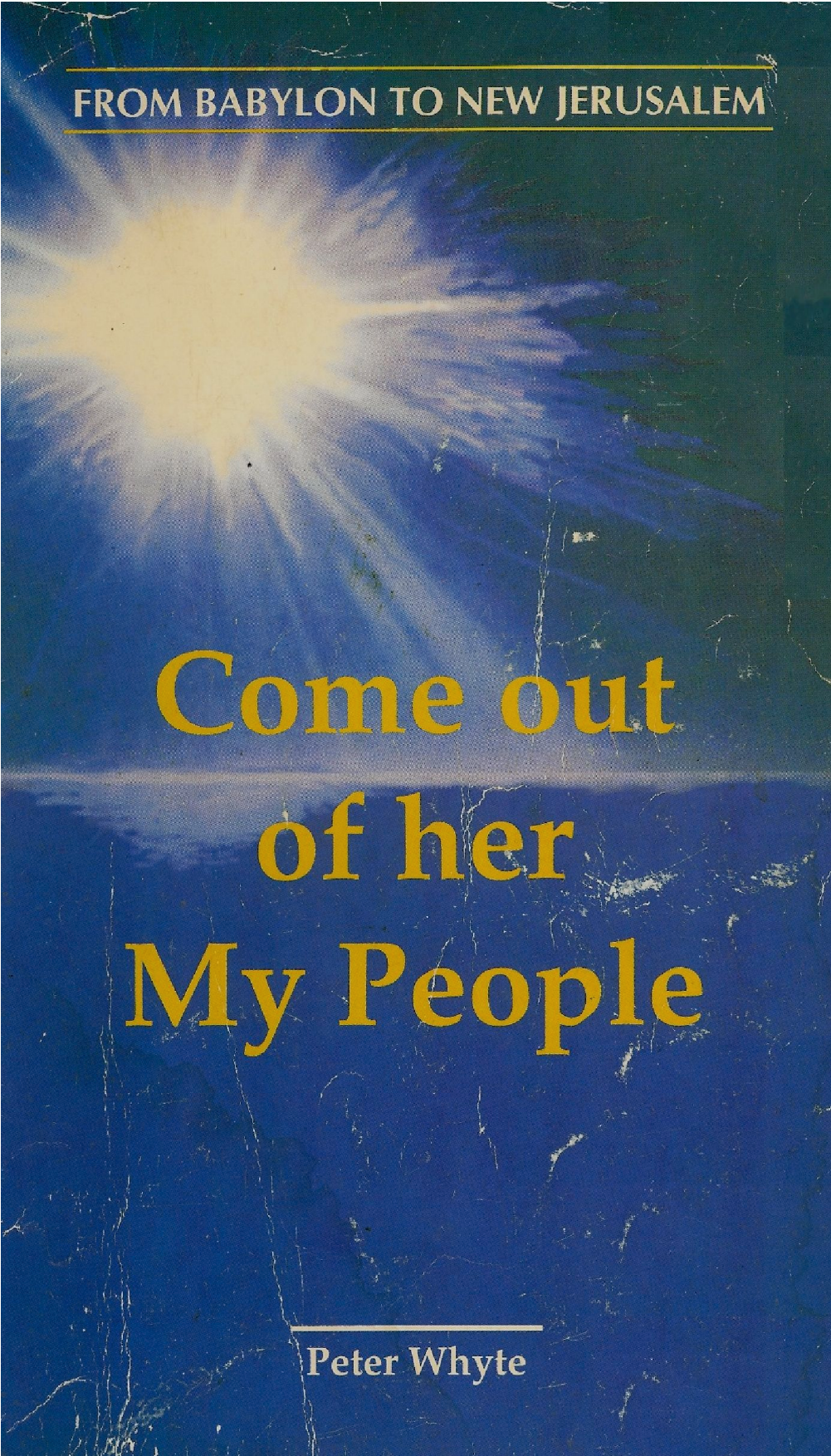


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FROM BABYLON TO NEW JERUSALEM

