years that followed, he picked up all his household accumulation, servants, and everything, and started toward Canaan, the land known as Israel today. He was a nomadic type person, of Syrian origin He lived on the other side of the Euphrates river. But he was not a penniless drifter, drifting about from place to place without any purpose in life, for the Bible says, he was very rich. He had about 300 servants, and many cattle, and much substance. Abram's father left Ur with him, along with Lot and Sarai,

Abram's wife. but they did not go directly to Canaan; they stopped in Haran for a number of years, and Abram's father died there. Finally he took his wife Sarai and his nephew. Lot, and departed from Haran to go on to Canaan when he was seventy five years of age. Later, after Ishmael was born unto him of Hagar: Sarai's maid. God appeared to him again reconfirming His covenant and His promise of a son. At that time. God changed his name from Abram to Abraham, and told him not to call his wife Sarai, any longer, but that he should call her Sarah. By that time Abraham had already been in Canaan for more than twenty years, he was ninety nine years old, and he still did not have that promised son by his wife Sarah, but the scriptures declare, that Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

MELCHIZEDEK BLESSES ABRAHAM

Let us back up a few years now, in order to pick up a certain point I wish to make. When Abraham was led into this promised land, there were many -ites in the land, (That is what I call them.) the Hittites. Amorites, the Moabites, Jebusites, and all sorts of -ites, and the place now called Jerusalem, was at that time, called Salem. It was a city on Mt. Zion, belonging to the Jebusites, an ancient pagan people. Abraham was living between Hebron and BeerSheba when his nephew Lot, was kidnapped, and most of you know what happened. He armed his 318 servants, and went out to rescue him. When he returned, the king of Sodom went out to meet him,

but he was also met by another man, a man called, king of Salem, and priest of the most high God; his name was Melchizedek. He brought forth bread and wine, and blessed Abraham, saying, "Blessed be Abraham of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand." Abraham then paid tithes to this man. Now brothers and sisters, this was not a pagan priest, even though Salem was a city of pagan Jebusites at that time. It remained so until David, many years later, took it. David was not even born yet, when Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek. This Melchizedek was none other than Elohim (God) manifested in angelic form. Abraham was not out searching for Him; he came out to meet Abraham, as he returned with Lot, the other souls that were taken captive with him, and all the goods they had carried off. You will notice also, if you care to read the account in Genesis 14, that Melchizedek already had the bread and wine when He met Abraham. Now, Saints; my point is this. This was God's way of beginning to reveal to Abraham, that He had a plan for him and his seed, that would be fulfilled right in the general area of where that city stood. Of course Abraham did not know any of this at that time; but on the other hand, he knew something, that caused him to pay tithes to this man. Furthermore, this was actually the introduction of the ritual and ordinance of the Passover. Christ who is a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek, instituted the Lord's supper to his disciples in this same general area, using bread and wine just like this man did. All of this fits

together in God's great plan of redemption for mankind, the redemption that one day will restore us to Eden from which Adam and Eve were driven.

JESUS CHRIST PROPHET—PRIEST—
KING

In our search for Eden we have come to the only city that God ever chose to place His great name in. We have identified a man that was to be known throughout all the years to follow as a man who believed and trusted in God. (He is called, the father of all the faithful.) Then we have seen how God manifested Himself to that man in the form of one called Melchizedek, a man whom the apostle Paul spoke of, as being, "Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the son of God." (Heb. 7:3) Only God Himself is without beginning of days or end of life. Also, we have seen how God introduced a type to Abraham, that is an ordinance among true believers even until this day. Jesus ministered bread and wine to His disciples at the feast of the passover just before His crucifixion saying, "Eat this." This is my body which is given for you. Drink ye all of it: for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for MANY for the remission of sins. In I Cor. 11:26, Paul states, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come." In Heb. 6:20, Paul also tells us that this Jesus was made a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. He also tells us that the interpretation

of this name is King of righteousness, and after that also a King of Salem, which is King of peace. Therefore, through this name, God began to open up a revelation that will run all the way into the millenium. This Jesus who was made a high priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek was born of a virgin woman, grew up as other children to manhood, fulfilled a prophets office in the days when He came to Israel as the promised Messiah, was crucified on a Roman cross, at Calvary, he arose from the dead, ascended to glory, and is now seated on the right hand of all authority fulfilling His office as high priest for all mankind. But there is coming the day when He will return to earth and rule from the earthly throne of king David throughout one thousand years of peace upon earth. Hallelujah! What a day that will be! Check it from cover to cover and you will find that this Bible contains a glorious plan, known unto God from before the foundation of the world, for fallen man's redemption. Jesus Christ is the central figure of everything that is related to that redemption. Even in the Old Testament, all the types and shadows pointed to Him. No man has ever found scripture that makes any room for another man to assume that place of authority, honor, and glory. Yet many have tried, either to take His place, or to lift up someone else into His place, throughout the ages, and our age is no exception.

FALSE TEACHERS ROB JESUS CHRIST

Ever since Brother Branham preached a message that he titled, Who is this

Melchizedek, many people have thought he was talking about himself. Brothers and sisters, I want to give glory and honor to God, and I want to respect my dear departed brother in the Lord, who was a prophet to this age, and a true servant of God, sent forth to turn the hearts of this generation back to the revelation held by the apostles of Jesus Christ. But I want you every one to know without any room for doubt or speculation, that he WAS NOT a Melchizedek. To be Melchizedek, would also mean that he was high priest and king, and that is why some of these people are saying that he is the white horse rider of Revelation 19, that will come to earth with his army. Saints: Please hear me well. These scriptures go together, and they all belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. If you give any of them to Bro. Branham, beyond those which absolutely apply to him, you rule Jesus Christ out of the picture, and you are worse than a pagan who has never heard any truth about God. Think about it. Where do you stand personally, in all of this religious junk that is being promoted in our day? I keep putting these things in here to show you where people are going astray from the word of God, in the hope that at least some of those who have been led astray, might be awakened to their calamity before it is too late. Bro. Branham's true place that God gave him, is a place of honor and integrity, but the place that some have pushed his name into is a place of dishonor and shame, for they have to rob Jesus Christ of that which belongs only to Him, to launch their theories, and deceive a certain element of people that are continually searching for something new and exciting. I will

have to say, Among those who profess to be following the message delivered to this age by Bro. Branham, there are ten times more factions than there was among the Jews in the days of Christ's earthly ministry. Some of them try to exalt Bro. Branham into the place of Jesus Christ. Others use his name in an effort to exalt and make a name for themselves, and others use his name for leverage in their efforts to destroy my ministry, and discredit my name, and every one of them are able to draw a few converts to their version of the message, or whatever they teach. One thing is sure though; they can never pull a true predestinated seed of God away from His revealed word. Furthermore, there is coming a day when they will have to stand before God and give an account for all of their foolishness. Knowing that God is able to handle every situation in His good time, I have never made it a practice to even call these men by name, as I speak of the error of their teaching, but if there ever comes a time that I feel it is necessary, I will. The apostle Paul named some fellows that had departed from the faith, so it would be all right if it were necessary, but usually, it is sufficient just to speak of the error.

GOD IN VARIOUS FORMS

Speaking about this Melchizedek to whom Abraham gave tithes of all the spoil, this was just one of the ways that God manifested Himself to His servants from time to time as they journeyed through life. He even manifested Himself to Moses one time in a burning bush, saying, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place

whereon thou standest is holy ground.” Listen how Paul spoke of it in the first chapter of Hebrews. “God, who at sundry (various) times and in divers (different) manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.” Paul is the one who pointed out the greatness of this Melchizedek, and spoke of how Levi, who later received tithes of his brethren, paid tithes to Melchizedek through Abraham; while he was still in the loins of his father. Brothers and sisters, please do not try to picture this theophany form of God, standing there, loaded down with a tenth part of all the goatskin clothing, boots, and all the other things Abraham might have had at that time; I am sure that what he gave Melchizedek, was gold and silver and such like. The point is, Abraham paid tithes to him of all his spoils, after Melchizedek served the Lord’s supper to him. This all took place in the general area of where God tried Abraham’s faith some years later. You remember the story, how Abraham waited for the promised son, Isaac, for more than twenty years until he was finally born when Abraham was one hundred years old, and how God spoke to him one day, after Isaac had grown into a young lad, and said, “Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.” The very mountain peak upon which Abraham allegedly used for an altar, to offer Isaac as a burnt offering unto God, stands right in the middle of the

Moslem Mosque of Omar, which is built upon the Jewish temple grounds atop Mt. Zion. Nevertheless Abraham obeyed God, and would have offered Isaac had an angel of the Lord not stopped him right when he had a knife at Isaac’s throat. Earlier when Isaac asked him, Father, where is the lamb, for a burnt offering? Abraham answered, God will provide Himself a lamb, my son. Not knowing, at that time, that he would not have to go through with offering Isaac. When the angel of the Lord said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do him any harm, for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me, Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and saw a ram caught by the horns in some bushes, behind him. There, God had provided Himself a ram, for an offering. That was a type of the Lamb of God (Jesus Christ) who was offered up, at Calvary. Jesus Christ was actually that promised son of Abraham, through whom all the tribes of the earth would be blessed. When He arose from the dead, He ascended to glory where He picked up that priestly garb of Melchizedek, and for two thousand years, He has been interceding to God on behalf of all the tribes upon the face of the whole earth. Every time God manifested Himself to one of His servants in a supernatural way, it was to set a type of something further on down the way. Now we look back at those types, and they help bring into focus, a picture of God’s total plan of redemption. As you consider it all, you discover that everything points to Jerusalem, as the place, and Jesus Christ as the man, divinely appointed and approved of God to figure into all prophecy.