Come out
of her
My People

Peter Whyte

COME OUT OF HER MY PEOPLE

By Peter Whyte

FROM BABYLON TO NEW JERUSALEM



Successful Christian Living
P.O. Box 1613 Cape Town
South Africa 8000

Come Out Of Her My People

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PLEASE DO NOT ALTER THE CONTENTS OF THIS E-BOOK

Originally Published and Distributed by:

Successful Christian Living

P.O. Box 1613

Cape Town

8000

Tel. (021) 236254

Fax (021) 221381

ISBN 0-620-16744-0

Originally Printed by: Promedia

Publications (Pty) Ltd. 324

Marks Street

Waltloo

This version of Come Out Of Her My People was scanned and converted to electronic format by:

TruthForFree.com

info@truthforfree.com

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THIS EDITION:

For purposes of converting this book to electronic format, the table of contents (i.e. page numbering) has been changed to fit the new layout. None of the remaining book content has been altered with the exception of occasional minor spelling corrections. The Appendix also does not currently appear in this edition.

This e-book is re-printed by direct permission of the author, Peter Whyte. All contents are scanned from the original book published by Successful Christian Living (SCL); However, SCL is no longer in service at the Cape Town address. Hard copies of the book can be ordered from the new publishers:

Jenni Hill
Lux Verbi-BM
International Book Division
Tel: 011.27.21.864 8253
Fax: 011.27.21.864 8292

Books can also be ordered direct from the distributor:

On the Dot Distribution
orders@onthedot.co.za
<http://www.onthedot.co.za>

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PREFACE

Christendom as we have known it is crumbling. Church splits multiply daily. Members leave a church and join another group and shortly find that they are just as unhappy inside themselves as they were in their old church. Others leave and join nothing and then find that they are misunderstood, rejected or ostracized for failing to conform to the accepted system.

Ministers resign from the ministry and take secular employment, and everywhere we go we find firm believers in Christ and the Scriptures as God's Word, who are no longer satisfied to "attend church" and behave like good club members.

Human failings can account for some of this but today the vast majority of believers who are dissatisfied with "churchianity" are in fact being led by the Holy Spirit, for **GOD IS AT WORK**.

The Lord's ways are not our ways and we are astounded to discover that Jesus is able to multiply by division.

For many of us this is a traumatic experience because the yearning of our hearts is in conflict with much which is accepted as "proper" Christianity. In humility we have anxiously examined our hearts before the Lord, worrying that there is something wrong with us. After years of being content with traditional concepts of churches and Christian "religion" we are confused that we can no longer identify with the old ways and keep a good conscience. Our inner man is rebelling against the system and the structures, and many of us are unsure if it is the Holy Spirit leading us or if we are in deception.

Be encouraged! You are not alone! All over the world the Holy Spirit is stirring hearts and drawing them from Babylon to the New Jerusalem. Everywhere we find thousands of confused Christians, either unhappy in a church situation or having left a church and wondering what to do next. My personal journey along this strange road began nearly twenty years ago and prior to that I had spent thirty years in traditional Christianity. This book is an endeavour to help those who are starting down this road and to share the truths I have learned along the way, in the hope that it will help them to look afresh to Jesus, the only authority on the being and function of His Body and Bride.

If you are perfectly content with "your church" and wondering what this is all about then **PLEASE DO NOT READ THIS BOOK IT IS NOT WRITTEN FOR YOU**.

Peter Whyte,
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HARARE. ZIMBABWE.

INTRODUCTION

The church we belong to may be one our parents attended, or one in which we were born again, or one to which we were attracted because of its charismatic preacher, its doctrine or perhaps its singing. Whatever the reason, we eventually hold the beliefs of the group we have joined. If we attend a Bible school or seminary our beliefs and concepts are formed according to that particular school of thought

Soon we find ourselves unable to agree with millions of other Christians simply because their "indoctrination" has been different from ours. Although all believers have been transferred from out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's Dear Son, we remain divided into thousands of denominations and disagreeing groups. This is the consequence of our beliefs, concepts and traditions, and we need to hold them lightly and be prepared to discard them if we wish to move on with God.

Our environmental background, be it the norms of our society, the teaching of others, or our personal study and Bible reading, affects our whole life and ministry. It influences our every decision and action.

Generally we tend to have a "popular" view of things: a view that is shared by the majority of Christians in our circle. However, this is no guarantee that it is God's view. Belonging to a recognized "church" with a building, an "ordained" minister, elders, deacons and engaging in all the activities associated with popular concepts of being a Christian can be a subtle deception. We can be deceived by these activities and think them God's pleasing behaviour, when in reality they are of little relevance to God unless we obey His Son.

On the Mount of Transfiguration God spoke audibly:-

**"This is my beloved son with whom I am well .pleased; hear him!"
(Matt. 17:5)**

When God instructed the disciples to "HEAR" Jesus He was telling them to OBEY JESUS. Without obedience to King Jesus we are forever stunted in our spiritual growth and remain babes, carnal men of flesh. No amount of Bible knowledge, religious activities or good works is of any relevance in the Kingdom of God if we do not obey the King.

Religious observance is not the priority of disciples of the King and His Kingdom. Jesus and His first disciples constantly shocked the religious leaders by not conforming to their traditions and the accepted pattern of religious behaviour.

Jesus came to preach the good news of the Kingdom of God, saying:

"The time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God has drawn near, repent and believe in the good tidings." (Mk. 1:15,16)

The gospel of the Kingdom is simply that the Government of God is restored, and we who believe are called to let the King reign over our individual free wills. Every child of God is called to become like Christ in loving fellowship and submission to God and to become an **"overcomer"**, to participate in the Government of God upon the earth.

Over the centuries Satan has been working as the angel of light to deceive the church of Jesus Christ. Deception is his greatest weapon because it is through deception that he keeps us in his spiritual city of Babylon, even though we may be Spirit filled believers "winning souls" to our churches. Babylon represents the government of Satan and is the name that God gives in Revelation to describe Satan's reign over the whole world system including the church system. The Holy Spirit is calling us to come out of Babylon and to enter the New Jerusalem. This is the reason for the great upheaval in the Body of Christ and the inability of millions of us to continue with "church as usual." There is a great shaking taking place as once more God shakes the earth, and everything that we have built will be shaken and reduced to rubble, until the only thing that remains will be the Kingdom of God.

Jesus taught that wars, rumours of wars, earthquakes etc., are not the sign of the end, but that this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness and then the end shall come.

(Matt. 24:14)

The gospel of the Kingdom is only beginning to be understood in the second half of the 20th century. We are still a long way from seeing the only message that Jesus called the gospel being preached in the whole world. The majority of preachers understand little about it, and we see some of them with their unrenewed minds arguing and fighting over their carnal understanding of the Kingdom of God.

However, there is a rustling in the mulberry trees. Millions of believers are being drawn by the Holy Spirit out of the church systems, and a glorious church is quietly and mysteriously arising in every place. Small pockets of believers who are led by the Spirit of God are relating without buildings, pews, professional ministers, choirs, set services, committees or any of the things that are so necessary for the perpetuation of churches in Babylon.

Instead of the practice of "Christian religion" the Lord is teaching us to understand once more the way of this life.

The church of the Kingdom, the church that Jesus is building, is one church, one with the Lord and one with each other. It bears no resemblance to the churches, structures and organizations that we have built over the past centuries. The church of the Kingdom is a church of overcomers.

We have generally failed to be overcomers because we have been subtly deceived into thinking that the basis for belonging to a church is found in agreement on doctrine. This is just one of Satan's more successful lies and we must stop perpetuating it by refusing to accept it any longer.

The church of Jesus Christ exists because it is a family with one Father. It exists in the same way that a natural family exists, not because all its members agree with one another, but because they have the same father. The only criterion for being a member of the church is to be one of God's children. If God is your Father then you are a member of His church.