ABRAHAM'S SHIELD AND REWARD

We want to look for a few minutes into a little episode in the lives of Abraham and Sarah, then we want to take a closer look at how God chose the place where He would place His name. In our day, if we receive a special blessing somewhere, like Abraham did from Melchizedek, we always have at least, a desire to return to that place, in the hope that we may have a similar experience again, but as far as we can determine from the scriptures, Abraham never did return to the place where he met Melchizedek, looking for him. He just paid his tithes, and went on about his business. He had no selfish motive that we can detect. When the king of Sodom asked only that Abraham return to him the souls that were taken captive with Lot, and offered to allow Abraham to keep all of the spoil, he replied to that king, "I have lift up my hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoe latchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abraham rich." After that, the word of the Lord came to him in a vision, saying, "Fear not, Abraham. (I am using the names Abraham and Sarah to avoid confusion, for these are the names we are all familiar with.) I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." At that time God promised him a son, and told him that his seed for number, would be as the stars of heaven. (In other words, so many they could not be numbered.) Then He promised him a land inheritance, the land of Canaan, and told him that his seed would be strangers in a land that

was not theirs for four hundred years, and that they would be servants, and would be afflicted by them. But after that, He would judge that nation, and Abraham's seed would return to the promised land. Genesis 15:18 says, "In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abraham, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates." Did you notice the boundary lines of the promised land? It is the same area of land that we identified as the garden of Eden in part one of this message. On our modern day maps the Tigris river lies just to the west of the Euphrates, but like we pointed out before, we do not know how much they vary from where they ran, in the days of Adam and Eve. What we do know though, is that God has always had a special plan for that area of land that lies right there between the Nile and the Euphrates. That is where He first began to deal with mankind, and that is where the great climax of those dealings will take place. Right now, that whole area is just like a huge keg of dynamite with a short fuse. Nerves are tensed, around the world, just waiting to see what is going to happen next, in those Middle East countries. People of the world are talking about the battle of Armageddon, and even though they do not have a true understanding about it, they have accepted the fact of it. They know it is coming. Right there in the Jezreel valley, in the land of Israel, the greatest battle of all the history of man will be fought, but when it is over, and all the debris is cleaned up, it will be ready for the Millennium. Christ Himself will sit upon the throne of David, at Jerusalem, right there close to where Abraham met Melchizedek.

WHY SARAH LAUGHED

After God made that land promise to Abraham, time went on for a few years, and there came the day when God was getting ready to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. He came to Abraham, and told him that his wife was going to have a baby. About that same time the following year, she would give birth to a baby boy, and call his name Isaac. That took place according to the word of God, and when the time came, that the child was to be weaned, Abraham made a great feast. I can just see it all. Here was a man that was 100 years old, and his wife was 90 years old when this baby was born. The time has come to wean him, so Abraham calls in all of his close friends, and probably many of the neighboring tribes that he had made leagues with, were invited to celebrate this special occasion with them. During the great time of festivity, I imagine there was a lot of talk about the reactions of various ones when they had heard the news about Sarah being with child. Sarah herself laughed when she first heard the angel of the Lord speaking to Abraham about it. Later, Sarah said, "God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me. And she said, "Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? for I have borne him a son in his old age." I have read that scripture many times, but recently, it dawned upon me why Sarah said, I laughed, and the world laughed with me. Remember how she was standing in the doorway of their tent when Abraham was told that she was going to conceive, and have a son, and how

she laughed? She laughed within herself saying, After I am waxed old, shall I have pleasure with my lord being old also? Nevertheless, the Lord heard her laugh, even though she did not laugh out loud, and He said to Abraham, "Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? Is anything too hard for God?" Sarah denied laughing when she heard that, because, suddenly she was afraid. From that moment on though, she knew she had heard the word of the Lord, and so did Abraham, so let us watch them. Abraham just can't wait to break the news to his friends. My wife is going to have a baby. Can you, just for a moment, try to imagine the reaction from those who heard that announcement? Abraham; are you all right? Don't you know your wife is almost 90 years old, and a thing like that is unheard of? I know how old she is, but she is going to have a baby boy just the same. Oh sure, Sarah is going to have a baby. HA! HA! HA! HA! We will sure want to be around when that happens. Just for the record, Abraham, we want you to know that we do not believe a word of that. It was the same with Sarah. The first few weeks, before she began to look like she was with child, every time she told someone that she was going to have a baby, they would just kindly snicker and walk away from her, probably saying, That old woman is off in the head. Especially the young women. They laughed, because they thought she was slipping. The first month, it was like that, the second month was the same, but Abraham and Sarah had heard the word of the Lord, so they just kept on telling it. (Saints, you have to read between the lines, in stories

like this. Moses did not write every little detail about what took place.) Before she ever began to look like she was with child, that word had spread throughout the whole area. Every nomadic tribe was talking about it. Sarah would try to be friendly with people, but they would find a way to shun her. Naturally that made her feel bad, but it served God's purpose. It caused all attention to be focused upon that old couple. When this thing goes on and on, and all attention is upon those two old people, there comes the day when someone says, You know, that old woman really looks like she might be carrying a child. From then on, it was a different story. She did not have to be embarrassed by their snickering any longer. I can just hear her, when the baby was born. Now, Who was right? God allowed it to be like that, to get this thing well established among all the people. By doing it like that, Abraham and Sarah never had to spend time trying to convince their neighbors that Isaac was their son; they all knew that he was. Therefore when it was time for the child to be weaned, they invited all their friends to celebrate the occasion with them.

ABRAHAM'S GREAT TRIAL

Now, Abraham already had one son Ishmael, born to him by Sarah's maid Hagar, as a result of Sarah trying to help God fulfill His promise of a son to him. She gave him her maid saying, It may be that I can obtain children by her. Therefore, Abraham had always kindly looked at Ishmael as his firstborn who would inherit from him,

according to tradition. But when he presented that thought to the Lord, he received this reply, "Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him." God went on to tell him that He would make of Ishmael a great nation, and that he would beget twelve princes, but the covenant to Abraham's seed would be through Isaac. Abraham took Ishmael and all the other men of his house, and circumcised them, according to the word of the Lord. Abraham loved Ishmael, but Ishmael got in trouble with Sarah on the day of the feast, when Isaac was weaned. Sarah looked over, and saw Ishmael mocking. About that time, she pointed her finger toward Abraham and said, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son Isaac." That hurt Abraham, but he had to do it, because the Lord told him to do as Sarah had said, concerning this matter. From that time Abraham paid special attention to Isaac, his son of promise, and left Ishmael in the hands of God. He had a little talk with Abimelech, king of the Philistines, and got the fact established, that the water well at Beersheba belonged to him, and it seemed that things were running pretty smooth for him for a little while. But there came the day when his heart was pierced by the words that God spoke to him. God said, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." Brothers and sisters, can't you just imagine how

those words rang down through the soul of Abraham? It was just like a knife piercing his heart. But nevertheless, he remembered how God had spoke to him while he was still in the land of the Chaldeans, saying, Leave this place, and all thy kindred, and come to a land that I will show you. He knew God's voice; therefore he knew that he was not having hallucinations; this was real. By faith (this) is why he became the father of the faithful; he looked beyond the circumstances and obeyed the voice of God. He believed that God could, if necessary, raise that boy from the dead. If He could bring forth a son to him, from a barren womb; then surely He could raise that son from the dead to fulfill the rest of His promise, if that was the way it was supposed to be. At that time, he was living near Beersheba and Hebron, two small areas in the midst of the Canaanites; just little settlements. From there, he could look to the northwest, and see a chain of mountains, so he laid wood upon his little donkey, took Isaac and two of his servants, bid goodbye to Sarah, and told her that they were going to worship the Lord. When he left the tent, he did not know the exact spot where he would make the offering; he just started out by faith, toward those mountains. After three days journey, I believe God allowed him to see a certain mountain peak, shining in the sunlight, and told him, There is a place. That was when he stopped, and laid the fire wood upon Isaac, to carry. He took the fire, and the knife, and told his servants to wait right there, while he and Isaac went to that mountain peak to worship God; then they would return to them. Saints, I want you to know, Abraham was

opening a pathway to Calvary, where, many years later, you and were purchased through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. On the way up that mountain, is when Isaac looked over to his dad, and said, My father, we have the fire, and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? With his heart bleeding inside, because of what God had told him to do, by faith, Abraham looked beyond his son and says, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering. He keeps trodding along, up that mountainside, feeling like he is carrying a ton of weight, because his soul is in anguish, knowing what he is to do shortly. He is in the general vicinity of the old Jebusite city, Salem, and his eyes have been drawn to a huge rock sticking up, with the sun glistening upon it. This is the place, he thought within, where I must do the hardest thing that I have ever done. He was right back close to where he had met Melchizedek, years before. This time he would carry the type of what was to take place there someday, one step further. One day, God's only begotten Son was to be offered, upon this mountain, as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Abraham did not know anything about that, though; he only knew what God had told him to do, and was here to obey.