We all agree that Jesus Christ is Lord and **believe in Him**, but believing **IN** Him is not enough. **WE MUST BELIEVE HIM. We must believe what he said and obey Him.**

Before we can enter the New Jerusalem we must return to child- like simplicity that maintains "If Jesus said it then that settles it." Only then can we be set free from the webs of diverse doctrines and traditions that hold us in Babylon and start our journey to the City whose builder and maker is God.

The early church consisted of people who had been taught THE WORD OF CHRIST which is what Jesus had instructed His apostles to teach.

We must face the reality that Jesus has never changed His instructions.

The way forward is for us to repent of our old concepts, doctrines, traditions and practices if they are contrary to the words of the King, and once more to Give Jesus Christ the first place in everything.

Chapter 1

BABYLON THE GREAT

"And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet colored beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned (gilded) with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality, and upon her forehead a name was written, a mystery,

"BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER. OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."

And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. And when I saw her, I wondered greatly. And the angel said to me "Why do you wonder? I shall tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns." (Rev. 17:3-7)

It is essential for those of us who are hearing the call of the Spirit to "come out of Babylon" to understand some basic truths about her so that we can see through Satan's deceptions.

Babylon the Great is depicted in Revelation as a woman clothed in purple and scarlet, and **adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls**. She is Satan's counterfeit of the Bride of Christ, who is the city of **pure gold, the new Jerusalem**. (Rev. 21: 18)

Notice that the false woman is **adorned or gilded with gold** in order to cover the impurity beneath the gilt, so while she looks beautiful and genuine on the surface she is not God's Bride city which is pure gold through and through. When we read of this harlot we often fail to realize that she is so close in appearance to the real Bride that she deceives and seduces us. She is not obviously repugnant but extremely attractive and innocent in appearance. Like the New Jerusalem she is adorned with pearls and precious stones, and to our carnal minds she appears to be too sincere to be false. This is because she holds the vast majority of God's children in captivity and we fail to see that it is not the people who are false but the system which is the Harlot City, and the subtle mind of Satan that controls it.

The woman sits on a **scarlet beast**, full of blasphemous names having **seven heads and ten horns**. Scripture states in verse 9 that **the seven heads are seven mountains** and many Christians interpret this to mean the seven hills of Rome which is not correct. When Revelation was written, the Roman

Catholic Church did not exist, yet Mystery Babylon had been working to deceive believers from the first century. Hills are not mountains, and mountains are symbolic of kingdoms or governments. Verse 9 must be read in context with verse 10 which tells us that **the seven mountains are also seven kings**, and so we should understand that the heads represent **seven kingdoms or worldly governmental systems**. The Roman church is very much part of Mystery Babylon, but so are the Protestant and Eastern churches. This great city Babylon the Great rules over every branch of the church system.

THE SCARLET BEAST, SATAN THE RED DRAGON, CONTROLS EVERY WORLD SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY INCLUDING THE RELIGIOUS SYSTEM.

The ten horns are also ten kings, rulers of governments, and their power and authority over men is used by Satan who manipulates and uses them, as his world system embraces everyone except those who "love not the world". (Verses 12,13) Despite this, these ten governments hate the harlot, the visible structures of "churchianity", and they make her desolate and naked and destroy her. However, **it is God who puts it in their hearts to do this for they are simply executing his purpose.** (Rev. 17;17)

This woman city reigns over the Kings of the earth, who are God's children, and holds them captive by her deceptions. She controls every denomination, every church organization that functions according to the standards of the world (kosmos).

The method Babylon uses to deceive and secretly control believers in Christ is rooted in the world order, the systems, structures, organizations and traditions of human society.

The apostle John tells us:-

"Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, Is not from the Father, but is from the world."

(1 In. 2:15,16)

"We know that we are of God and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one."

(1 In. 5:19)

The Greek word for "world" in these verses is "kosmos" and it refers to order and arrangement. It includes everything that men have developed for the conduct and control of their societies, including every system of government, education, religion, law, economics, defense, finance, business and entertainment.

It is **all the elements of society** that lie in the power and control of Satan. By using the norms of society to control our concepts Satan subtly seduces God's children, making us believe that the standards of the world are the norms of the church.

The spirit of the world is manifest in all its ugliness in churches which glory in the size of their buildings, numbers of members, their wealth and their programmes. It can be seen in the man oriented services, the preaching aimed at impressing or entertaining audiences, the music and singing and star performers in theatre type situations, which are no more than "show-biz" in Christian wrappings.

Satan holds us captive in Babylon having established in our minds the false idea that the world's standards are acceptable in churches.

Scripture tells us that there are three main areas where men are vulnerable.

The lust of the flesh.

The lust of the eyes.

The boastful pride of life.

These are inherent in all of us in the natural, but after we are born of God's Spirit we are empowered to overcome them. However, it is only if we use our free will to obey the Spirit of God that we can overcome these worldly desires and refuse to continue accepting the world's standards.

One of Satan's main objectives is to keep us from being led by the Holy Spirit, and when he succeeds he causes us to live and behave and think like the world. Scripture exhorts us to have our minds renewed until we can think with the mind of Christ. (Rom. 12:2, Eph. 4:23) Only then can we see our society and our religious systems with the eyes of God.

To understand and escape from Babylon we must first comprehend that the systems and structures of religion have their origins in the mind of Satan, and are as much a part of the kosmos as any other facet of human society. Consider how Satan divides humanity with different religions, and even causes men to war with each other over religious beliefs. Not only does he cause the conflicts between different religions like Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism and others, but within each religion he divides its adherents. In every different religion there are sects who fight with each other and confusion, (Babylon) reigns.

In the first three chapters of Revelation the Lord repeatedly states "**He who has an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the**

churches". The Lord also tells us that it is only overcomers who are able to enter the New Jerusalem.

It is the individual responsibility of each one of us to overcome the world, and to heed the call of the Holy Spirit and the Bride to come out of Babylon. **You can be certain that this call is made to Spirit filled believers in Christ, who belong to churches, for Revelation is addressed only to us, not to those outside the Body of Christ.**

Those who fail to leave the, Harlot City participate in her sins and receive of her plagues, when the ten kings are used by God to destroy her. It is the visible, organized church and its structures that is pulled down and persecuted by anti- Christ governments and rulers. Have we seen one of these kings operating in China in the 20th century? Now, after the destruction of the Harlot churches and the slaughter of many saints in past decades, we see a "*King*" or government accepting and even commending the believers living outside Babylon. We also see the Chinese Christians not wanting back the buildings and organizations called "churches" which their Government no longer frowns upon. Having tasted LIFE outside Babylon they are not interested in returning to her.

Revelation 18 describes the judgment that comes upon Babylon The Great, this monstrous, spiritual city that counterfeits the true Bride of Christ and deceives and holds captive God's family. She makes the merchants of the earth rich by her desire for sensuous living. (verse 3)

She causes us, the kings of the earth, God's royal children, to live with her in adultery instead of our husband Christ. Most of us are so deceived that we actually weep and lament over her when we see her destroyed. (verse 9) Yet the Lord instructs us to **rejoice over her destruction.** (verse 20)

In many churches the members' comfort and prosperity are of prime importance. Luxurious buildings with air conditioning, plush seating and high tech sound systems are established which perpetuate the Harlot system. Verses 12 and 13 describe the material wealth in which they deal as well as dealing in the bodies and souls of men.

We are warned from heaven:-

"Come out of her My people, that you may not participate in her sins and that you may not receive of her plagues; for her sins have piled up as high as heaven and God has remembered her iniquities." (verses 4,5)

The result of God's judgment is that Babylon The Great is thrown down with violence, (verse 21) **"and no more will the voice of the bridegroom and bride be heard in her."** (verse 23)

Saddest of all is the fact that in the destroyed Harlot church is found

"the blood of prophets and saints" (verse 24) who are true believers who never understood the counterfeit. Possibly the great majority of God's children have died and will die in Babylon, never understanding the greatest deception that Satan has used to overcome the saints.