GOD WORKS THROUGH
CIRCUMSTANCES

The scriptures do not say so, but I feel certain that Abraham sat down there, and told Isaac the whole story from start to finish, of what was about to take place. If Isaac had been anything

like the young folks of our generation, he would have jumped up from there, Bless God, you are not going to stick that knife in me, and down the mountain he would have come. He was a good size boy by then, you know, and his father was way beyond one hundred, so there is no doubt he could have done that. Somehow, though, he submitted himself to his father, to carry out the will of God. I can just see Abraham, as he lays him upon the wood, and ties his hands and feet. No doubt, his old heart was quivering within, and tears were streaming down his cheeks, as he prayed his last prayer and raised the knife to slay his son. God let it go that far before He called out to him from out of heaven saying, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do him any harm, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you did not withhold your only son from me. It was then, that Abraham's prophecy was fulfilled, "God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering," for at that moment, he looked behind him, and there was a ram, caught in the bushes by his horns. Abraham's tears immediately turned to tears of joy and gratitude. He went over and got the ram, and offered it upon the altar in the place of his son, Isaac. Then he called the name of that place JEHOVAH JIREH, which means, the Lord will provide. Now of course that ram belonged to some pagan of that area, but it was not just an accident that caused it to be right there by Abraham when he so desperately needed the Lord's provision for that offering he was about to make. Do not ever try to convince me that God does not work circumstances in the lives of His children, in order to fulfill His purpose

on their behalf. You may say, Then why does He allow so many bad things to happen to me? But I will just have to point you right back to the word of God for your answer, right back to Romans 8:28, where Paul said, "And we know that all things work together for good TO THEM THAT LOVE GOD, to them who are THE CALLED according to HIS PURPOSE." Whatever is happening in your life will serve a purpose in God's process of perfecting you; if you be one of His. Did not David say, in the 37th Psalm, "The steps of a good man are ordered (or established) by the Lord: and He delighteth in his way? Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with His hand. How could God be certain that a man would not be utterly cast down, if He were not in control of circumstances that surround us? But I thought Satan was the one that causes us all the trouble we have. It is true that Satan is a troublemaker, and he is God's adversary, trying to defeat God's plan of redemption, but on the other hand, you have to realize that he is actually a servant of God, whether he likes it or not. For everything he does, one way or another, fulfills something that the Bible tells us, is going to happen. Furthermore, let us read a few verses from the 12th chapter of Hebrews, that could help explain some of what happens in our lives. Verse 5-B, "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him: For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof

all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.” Let me ask you this now, How do you suppose God chastens us? He just simply draws back His protective hand, and allows the devil to whip us, but there is never a time that He does not set the limits to which Satan is allowed to go. We need to realize also that not all of our troubles are chastening for wrong doing. Many times we are just being tested, like Job and Abraham. But regardless of which it may be, God is still in control of the end results of what happens.

MAN FOLLOWING GOD’S PLAN

It was not just chance that caused Melchizedek to meet Abraham where he did. It was not just chance that caused Abraham to prepare an altar there on Mt. Moriah, (an area known to us as Mt. Zion) where he was going to offer his son Isaac. It was not just chance that caused that ram to be caught in the bushes, right where Abraham could get hold of it. Neither was it just by chance that king David later purchased the threshing floor of Orman the Jebusite, where he erected an altar unto the Lord; and where do you suppose it was? Right in the same place where Abraham had laid Isaac, to offer him unto the Lord. God was unfolding a plan for the human race: here a little, there a little, all the way to the cross where Jesus Christ offered Himself, as a Lamb without spot or blemish, to settle the sin debt for all mankind. Not everyone will acknowledge and accept that provision, anymore than Cain would accept the idea of a blood sacrifice in

his day, but the debt is paid for all who will accept it, and we thank God for it. As for how king David happened to purchase the threshing floor of Orman the Jebusite, let us take a look at the circumstances that led up to that point. David was to be the pregenerator of a royal line of who would one day rule from a throne established by God in that old Jebusite city called Salem, but it would not be called Salem, then; it would be called Jerusalem.

JEBUS BECOMES JERUSALEM

Let us begin by reading a few verses from the 11th chapter of I Chronicles. David was a mighty man; he was a man that had insight, and the Bible says, that he was a man after God’s own heart, even though he had his ups and downs and failures. Now, let us watch this ancient Jebusite city come into the picture with David, as we begin reading with verse I. “Then all Israel gathered themselves to David unto Hebron, (This is where he was dwelling during those years he was running from Saul. But now that Saul is dead, all of Israel is coming out to David, because they know he is destined to be their next king.) saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh. And moreover in the past, even when Saul was king, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the Lord thy God said unto thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be ruler over my people Israel. Therefore came all the elders of Israel to the king to Hebron; and David made a covenant with them in Hebron before the Lord; and they anointed David king over Israel, according to

the word of the Lord by Samuel.” It was Samuel who had prophesied this. He was the one the Lord sent with a horn of oil to anoint one of the sons of Jesse to be king. Watch now, This anointing by the elders takes place at Hebron, just a few miles from the ancient city of the Jebusites, but notice what David does just as soon as they anoint him. Verse 4, “And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem, which is Jebus- it wasn’t called Jerusalem yet) where the Jebusites were, the inhabitants of the land. And the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, Thou shalt not come hither.” Now, brothers and sisters, here is another place where we need to read between the lines. The way this city was situated, with its high walls and all, these Jebusites thought it would be impossible for anyone to take their city. You can read, over in Joshua, how that Israel could not take it, so they just sort of always passed by it, or by-passed it. In other words, it was sort of like a nest of hornets. You just do not play around with a nest of hornets, without getting stung. You either have to take them by surprise, or just leave them alone. I can just see David going up there, with determination in his heart to capture that city. The reason God had not caused Israel to take that city before then, was because He wanted it captured by the one chosen to establish a royal line of people to rule there. You see, Melchizedek was not only priest; he was also king. Now it is time for Israel’s king to establish his throne in this place, so there is not enough hornets in the whole land to stop him. He has God’s approval, and God is with him. Those old Jebusites get the surprise of their lives right there.

“Thou shalt not come hither,” they called out to David. In other words, they as same as said, You may as well give up; for you know you can never take this place. Notice the last part of verse 5. “Nevertheless David took the castle of Zion, which is the city of David.” I do not imagine that castle to have been anything like those ancient castles of England, but nevertheless, to them it was a castle, for it was where their king dwelt, and David took it, and then it was called after the name of Israel’s king, David. Verse 6, “And David said, Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites first, shall be chief and captain. (That is like throwing a hundred dollar bill into the air and saying, Whoever gets it, can have it.) So Joab the son of Zeruiah went first up, and was chief.” When David said, Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites first, shall be chief and captain; those mighty warriors hit that wall immediately. They all wanted that place of honor, to be captain of the host of Israel. But it was Joab that cut off the first Jebusites head, and he got the job. Verse 7, “And David dwelt in the castle; therefore they called it (Zion) the city of David. And he built the city roundabout, even from Milo roundabout: and Joab repaired the rest of the city. So David waxed greater and greater: for the Lord of hosts was with him.”

PROPHECY FULFILLED

God had been focusing attention on this place through Abraham. Melchizedek, and so forth, but the time had come to introduce an era of time whereby He would fulfill

something Moses told the children of Israel, before they ever crossed Jordan into the promise land. Beginning in Deuteronomy 12:9, we find Moses speaking to them on this wise. "For ye are not as yet come into the rest and to the inheritance, which the Lord your God giveth you. But when ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the Lord your God giveth you to inherit, and when He giveth you rest from all your enemies roundabout, so that ye dwell in safety; Then there shall be a place which the Lord your God shall choose to cause His name to dwell there; thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the Lord." Hundreds of years passed from the time Melchizedek met Abraham in the road near the city, until David captured it from the Jebusites, but God knew all the time where that place was to be that He would place His name. He had Moses speak as he did about choosing a place to put His name when they had come into the land beyond Jordan, but as you read the account of their entering in you will notice that the first place they set up the tabernacle was at Shiloh. That was the first logical, convenient place they found. During the years that followed, Israel went through periods of ups and downs, and even the ark of the covenant would get captured by the Philistines. Through all the years when they had judges, and even still when Saul was king, God still had not revealed to them, that place where He would put His name. David did not know when he captured Jebus, that it would one day, be that place that would fulfill Moses' prophecy. To

him, circumstances just seemed to work up to the point where that seemed like the thing to do, but what he did not know was, that God had been working in those circumstances. Too few people actually realize how a sovereign God works with human instruments to fulfill His will, and yet give those individuals a freedom of choice in the matter. Of course there are technical points that some people argue about in this area, but if you are honest, you will have to confess that God allows us to exercise our will. In other words, He will not force us to go against our will; He just works circumstances around us that makes us willing. Just look how those Jebusites had pestered the Israelites from behind their protective walls, right up to the very time David took their little city from them. They were a mean bunch, and the children of Israel had put up with a lot off of them, but the time came when David felt in his heart that those pesky hornets should be flushed out of their nest. It was his decision to do it, but he was fulfilling God's purpose. God already had that spot marked, as the place where He would one day place His name. Geographically, it is called the heart of the earth, and now there is a king of Salem who knows God, and that king waxed greater and greater, because the Lord of hosts was with him. God is unfolding a plan I for this little city that is situated right within the ancient area of Eden.

THE NUMBERS RACE

Reading between chapters 11 and 21, you see various battles that David

fought against the Philistines, until he finally felt that he had put them in their place. He has been conquering his opponents and establishing his kingdom, therefore when things begin to quiet down a bit, and he realized that the great battles were over, (Now, saints, let us try to read between the lines here.) he begins to meditate upon how every time they went into battle, spies would bring word about the size of the opposing armies. They have 40,000 footmen, 5,000 chariots, and on like that. He had heard those reports so many times, that he was provoked by the constant bragging of his enemies about the number of men they had. Naturally they thought they could scare David with their numbers, but David did not scare easily. Nevertheless, all of their bragging had served one purpose; it got David's mind upon numbers. As he thought upon his victories, and how he had succeeded in getting things under his control, he fell upon the idea of counting heads in his own ranks. In ether words, I imagine he thought, I am going to let this bunch of scattered inhabitants, around here, know that we also, are a goodly number of people. He ordered a census to be taken, and when he did, he began to have troubles he never dreamed he would have. Turn to chapter 21, of I Chronicles, and we will see what happened. Here was a man after God's own heart, getting ready to do something that is completely against the will of God. He is even warned by his own chief general, not to do such a thing, but he exercises his own will in the matter, and all Israel has to suffer because of it. That numbers spirit that got hold of David, was the same old spirit that gets into church in our day. They have fish

fries, chicken suppers, rummage sales, ball games, bingo parties, circus acts, Halloween parties, and anything else that will attract people, hoping that somehow they will get some of them on their church roll.