We need to be aware that the Harlot church is very attractive and appealing to our natural minds. She is not obviously ugly and wrong because she is an excellent counterfeit of the Bride. She is such a good imitation that she deceives the majority. She holds the precious children of God in her power, and it is only by the grace of God that He opens our spiritual eyes to see through her marvelous deception.

We also need to understand that God in His sovereign purpose has allowed the beast to overcome us for many hundreds of years, but that time is coming to an end with the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. This was first prophesied by Daniel in the time of the Jews' Babylonian captivity:-

"I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and OVERPOWERING them, until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was passed in favour of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom."

(Dan. 7:21,22)

We are now living in the time when very slowly the church is awakening to the fact that it is God's plan for us to rule and reign in life. We are to come under His government and then become part of His government, when we have learned to be overcomers. This is why the Spirit is calling us out of traditional types of churches in such great numbers today. Jesus is preparing those who have an ear to hear, so that large numbers of us will be actively putting His enemies under His feet in preparation for His return. Overcomers are to be part of the Bride that makes herself ready.

For centuries the church has consisted of weak and predominantly immature believers and very few have walked as overcomers. Bound by the great deceptions of Babylon the Great, we have simply evangelized and added to our numbers within the Harlot city. We have been like the Jews in their Babylonian captivity, the beloved children of God, reproducing our nation, growing in numbers, but bound in captivity.

Confirming Daniel's prophecy, God informs us again in the book of Revelation that He allows the enemy to overcome His saints together with all mankind upon the earth.. This is the awful result of our submission to the world system, and our failure to overcome it.

The beast in Revelation 13 is the same one on which the evil woman sits. The world system of Satan is the beast that blasphemes against God and

the Body of Christ and makes war with the saints and overcomes them.

"And it was given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them: and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him. (the beast operates all worldly systems of government)

And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name is not written in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain. if anyone has an ear to hear let him hear." (Rev. 13:7-9)

The **"all who dwell on the earth"** refers only to those **whose names are NOT written in the Lamb's book of life**, and does not include believers in Jesus Christ.

The "worship" of the beast refers to the love that some people have for the Kosmos rather than God. We need to examine carefully the objects of our love, so that we are not deceived into thinking that we can love the things of the world without worshipping Satan unwittingly. Love of money, power, pride of position, materialism and sensuous pleasures are all an abomination in the eyes of the Lord.

When we start counting the numbers of those who "support or belong" to us, and announce how many we have saved, delivered or healed, or who attend our services, evangelistic meetings or campaigns, we are manifesting **"the boastful pride of life."**

When we build a "church" building and organize membership we are simply creating another Babylonian tower. When we dress beautifully to attend meetings, beautify the building and fill it with creature comforts for our "members" we "satisfy the lust of the eyes and the lust of the flesh."

THE KINGDOM OF GOD DOES NOT COME WITH SIGNS TO BE OBSERVED. IT IS ONLY BABYLON THAT CAN BE OBSERVED.

The Kingdom of God is invisible to the eyes of the flesh but is seen and understood by the eyes of the Spirit, for it is the reign of God in the believer's heart. Religious behaviour can be seen, but only the Spirit knows if God really rules a heart.

Babylon the Great is however much more devious and insidious than our visible denominations, churches, structures and organizations. Her name is written on our foreheads since she has penetrated our minds and corrupted our thinking. We are so brainwashed by tradition that we cannot imagine how to live the Christian life without her. Even when we have left one of her visible towers we will join another, or worse still start building a new one.

Only when we have had our minds renewed and exert our free wills to erase the name of Babylon from our foreheads can we escape from the Harlot City.

An essential step in this process is to begin to question the traditions and practices that we have accepted and followed blindly in the past, and to learn their origin. We also need to heed every word spoken by King Jesus and compare His teachings and instructions with what we have learned from our spiritual teachers and religious leaders. When our hearts and minds are set on obeying the Word of God we must learn that the only firm foundation on which to build is Jesus Christ, and that every word that proceeded from His lips and is recorded in scripture is the Word of God of primary importance that we must hear and obey.