DAVID SINS — ISRAEL SUFFERS

The very first verse of chapter 21 lets us know that Satan is the instigator of all such actions. Notice now – “And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel. (God did not want this done, but He did not prevent it.) And David said to Joab and to the rulers of the people, Go, number Israel from Beersheba even to Dan; (In other words, from the north to the south, and from the east to the west.) and bring the number of them to me, that I may know it.” I can just picture what he had in his mind; he was going to do a little boasting about how many Israelites he had, ready to move at his command. I have had people ask me, Bro. Jackson: How many members do you have in your assembly? We do not have any. Don't you have a membership roll? No. Why not? Because we do not know who belongs to God. He is the one who keeps the record. All we do is furnish a place to worship together, a place where we can get in out of the rain and cold weather. We do not have any stained glass windows, no memorials erected to individuals, and no steeple on our building. All of that belongs in the same category as Cain's basket of fruit and vegetables which God rejected. What God is looking for is some dedicated souls who love truth, and do their best to walk in the

revelation of whatever truth they have. By the same token, all He wanted from Israel, was a people He could lead. He was not concerned about their numbers, and He did not want them to be numbered, but nevertheless, because the king ordered it, Joab carried out the orders, but reluctantly, for he knew God would be displeased with such a thing. Listen to Joab, in verse 3. "And Joab answered, " The Lord make His people an hundred times so many more as they be: but my lord the king, are they not all my lord's servants? (That was like saying, Don't you trust them?) why then doth my Lord require this thing? Why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel? Nevertheless, the king's word prevailed against Joab. Wherefore Joab departed, and went throughout all Israel, and came to Jerusalem. And Joab gave the sum of the number of the people unto David. And all they of Israel were a thousand thousand and an hundred thousand men that drew the sword: (Brother! That is a lot of swordsmen!) and Judah was four hundred three score and ten thousand men that drew the sword. But Levi and Benjamin counted he not among them: for the king's word was abominable to Joab. And God was displeased with this thing; therefore he smote Israel." In other words a plague, a disease turned into an epidemic. We do not know what it was, but David realized it was because of what he had done. He had imagined he could use their vast numbers to scare their enemies, rather than just the sword, and the fear of their God. But God does not like his plans, therefore He allows them to die like flies. At such a death rate, David's numbers were getting smaller and smaller every day, and it finally

caused him to repent and cry out to God. Notice verse 8, "And David said unto God, I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing; but now, I beseech thee, do away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly. And the Lord spake unto Gad, David's seer, (or prophet) saying, Go and tell David, saying, Thus saith the Lord, I offer thee three things: choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee. So Gad came to David, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, choose thee either three years famine, or three months to be destroyed before thy foes, while that the sword of thine enemies overtake thee; (In other words God was saying, I will bring those Philistines back again, and let you take a beating from them for three months, if that is what you choose.) or else three days the sword of the Lord, even the pestilence, in the land, and the angel of the Lord destroying throughout all the coasts of Israel. Now therefore advise thyself what word I shall bring again to Him that sent me." Brother! No wonder the apostle Paul said to the Hebrew Christians, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." David had provoked the Lord by his actions, and now, even though he had repented, there is still a price to pay. What a choice! Because of him, Israel will either have to suffer through three years of famine while thousands starve to death, be attacked, and thousands of them killed by their enemies, or suffer three more days of pestilence at the hands of the Lord. In other words, three more days of the epidemic that was already among them. David had more confidence in the mercy of God than any chance they might have otherwise, so he gave his answer to

Gad and waited for whatever else the Lord would do. Verse 13, “And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let me fall now into the hand of the Lord; for very great are His mercies: (Do you see what he was depending upon?) but let me not fall into the hand of man. So the Lord sent pestilence upon Israel: and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men. (Some of the best swordsmen that David had ever seen died there, because of him.) And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it: and as he was destroying, the Lord beheld, and he repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed, It is enough, stay now thine hand. And the angel of the Lord stood by the threshingfloor of Oman the Jebusite.”

EFFECTUAL FERVENT PRAYER

Brothers and sisters, I want you to notice now, that God is ready to reveal the place He has chosen to place His name. But first, listen to King David pray. He, and the elders of Israel are clothed in sackcloth, and they are upon their faces before the Lord in prayer, seeking mercy from Him, because of all those innocent people having to die. David knows he has sinned, and he knows that sin has to be atoned for, and it will have to be according to the will of God, so let us read a little more here, to get the picture. 16 “And David lifted up his eyes, and saw the angel of the Lord stand between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders of Then David and the elders of Israel, who were clothed in sackcloth, fell upon

their faces. And David said unto God, Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? Even if it is that have sinned and done evil indeed; but as for these sheep, what have they done? Let thine hand, I pray thee, Oh Lord my God, be upon me, and on my father’s house; but not on thy people, that they should be plagued. (He is really getting down to business in this prayer.) Then the angel of the Lord commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up, and set up an altar unto the Lord in the threshing floor of Oxman the Jebusite. (That is God’s choice, a place that still belongs to a Jebusite man.) And David went up at the saying of Gad, which he spake in the name of the Lord.” We will not read the rest of the story at this time, even though you might like to do so later. My point is this, though, David has sinned, he has repented and cried out to God for mercy for the other people, yet he knows that his sin must be atoned for. God chooses the place for David to build an altar, where He will accept David’s sacrifice, and David immediately went out to acquire the threshing floor for Oxman. This is the very area that God has been focusing attention on, in various ways, ever since the day Melchizedek met Abraham close by there and served the Lord’s supper to him. David bought the ground and built an altar, and he offered sacrifice unto God upon it, and the plague was stayed. Now by this time David was getting on up in years, but he determined to build a house for the Lord at this place. It was in his heart to do it, and God gave His approval upon the building, but He would not let David build it, because David had shed too much blood in His sight. He told him that since he had

been a man of war, and shed so much blood, he should not build the house. The house would be built by David's son Solomon, a man of peace, in the days when Israel was at rest from all their enemies. David accepted the word of the Lord concerning the matter, but he began buying and laying up lumber, iron, stone, nails, and all sorts of building materials in preparation for Solomon to carry out the actual building of the temple. From that time on, Jerusalem has been the place where all Israel has looked to as the city of Jehovah God. Regardless of where they were, or what kind of situation they were in, if they could look toward Jerusalem and call upon the name of the Lord, He would hear them. When Solomon's men finished their work, they had constructed what, at that time, was the most magnificent thing for beauty that the human eye had ever seen. Right there in Jerusalem, God has dealt with mankind throughout the centuries since. It has been the center of many wars and conflicts, but through them all it still remains to be the city of God, the only earthly city where He has ever placed His great name. Furthermore, even though it has been controlled by various peoples since those days, it is still a city that sovereignly belongs to Israel. No matter how much talk they have about declaring it an international city, in the eyes of God Israel has sovereign control of it. God gave that land to Abraham and his seed by Isaac, for an everlasting possession, and He has not changed His mind about it. Of course we realize that the Antichrist is yet to have his hour, when he will control that city, but no one apart from the seed of Isaac will ever have a legal title to it. In the

Millennium, David's throne will be occupied by the one who will literally fulfill all that Melchizedek set the type for. He is already priest of the most High, and then, He will be King of Israel, King of kings, King of peace, King of righteousness until God's plan of redemption is completed, and he becomes our elder brother in the eternal age.

FROM BETHLEHEM TO GOLGOTHA

The next great event that we want to deal with, which took place in the same general area as these other instances, took place about two thousand years ago. A young virgin was found to be with child. Her name was Mary, and her lineage was of Bethlehem of Judaea, the same as Joseph's whom she was engaged to be married to. However both she and Joseph lived in Nazareth at the time when she was found with child, for there was much scripture to be fulfilled by the events of their lives. This little lady gave birth to a son who would one day hold the destiny of the whole world in his hands. He looked just like any other little baby would, in the sense of being a newborn baby. He grew up in Nazareth, just like other little boys, and was referred to as Jesus, the son of Joseph. At age 12, he displayed some knowledge that set him apart from other little boys his age, when he was found in the temple both hearing and speaking with the religious scholars of his day. Those who heard him were astonished at his understanding, and his answers, but none of them realized what his destiny in life would be. How could they have

known then, that one day He would ride into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey, and offer Himself to the nation of Israel as their long awaited Messiah and King? Here sat a twelve year old boy, the son of a certain woman, Abraham, but most important of all, the Son of God. Now you know, and I know that God is King, God is priest, and God is the provided sacrifice for man's sin, and here sat a little boy who would one day become all of that. He was born in Bethlehem, brought to Jerusalem, circumcised and dedicated to the Lord, and thirty years later, baptized by John in Jordan. John's baptism fulfilled a two fold purpose in the ministry of Jesus Christ. We all know He did not have to be baptized for the remission of sins, for He was without sin. But on the other hand He was entering into a priestly ministry whereby He would offer up a sacrifice acceptable to God, and it was required by the law of Moses that every priest must be washed before entering in to offer unto the Lord. He was also to be the sacrificial Lamb that would be offered, and the law of Moses also required every such sacrifice to be washed before it was offered, therefore John performed a twofold washing to fulfill the righteousness of the law, when he baptized Jesus that day. It was the burnt offering that had to be washed, that which was burnt for a sweet savour unto the Lord, that which Abraham was to offer Isaac up for. Certainly, when Jesus offered Himself, He fulfilled all of those types, and truly sent up a sweet savour unto the nostrils of God, so to speak. About 300 yards outside the old Damascus gate, on a little slope that overlooked the old city itself, looking toward the

temple, they crucified Him. Just another summit area of Mt. Zion, right within the area where the many types had been set, which pointed to this very event. Through those years between the Eden of Genesis 2:8, and the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, men built many cities, but there was only one that God ever placed His name in, Jerusalem, right in the heart of the earth.

CITIES OF THIS EARTH

ancient times most of the larger cities were built with huge walls around them, to protect their inhabitants from their enemies. Now the cities, the walls, thieves and robbers were all a result of the sin committed in the garden of Eden. If it were not for sin, there never would have been one strip of asphalt or concrete on earth at any time. I got that on my mind as we came back from Norway, and landed in New York. All we could see was asphalt and concrete. That is why they call it asphalt jungle. Saints: I am not making fun of individuals who live in such cities, but brother, we do know that they (especially the large ones) have become incubators for evil and perversion of every sort. Every conceivable crime is committed almost daily in many of them. Countless thousands are born, live their lives, and die, being all their days upon earth subjected to Satan's devices of crime and perversion. No wonder the Bible says in connection with that great earthquake under the 6th seal, (Rev. 6:12) that the cities of the nations fell. When God shakes the old planet, I want you to know, it will

not take ten years to bring them down. No, sir. New York City will crumble and fall to pieces just like a bunch of those little play blocks that children build with. Chicago, Illinois, Los Angeles, California, and those others will go likewise. Those cities will crumble and fall, and wicked mankind will (if they are not killed then) beg for the rocks and mountains to fall upon them, and hide them from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. When that time comes, I would feel safer in Jerusalem than anywhere else, if I was still left here. But, praise God, I do not expect to be here to witness that, as a mortal being. Nevertheless, we are talking about one city upon the face of this old planet, where God chose to place His great name, a city in which He placed His shekinah glory, and from which salvation for all of lost mankind was first introduced. That little city, though natural, and though it sits upon a natural mountain, types everything that God has purposed to be for the redeemed people of the earth. When you read Revelation 21 & 22, with an open mind, and through the eyes of the Spirit which is able to give understanding, and you see such a city coming down to earth out of heaven, you realize that this is God restoring back to earth, something that was taken away in Genesis 3:24. Man has been out of that paradise for six thousand years already, and will be out for another thousand, before God restores him back. There are countless numbers of people who get very upset with me, for saying that the city of Rev. 21:2, 10, is not a literal city, but if they had eyes to read their Bible, it would be very easy for them to at least see verses 9 & 10, which tells us that

this great city, the holy Jerusalem, is the bride, the Lamb's wife. Certainly they should be spiritual minded enough to know that Jesus is not a polygamist. He will not have two wives. Throughout the New Testament the overcoming believers are referred to as the bride, or wife of Jesus Christ, and then John sees His wife and tells us that he saw a city, so if you can believe the word of God, you ought to be able to believe that what John saw coming down to earth was what God took away from Adam and Eve. God's presence with Adam and Eve made it paradise, but they lost that continual presence through disobedience. Therefore after seven thousand years, when redemption is finally completed, and there is no more sin present, God's shekinah glory comes back down to earth to dwell with His redeemed people. There is much to be said about why God chose to display Himself over here, as a spiritual city, instead of a garden, but we have an article in print already, titled, *The New Jerusalem*. If you have not read it, you might like to get it and read about this great city that lieth four-square. The fact that its length, its breadth, and its height were all equal speaks of something that is complete and perfect in itself. That is what will be upon this earth, when the great eternal age is introduced, after the millenium has served its purpose. God's holy presence back among His people in perfection will mean that paradise has been restored back to man. You say, That is unthinkable. Yes. If you try to grasp it only with the natural mind, it is, but please remember what was written to the church at Ephesus. (Rev. 2:7) "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of

the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” That puts overcomers right back in the same relationship to God, that Adam and Eve had in the beginning. As we have said so many times, Adam and Eve were not driven from a fenced garden. as so many are prone to picture it they were just merely deprived of God’s shekinah glory. they lost their access to the spirit world, and became earthbound. Ever since then, man has been confined to a materialistic, tangible worldly environment. That is why for six thousand years. man has had to walk by faith, and not by sight, as it could have remained if sin had not entered the picture. Where is God then? you may say; Just listen to David, in the 139th Psalm, talking about how great God is, and how He knows everything about us, even our very thoughts. Then in verse 7, he emphasizes it by saying, “Whither shall I go from their spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up to heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.” That just about sums it up. God has not forsaken His people. Being omnipresent. He fills all of His creation, but He does not allow man to dwell in His glory as before the fall. As for the new Jerusalem, the holy city that John saw descending from heaven to earth: there is no reason to become upset and frustrated because I say it is the paradise that Adam and Eve lost, being restored back to man. The fact that it is called a city instead of a garden is God’s way of expressing even more fully that man, in that day,

will be completely secure. The earth will be completely free of all sin and danger of every kind. Cities have always been looked upon as places for fellowship, communication, and especially in ancient times, as places of refuge and protection from forces of evil. Even most churches are built in cities. That is why God chose a city upon earth to set a type of what He is redeeming mankind back to. Throughout the history of time, God has been leading man back home. Not to another planet, but back to the same conditions that existed in the garden of Eden. With one exception, of course; man then, will have already been tested and found faithful, for only those who have passed the test will be present. All others will have been cast into the lake of fire and destroyed. Therefore what John saw was the shekinah glory and very presence of God descending back to earth, to dwell eternally among His redeemed family of people.

REDEMPTION IN PERFECTION

Open your Bibles to Revelation 21:1, and let us read a few verses there. “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: (new by redemption, not by creation) for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I, John saw the **HOLY CITY, NEW JERUSALEM**, coming down from God out of heaven, (John is just writing what he is seeing, he is not explaining anything. He sees this beautiful thing coming down out of heaven, and describes what it looks like.) prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice

from out of heaven saying, Behold, the TABERNACLE OF GOD IS WITH MEN, and He will DWELL with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself SHALL BE WITH THEM, and be their God.” You can read the verses in between, later. Right now I am establishing a point; so we will skip down to verse 9, “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, “Saints, do not try to insert those seven vials of plagues into this eternal age setting; John is just identifying the angel which carried him away in the spirit to show him what he is about to describe.) Come hither, I will show thee the BRIDE, the LAMB’S WIFE. (What is he going to see? 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, (the Lamb’s wife) descending out of heaven from God, Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, (verse 23 tells us that the light of this city was the glory of God) even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal, and had a wall great and high, and had TWELVE GATES, and at the gates TWELVE ANGELS and names written thereon, which are the names of the TWELVE TRIBES of the children of Israel. 14 And the WALL of the city had TWELVE FOUNDATIONS, and in them the names of the TWELVE APOSTLES of the Lamb.” Brothers and sisters, keep these twelve’s in your mind, for they are going to help us understand these symbolic terms as we continue on through the measuring of the city, its gates and its walls. But please

remember, the city itself is the bride of Christ, this grace age bride that comes to perfection. As we pick up verse 15 now, and continue reading, we are going to see a mystical, mathematical formula. Notice now. “And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. (This city of pure gold could not be measured with just any old tape measure, it had to be measured with a golden reed.) And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, TWELVE THOUSAND FURLONGS. The length and the breadth and the height of it were equal.” All right now, notice what was said. the LENGTH, the BREADTH, and the HEIGHTH of it are all equal. and he has just got through saying that it was foursquare. Right? Watch now, I want to show you something. In chapter 7, you read how twelve thousand servants of God are sealed with the Holy Ghost, from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. We all know that some of those tribes were larger than the others, but it was very important in the plan of God, to keep those numbers exactly even. They figure up to a total of 144,000 individual men when you multiply 12×12 , and this speaks of something in connection with this great city. The city measured 12,000 furlongs, and naturally, to square that, you would multiply 12×12 , which would give you 144,000 furlongs, but you are not through yet, for the heighth was the same as the length and breadth. Therefore you have to go up 12,000 also. In other words, twelve stacks of the same, one on top of the other, and then you have it cubed. Now when

something is cubed, you cannot add to it, nor take anything from it, without marring it. The very minute you do either one, you no longer have a perfect cube. To me, measurements cubed, speak symbolically of a perfect and complete work of redemption. There is not one thing that needs to be added to it, nor taken away from it. There can never be such perfectness until the eternal age which follows the millennial reign of Christ upon earth, but when time does reach this point, there will not be one thing left to do. God's plan of salvation will have brought everything to perfection, that is to be perfected. All the rest will have been destroyed, and those who remain will be back home at last, back in paradise. Where it was once called a garden, it will then be called a city, and time will be measured no more. The eternal age will not be measured by days, weeks, years, and so forth. It will be God dwelling among His true people throughout all eternity. Now we have journeyed through time, through the scriptures, from the paradise of God that was in the garden of Eden, back to that same paradise of God, only now it is referred to as a city instead of a garden. But saints, the important thing for us to see, is what made that garden a paradise, and be able to understand what the restoration of that paradise will be when God's great redemption work is finished. We will insert a little portion of our September 1978 message on the new Jerusalem that will deal with the gates and wall of this city, and then, use the rest of our space dealing with the subject of how one becomes a part of that beautiful picture.

+EXCERPTS

PRAISE — SALVATION — HOLINESS

When we come to verse 12, we find a great, high wall which is symbolic of perfect security and safety, the wall having twelve gates with the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel written on them, signifying that the way into this walled city was worked out in types and shadows through these Israelites in the law age. Verse 13, with three gates on each of the four sides of the wall, speak of the fact that the city is made up of redeemed saints that have come from every direction on the face of this old globe. Between verses 13 and 14, let me say this, Isaiah gives us another set of three's, 60:18, violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shall call thy WALLS SALVATION, and thy GATES PRAISE. Then in 62:9 it speaks of the COURTS OF MY HOLINESS. Now when you connect PRAISE, SALVATION, and HOLINESS together, you see a threefold redemptive work accomplished in the saints of God. Alright now, we connect the praise with the children of Israel which pointed the way through the gates into that city of God's redeemed. The wall of that city, verse 14, had 12 foundations with the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb in them. It was the apostles of the Lamb that laid the foundation for the faith of our salvation, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone. Remember, the wall, or walls of that city are called salvation. Why? They

symbolize the fact that the bride, the church, has found that security, that place of safety and protection, in Christ in God, which men in the natural, in days of old, sought from the protective walls of natural cities. Walls, in our day of modern warfare, are of little significance, since they cannot protect anyone from a nuclear attack, but they are symbolized in the scriptures dealing with this spiritual city because of the salvation (deliverance from enemies) they furnished to men in days of old. The reason Ezekiel 38 refers to the people of God who dwell in safety in unwalled cities is because it is referring to the people in this age that have been brought back to the land of Israel in fulfillment of the scriptures and God Himself, is their wall, their protection, their defense, for the simple reason that a wall around the natural city of Jerusalem could not protect them against an attack from Russia and her allies when it comes. We see that verses 15, 16 and 17, all go together, for they pertain to the measurements of the city, the gates and the wall. The twelve thousand furlongs of the city, and the hundred and forty-four cubits of the wall seem to speak of the vastness of the city itself. One thing we do want to notice though is that the city is four square. In other words, equal in every direction (cubed) pointing to a finished work. When something is cubed, you cannot add to, or take from, without marring the picture. That is why it could not be pictured as a pyramid the way some people think; the language here rules out any such thought. Four square, the length, the breadth, and the height being equal, could not be represented in a pyramid. No,- this four-square

terminology definitely represents the fact that God's redemption process is a completed work, and that the bride, (which is the city itself) is made up of saints that are all perfected. There are three realms of sainthood in God's redeemed family, but the bride saints themselves are all those who were perfected in this life. Verses 18, 19, and 20 go together in their description of the wall, its foundations, and the stones which garnished them with beauty. The city of God, speaking of the perfect faith of the bride church, is explained in detail earlier in the message, and remember these stones are to represent the life and ministry of the various apostles they apply to. In other words the twelve apostles of the Lamb which carried the gospel to all nations, laying the foundation stones of the church of the living God. Some stones (we are told) are formed by tremendous pressure, others by tremendous heat and so forth; therefore God used these different stones to symbolize the life and ministry, and character of those apostles. Verse 21, speaking of the twelve gates being twelve pearls, each gate of one pearl, remember, these gates represent the 12 tribes of Israel, which speak of the way into the city, how God worked it out in types and shadows in the law age, and the pearl which has its formation perfected because of an intruder, (an enemy) lays perfectly in line with what the children of Israel suffered at the hands of their enemies. The street of pure gold, even as transparent glass speaks of the fact that the faith of the church, which is more precious than gold, tried in the fire, has come forth so pure that there is not a speck of anything left to mar that faith or keep her from

approaching God. The way to perfect fellowship with God is faith, faith which has been tried in the fires of ridicule and persecution, and come forth pure and spotless. 22, "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God and the Lamb are the temple of it. In other words the city itself is made up of people. There are no natural buildings, and every immortal body there has the same measure of the presence of God; therefore there is no certain place designated as the place where the omnipresent God would place His presence. He will be in us, and we in Him; therefore He IS the temple of the CITY. 23, The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. The city itself, (the people) had no need of these lights, but the planet will still have the sun and moon to shine on it. 24, The nations of natural people will walk in the light of that city; in other words, in the light of the revelation of the bride, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory and honour to the church, the bride which is the city. 25, The gates of the city shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. This simply means that since the moon will be as bright as the sun, there will be no darkness, and the fact that the gates are never closed, speaks of the fact that the natural people of the nations will have constant access into the presence of the church, the bride saints. It speaks also, symbolically, of the fact that there is no more evil present, no robbers, no murderers and therefore no necessity or reason to close the gates. Every reference here, furnishes us with many avenues of thought, once we get a glimpse of the fact that

everything man has been associated with in this life, is represented symbolically, in this city with its wall and 12 gates. Verse 26, goes with verse 24, and verse 27 shows that every defiling thing has been cut off, and only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life remain. mount," the pattern of the heavenly tabernacle which was pitched by the Lord. Think of this Saints, if there was a heavenly tabernacle, it has to be the blueprint of the church of the living God. That earthly tabernacle, in its natural structure and dimensions, was to type what the church would be in its redeemed state, and relationship with God. Alright now, there were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south, and three on the west, "And the wall of the city had twelve foundations." The foundation of a wall (in building terms) is called a footing. That which holds up the wall giving it a solid foundation, is called a footing, and I have never yet heard of a wall having more than one footing, regardless of how thick or how high it may be, but here, in this spiritual wall, we have 12 foundations. Why? Why have 12 foundations? Praise the Lord, this takes on real significance here; for in those foundations were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. John saw his name there as his eyes passed over those layers of the foundations. Can you imagine how his old heart must have leaped within him? Probably, there was a big teardrop run down his face about that time, as his head jerked back to take another look.

APOSTLES — FOUNDATIONS

Let me ask you a question now. Did the apostle Paul carry any earthly material up there while he was alive? Did Peter, James, or John carry anything up there to lay in the foundations of the wall of that city? We all know better than that; therefore those foundational layers portray the life and ministry of those apostles, and the revelation that they held in their bosom as they went forth under the leadership of the Holy Ghost, being inspired of Him to preach the gospel to every creature. Of course it all began with the Jews, and it is true that the apostle Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles, but according to church history, each and every one of those apostles ministered, at times, to the Gentile congregations as time moved on. It was all in the plan of God for them to be instruments, by which, He would lay a sure foundation for his church. We will talk about this more, as we come to verse 19, but now, let us look at the dimensions of this city. Verse 15, "And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth a four square, (we are getting into the mathematical language of it now) and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are I, equal." I am a poor mathematician, and know very little about it, but I do know when you start talking about foursquare in mathematical terms, you are talking about a cube. I know this also; you cannot add to, or take away from a

cube. If you have twelve thousand this way, twelve thousand this way, and twelve thousand this way, you have a cube. If you only had 11,900 on one side it would not be a cube, would it? I see that God used mathematical language here to show the climax, or completeness of something to that would be of the total plan of at redemption for the whole human race. It is all symbolized right here so beautifully. To the natural mind it looks like such a natural setting, but to the spiritual mind that already has that question settled, it presents a beautiful picture of completeness. If you try to change its form, you automatically uncube it, and it becomes an incomplete revelation; Any time you change the dimensions of a cube, you lose your cube, and the only way you can get it back is to put back what you took away. Is that not what we read in the last few verses of the book of Revelation? It tells us what will happen to anyone who adds to, or takes from the words that are written in the prophecy of this book. We must accept it just like it is, for what it says, no more, and no less. Verse 17, "And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. 18: And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: (John evidently used the word jasper in an attempt to describe something that was too beautiful to be described with human words) and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass." The peculiarity of the description of this gold should tell us something. We all know that pure gold, in the natural, is not clear as glass, no matter how refined it is. We know that gold is either white or yellow; therefore we

are made to understand that this is a spiritual term applied to pure, undefiled faith. This symbolizes the fact that the souls of the redeemed church are abiding in perfect faith, the faith they had in this earthly life, which was tested and tried by fire. What did Jesus say to the church at Laodicea? "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire." Surely we do not think He is going to give us natural gold; what spiritual good would natural gold be to a people mar was lukewarm spiritually? If we can see then, that the gold referred to is faith, we can easily see that the city of gold symbolizes the perfected state of that faith some will say, I did not know that the Lord Jesus would give us faith; and others are continuously praying for more faith. In each situation there needs to be some direction. The scriptures teach us that to every man is given a measure of faith. If that faith is exercised in believing God's word, it brings an increase in faith back to us according to God's law of sowing, and reaping with increase Faith and revelation go hand in hand. We are given a measure of faith; then through that faith we receive a revelation of who Jesus Christ is (the incarnate God, Himself) and that revelation increases our faith sufficiently to believe the other things that are set forth in the Bible, but not without trials and tests along the way. Every revelation we receive has to be tested by the fires of ridicule and persecution; that is what determines whether it was a revelation or just an idea. A genuine revelation becomes a part of you that no amount of persecution can cancel out. Turn to I Peter 1:3-9, for just a few minutes, and we will see what the apostle Peter added to the subject of faith, gold and

fire. 3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead To an INHERITANCE incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, resented in heaven for you, who are KEPT by the POWER OF GOD THROUGH FAITH unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time – Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness THROUGH MANIFOLD TEMPTATIONS: (why?) THAT THE TRIAL OF YOUR FAITH, being much more precious than of GOLD that perisheth, though it be tried with FIRE; why did Peter use such an illustration if he was not making a comparison between our faith, — GOLD — and natural — GOLD — might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love: in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet BELIEVING, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your FAITH, even the salvation of your souls." I believe these words of Peter more than establish the fact that our FAITH is likened unto pure GOLD, and the reason John described it as being like clear glass is because the bride (the city) is pure and clean with nothing left to defile or corrupt her. In this verse the CITY is pure GOLD, and in verse 21 he said the STREET of that city was pure GOLD. Brothers and sisters, I would rather have this kind of gold to cherish in my soul than all the other you could load on a burro's back. This gold isn't heavy. It will not get you all humped over, carrying it. As a

matter of fact, it will have a reverse effect on you; it will make you stand up straight and hold your head high. It will cause you to look up to heaven and say, Thank you, Lord, as you realize just how blessed you are. The devil has worked hard at his task of getting people to look at these scriptures from the standpoint of natural reasoning, and he has had a tremendous amount of success in his program, but bride saints must be able to look beyond the natural realm, and see the beautiful plan of God unfolding in these last days.

FOUNDATION STONES

Let us continue on now with verse 19, “And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnishes with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was JASPER, the second, SAPPHIRE; the third, a CHALCEDONY; the fourth, an EMERALD; the fifth, SARDONYX; the sixth, SARIDIUS; the seventh, CHRYSOLITE; the eighth, BERYL; the ninth, a TOPAZ; the tenth, CHRYSOPRASUS; the eleventh, JACINTH; and the twelfth, an AMETHYST – Each stone is to typify the beauty and splendor of the life of that apostle, as he went forth carrying the gospel to the ends of the earth. His ministry and relationship to the people, reflected the beauty of these stones as he went forth planting the seed of revelation in their souls. Those apostles were pointing the way through the gates of that city where people could find rest and refuge for their weary souls, an eternal rest from their adversary, which is the devil.

Watch this next verse now, 21, 1 “And the twelve GATES were twelve pearls; signifying something pure, (which is exactly what I was portrayed through the age of the law, in types) every several GATE was of one pearl; and the STREET (SINGULAR) of the CITY was pure GOLD, as it were transparent glass. “As you walk down the STREET of that CITY, you are walking in the eternal realm of perfect faith, faith that has been made pure and clean through redemption which God worked through Jesus Christ. Think of it, the CITY, and its STREET was of the same substance. A city is not just a street, but the street certainly IS part of the city. It goes to show that this city, with all of its splendor, referred to as the Lamb’s wife, the bride of Christ, is completely, and wholly, in every aspect of its makeup, souls that have been redeemed and made perfect through faith which is in Jesus Christ. Speaking of the gates of pearl in the wall of that city, and for whatever it may be worth, it is interesting to note that the Collier’s Encyclopedia, 1963 edition, lists 12 colors, or shades of pearl. Then as we consider how a pearl is formed, by calcareous concretion, built layer upon layer, to protect the pearl oyster from whatever irritant caused the process to begin in the first place, we can see how this parallels with the lives of the people who made up the twelve tribes of Israel. The substance which forms into a beautiful pearl is already present in the oyster shell, in the oyster, but of little or no value gem-wise, until an intruder enters the picture. Reaction to the intruder forms the substance into beautiful pearls. Is that not how it was with the children of Israel? Their character, and stature was molded as

they reacted to the intrusions of their enemies, which were enemies of God, who is the source of all substance. God does not need protection for Himself, but it was His enemies that brought out the best, of the children of Israel.

TEAR THIS TEMPLE DOWN

As we come to verse 22, it calls our attention back to verse 3, which we spoke of already, where a voice from heaven spoke saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men." When John heard those words he was viewing the city from an outside position, but as we come to verse 22, John is seeing within the city, and that is when he said, "And I saw no TEMPLE therein." What does that mean? It means he did not see any kind of a building within the city where a person could go to and say, This is where God is, In the natural Jerusalem, which is built on top of Mount Zion, there stood a temple, the place where God chose to place His presence, His Shekinah glory. That city also had a wall around it, and gates in the wall, and buildings within; many buildings, but God only chose to place His presence in one of those buildings, the temple, which was a type, to foreshadow which was a type, to foreshadow the very thing that God has given to you and I. Anything that was to foreshadow the bride of Christ, in her perfected state would, of necessity, have to be a thing of beauty for the eyes to behold. It was the beauty of it that the disciples of Jesus were taken with. They came to Him one day just to call his attention to the beauty and splendor of the temple, but

Jesus surprised them by saying, Matt. 24:2, "See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." That was a surprise to them, but they were even more surprised the day He said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." That is when the Jews became indignant saying, "Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?" Every Jew standing there thought He was blaspheming against their most sacred holy place, but naturally, He was speaking of the temple of His body, the place where God has always desired to place His eternal presence, (in the body of His true people) since the day He created Adam; With such a revelation as this, it is no wonder the apostle Peter referred to believers as lively stones, built up into a spiritual house, and Paul referred to that house as a holy temple in the Lord. For a parallel thought let us consider a natural setting, using the temple in the natural city, (Jerusalem) where God placed His presence. Like we said already; there were many buildings in the city, but only one where God had chosen to place His presence. Just suppose that while God's presence was in that natural temple, all the other buildings in the city had been erased from the picture, leaving the wall around the city, but nothing inside the wall except the temple of God: you may consider this to be a poor example of illustration, but inside the wall of that new city, the spiritual Jerusalem. There will be nothing except the bride of Christ, the Lamb's wife. Even though there will be many, separate, Individuals making up the bride, they

are all referred to as one body, one building, which is the house of God. The whole city inside the wall is one building of God, one building, but with many individual abodes within that one building. That is why John had to say, "I saw no temple therein, because God's eternal presence was in every building (immortal body) of that city. It may sound like the picture gets a little twisted when John says, "For the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it," but remember what Jesus prayed for in John 17 : 20-23, "Neither pray I for these alone. but for them also which shall believe on me through their word. That they ALL may be ONE, (one body) as thou. Father, art IN ME, (Father-eternal Spirit-in the Word-the Son) and I IN THEE, (Son-the Word-in the Spirit) that they also may be ONE IN US: (one body in God who is Word and Spirit) that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that THEY MAY BE ONE, (one body) EVEN AS WE ARE ONE: (Spirit and Word-one God) I IN THEM, the Word in the body) and THOU IN ME, I the Spirit in the Word which i is in the body) that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." Now you can see that, even though we are the temple of God, and He is in us, we also are in Him, therefore it is not strange for John to say that God is the temple of the new city. Verse 3, The Tabernacle of God is with men, (He is in us) and verse 22, The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it, we are in Him) go together to show complete oneness between God and His redeemed family. With Him in

us. and us in Him, it becomes a beautiful picture. That is exactly as it was in the garden, in the beginning. Adam's natural body was made to give him contact with the earthly realm, but his spiritual body (the inner man) which was made in the image and likeness of God, enabled him to move freely in fellowshiping God at any moment. He had free access to both worlds, or realms of habitation. With redemption and restoration fully completed, it will be God in His people, and His people in Him, a perfect union.

YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN

God foreshadowed His great plan of redemption throughout the whole law age by various types, but none of those Old Testament saints ever knew very much about what they pointed to. They just walked on by faith, believing that God was a just God, and as Abraham expressed, or as it was said about Abraham, what they were really looking for, was a city, not made with hands, whose builder and maker is God, a city with foundations. Jesus Christ opened up the way into that city when He surrendered up His very life there at Calvary one day, and we Gentiles have been the beneficiaries of that glorious gift to lost mankind for almost two thousand years now. But among the Gentiles, the gospel of Jesus Christ has become so perverted, that what looks like Christianity, is not really Christianity at all. Much of it is just a lot of politics, hid behind a cloak of religious formality, using Christianity only for personal advantages in this present life.

Nevertheless, I hold in my hand a book (the Bible) in which every word was written by Jewish men. In it is found God's plan for all who desire to be a part of that holy city of Revelation 21:2. The only way into that city is to be born again by the Spirit of God. It is all right here in the book. There is no alternate route that a person can take. Countless multitudes have joined religious groups by a handshake, or by observing some kind of ritual down through the ages, but a thing like that has no more spiritual benefit to your sin burdened soul than joining the Democratic political party here in America. On the other hand, to be born again according to the scriptures, by the Spirit of God, is to become Christ-like, and that is of utmost benefit to you. The Bible teaches that we should not just be hearers of the word only, but that the true value is in being doers of the word, lest we deceive ourselves. Being Christ-like is to be a motivating factor in the life of everyone who has as his goal in life, to reach that glorious paradise of God. To deceive ourselves, or to allow anyone else to deceive us, is just plain religious folly. We are no better off than old Cain was, when he chose to continue on in his self willed way. Furthermore, just to observe all the certain rituals of "supposed to be" Christianity, only puts you in the same category with the scribes and Pharisees which constantly seized upon every opportunity to strive with Jesus. Their hearts were not right, for their thoughts were only upon keeping their version of the letter of the law of Moses. One such Pharisee came to Jesus by night in the early stages of His ministry upon earth, Nicodemus by name, a ruler of the Jews, and tried

to win favor with Him by flattery, only to hear the words, "Ye must be born again." That is God's only provided way. If you as an individual read these words, and come to realize that you have been putting your trust in something else for your soul's salvation. Let me say this to you, Ye must be born again!

LIFE WITHOUT SIN

Jesus had been baptized in the fall of the previous year, and He had come to Jerusalem for the Passover, in the spring of the year. Prior to His trip to Jerusalem He had been preaching and testifying in the various synagogues in and around Capernaum, so much so, that His name was known among the religious circles in Jerusalem. On top of that, one of the first things He did when He arrived at the temple in Jerusalem, was make a scourge of small cords and clean out the temple. He drove out sheep, oxen, doves, and those that sold them, and turned over their tables of money saying, "Make not my Father's house an house of merchandise." Therefore it goes without saying that there was much talk about Him around Jerusalem in those days. Some of the Jews contended with Him openly, and others believed on Him when they witnessed the miracles which He did. But this Pharisee named Nicodemus, who himself was a ruler of the Jews, and therefore very highly educated, thought he would just sneak in at night and try to set his mind at ease, because of some of the questions that had been aroused in him. Evidently some of the things that Jesus had said were

beginning to get next to him. He could not take the chance of his reputation being ruined, by coming to Jesus in the daytime, so that is why he came in at night. We are in the 3rd chapter of John, verse 2. "The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto Him, Rabbi (That is what they called their religious instructors.) we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." No doubt Nicodemus thought Jesus would surely be pleased by being addressed in this manner. But Jesus knew exactly why he was there, and He did not even wait for the man to ask the question he had upon his mind. He just simply cut him right off by saying, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." In the four thousand years since the Garden of Eden, no such statement had ever been uttered. I am sure it must have sounded very carnal to Nicodemus, and likewise his reply was very carnal. "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" He took the whole thing from the natural, carnal side, and Jesus was not referring to physical birth at all. Jesus was talking about something that Nicodemus and all of mankind needed, something inside that would give them eternal life. If Adam and Eve had obeyed God in the beginning, such a statement would never have been uttered. Every little baby born into the world would have had eternal life. Man never would have needed a bloody sacrifice, or an altar, or a temple to worship God in. It is sometimes hard to grasp the reality of what it would have been like, had there never been any sin, or death

imputed to man because of sin, and likewise, it is just as hard to visualize what it will be like when all traces of sin have been purged from the earth, and man is living in the eternal age, back in the presence of God's *skekinah* glory. But one thing is made very clear in the scriptures; only those who are born again will ever actually know.

WHO GOES TO HELL?

Throughout the history of mankind upon earth, there has always been a consciousness inside of individuals that caused them to realize they needed to do something in order to be reconciled to God. You can study up on the religions of the world, and you will find that they, almost every one, believe in some form of life after death, regardless of how pagan they may be. For instance, I have studied a little about some of the ancient Chinese beliefs, and was amazed at some of their concepts of what it will be like after this present life. They did not have a Jewish Bible, but they believed there was a place called hell, and they believed there was a heaven, a paradise. I have seen their concept of it, illustrated in a wax museum. On one side, they had wax figures of people who had lived good lives upon earth. It showed them after death, in a place of paradise, completely comforted. But on the other side their illustrations showed people who had lived wicked, evil lives, and they were being tormented in hell according to the degree of their wickedness in this life. Just think of it, brothers and sisters; those ancient Chinese had that

idea inside of them, but they did not have a true revelation. They showed demons cutting the tongues out of some who had lived the most wicked lives, and I will have to say, hell could not be pictured any more gruesome than what they had it. But as I walked along there, looking at those wax figures, I began to think of the rich man Jesus spoke of in the 16th chapter of Luke, who in this life fared sumptuously every day, and probably lived what his neighbors considered to be a good life. But after he died, and was buried, he lifted up his eyes from his place of torment, and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus, the old beggar that had laid at his gate begging for the crumbs which fell from his table, comforted in Abraham's bosom. All of you are familiar with that story of course, but my point is this, people do not wind up in hell just because they lived evil lives upon earth. If you are not born again, you will wind up in hell, no matter how clean and moral you live this life. That rich man was not in torment because he had killed someone, or anything like that; he was just rich and conceited, and without any feeling of compassion for the poor old beggar who laid at his gate, with the dogs licking his sores. Friend: Do not let Satan deceive you; your good life will never gain you entrance into the kingdom of God. That is only for those who have been born again. Let me say this also, Do not imagine yourself to be born again, just because you walked down a church aisle someplace, shook the preacher's hand, and had your name placed on their church roll. All that does, is make you a member of some religious club; there is no life in it. Do you think Jesus would have talked to Nicodemus like

He did, if a good moral life, and a religious cloak was all he needed? I am convinced that no one could have laid a finger on that man's life, yet Jesus said to him, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." He goes ahead in the next re two verses, to distinguish between the natural and the spiritual, saying, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; (In other words, that which is born by physical birth is fleshly, it has natural life in it, but it also has death in it. Eternal life is nowhere present until that life has been reconciled back to God.) and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again." In other words, do not be confused by my words. Nicodemus did not understand any of what Jesus said to him, for he concluded his remarks by saying, How can these things be? Jesus did not give him any I formula for the new birth. Instead, he just said, "If I have told – you earthly things, and you believe not, how shall you believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?"

FORMULA FOR NEW BIRTH

After the redemption price had been paid at Calvary, and the New Testament church had been born when the Holy Ghost fell upon about 120 who were gathered in an upper room, a bunch of devout Jews who had gathered in Jerusalem from every nation under heaven for the passover, heard Peter preach a little message that cut them to the heart, and they cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we

do?” Now it is time for the formula of that new birth experience to be given. If Peter had just said, “You must be born again,” they still would not have known what to do. But, Praise God, he gave them the complete formula, and that formula is still good today. It is the only way into the kingdom of God. “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” Brother Jackson: Does that really mean that I will receive the Holy Ghost if I am baptized in the name of Jesus Christ? Listen to verse 39, (we are in Acts 2) “For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all (that is us) that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” Now to answer that question specifically, when a person truly repents, and comes by the urging of the Spirit of God and submits to water baptism (by immersion) in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins of the natural life, then the integrity of the word of God is your assurance that you will receive the Holy Ghost. Do not depend upon any certain experience or feelings that you have heard others speak of; you just believe the word of God, like Abraham did. He waited twenty five years for a promise God made to him, but the Bible says that because he believed God, (B-E-L-I-E-V-E-D GOD) it was counted to him for righteousness. If you go down into that water, and later, are heard saying, God promised to give me the Holy Ghost, and He didn’t do it, Brother! You have got some more repenting to do. You have not yet believed the word of God. Well, I thought I did. When you truly believe the word of God with your whole heart, you will

begin to hunger and thirst for the things of God, and that very condition will obligate God because of His own word, to fill you with what you hunger and thirst after. “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.” (Matt. 5:6) “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?” (Luke 11:13) When you believe His word, and meet the condition of a promise He has made, you do not even have to ask Him to keep His promise; that will be an automatic response on His part, and if you have truly believed His word in the first place, your faith will stand in the place of that promised blessing until such time as it is manifested.

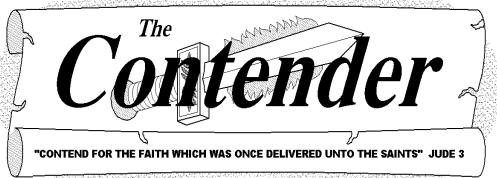
CHOOSING YOUR ETERNAL DESTINY

Many people, especially young folks, have the idea that religion is just for the aged people, something for them to occupy their time with after they get too old to run the streets all night. Let me tell you: that is the farthest thing from the truth that you could ever believe about religion. Now, I am using the term religion, because that is the way the world refers to Christianity, but I trust that all of you realize we are talking about Christianity as taught by Jesus and His apostles. There are many religions in the world today, but only one of them has any eternal value to a lost soul. It is the one Peter introduced three thousand repentant Jews to, in the aid chapter of Acts. That kind of religion will bring peace of mind, joy of heart,

lift the burden of sin from your soul, and cause you to sing praises unto the Lord, instead of hitting the booze bottle, or shooting your arm full of dope. I might add also, that there is a price to pay in this life for sowing wild oats. God will not even wait until you die, you will reap for your wrong doing before you die. I will read two verses from the 6th chapter of Galatians that ought to set some of you thinking, if you have never heard them before. Verses 7 and 8 tell us this, (and I believe it with all my heart) "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall be also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Many a person who has lived a wild, careless life throughout their prime years, has been found, crying on some preacher's shoulder when disaster struck them in later years. But I want you to hear me well – There is not one prayer that any preacher can pray, to lift that thing from you, when it is time for you to reap from what you have sown. Think about it, young people, Don't waste your life just because your friends are wasting theirs. Don't go through life thinking that you will give your heart to God when you are on your deathbed, just before your last breath leaves you. In the first place, you may not have the chance; you may be killed instantly. Then, in the second place, you cannot even come to God, unless you are being drawn to Him by His Spirit. When you feel that tugging at your heart strings, that is your time to surrender your life to God. After you wind up in an insane institution climbing the walls and screaming your head off, it may be too late to call upon

the Lord; your brain may be destroyed by then. This may sound gruesome to some of you, but I believe we need to present both sides of this thing. Every living soul is faced with certain choices they must make, almost every day, and many of them make the wrong choice, simply because they are not well enough informed. That is why, when it comes to making a choice that will determine your eternal destiny, you ought to be able to consider all that is involved. Satan will make sin appear very glamorous and exciting to those who have never seen the ugly side of a life of sin and rebellion against God. Regardless of what anyone may say or think about heaven and hell, life and death, Right and wrong, and all the other debatable issues among the ranks of mankind, there is no middle ground; you are either on God's side, or you are against Him. You either have eternal life. or you are spiritually led in your trespasses and sins. You will either wind up in the eternal age with God, or the lake of fire with Satan, and there is not another soul upon the face of this old earth that can choose your eternal destiny, except you yourself. Think about it, Like I said earlier, you may feel that you have never done anything wrong, and that you live better than most of the Christians you know, but if you leave this life without ever being born again by the Spirit of God, hell is awaiting you. Do not be deceived by your goodness, for the Bible says that we have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23) **YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN.** You who have followed this message all the way through ought to have it settled by now, as to what man's original sin was, what kind of

garden Adam and Eve were put out of, what God has done to get man back to his original state, and why paradise ends up as a city instead of a garden. Now I realize of course, that some of you already knew everything we have presented here, but there are many who did not; therefore let us pray that some understanding shall be gained by them, and we can all have a more clear vision of what is ahead for those who love God, and cherish truth. Before closing, there is one other thing I want to get in the message, the general location of that first river, mentioned in Genesis 2:11. In part one, we pinpointed the Nile as the second river, called Gihon in verse 13, and Tigris as the third. called Hiddekel, in verse 14, and of course the Euphrates is still called by its ancient name. A lot of your maps show these three rivers by one of the names mentioned here, but we have never found that first one, Pison, on any map even though we know generally, where it was. If you have an old edition Scofield Bible, open it to the first map over in the back, and you will find, in the north east sector of Arabia, the word Havilah. Genesis 2:11 tells us that this river, Pison, compasseth the whole land of Havilah. This puts it to the south east of the Tigris and Euphrates, but still keeps it within the area commonly referred to as the Fertile Crescent. To some of you this may seem unimportant, but there are others who search out these little details, so may the Lord bless each and every soul who loves truth in this hour. Amen.



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