Chapter 2

ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

Without structure no organization can exist or function. Our churches are all in some form or another religious organizations, and have to have structures to maintain their existence, yet Jesus never started a religious organization.

How then do we reconcile our concepts of church today with the example and teaching of Jesus Christ and His apostles?

Since our King is the firstborn of many brethren, the first Apostle, our High Priest, our Shepherd and the only Master and Teacher, why is His example not followed today?

Jesus never called Himself Reverend, dressed in special clothes to let all know that He was a servant of God, built a building in which to conduct services, suggested that His disciples tithed to Him or took up offerings at His meetings.

He prepared for His ministry by working as a carpenter, supporting His mother and younger brothers and sisters after Joseph had died. He never studied under the Rabbis in Jerusalem which was His era's equivalent of seminary or Bible school. From the age of twelve until He was about thirty He lived and worked in a small village and **HAD FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD THE FATHER.**

For eighteen years He was an industrious, upright member of His community, **"Increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men."**

When He eventually began to teach:-

"The Jews marvelled, saying, 'How has this man become learned, having never been educated?'" (In.7:15)

It is not surprising that the Jews marvelled, because here we have One who had **not** gone through their religious system of instruction and yet He had become their teacher.

It is obvious that God does not need to process His servants through the religious systems of the world in order to produce an Apostle, Prophet, Priest and King.

If we consult the Holy Spirit and follow the teachings of Jesus we will discover that having intimate fellowship with God is the best way to become a disciple of the King and His Kingdom.

Unfortunately the world has penetrated the church to such a degree that we only feel secure when we belong to some visible structure or

organization, and especially when there is some clearly defined chain of command. Before we can get delivered from this deep rooted need to be part of some religious structure, we must understand the origins and purpose of organizations and structures.

Since Jesus created all things, He created organizations and structures. However He created them long before He created man, and He designed them for the heavenly hosts. Principalities, powers, rulers and authorities were made in the heavenlies before we humans existed. It was for them that God created the "chain of command" system.

His angels were divided into three groups, each ruled by an Archangel. So great is the authority of these three over their hosts, that when one of them, Lucifer, rebelled and was cast out of God's presence, all the angels under his authority went with him. They came to the earth, and from the invisible spirit realm they influence, corrupt and endeavour to destroy man who is God's most cherished creation.

Men and women were created by God in His Image. They are created to be **like** God, with total freedom of choice, and created to rule, not to be ruled by Satan and evil spirits, or anything that lives and moves upon the earth.

"And God blessed them (the man and the woman), and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and SUBDUE IT AND RULE over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth." (Gen. 1:28)

When Adam and Eve fell they rejected the Kingdom of God, (God's Government) and opened the way for Satan to introduce his government, which only operates by organization and a pyramid type Structure, with commands passed down from the top.

The first mention of a kingdom in the Bible is that established by Nimrod, who founded the city of Babylon. (Gen. 10:8- 10) This was the beginning of the kingdoms of this world, and very gradually Satan introduced his Babylonian system of government until the whole world came under his systemized structures.

Right through the history of the Old Testament we see God desiring a people for Himself. A people who will voluntarily submit to His very different type of government which functions only out of a love relationship. **A flow of love that originates in God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and flows back to God out of the spirit of a man who has discovered the joy of serving and glorifying his creator.**

Authoritarian type Structures, even the most subtle we can design, are like dictatorships, and have their origin in Satan's kingdom and are opposed to the Kingdom of God.

How sad our heavenly Father must be to see His children ensnared in Babylon's system of government, and their leaders using scripture verses to promote their worldly concepts of authority and submission. Like big business corporations they produce constitutions and statements of belief which all must obey and agree upon to qualify as members.

Well meaning Christians, unwittingly living in Babylon, approach others with questions like, "Which church do you belong to?" or "Who do you submit to?" Their concepts are so worldly that when any member fails to submit to their hierarchy or agree with their beliefs or practices, he or she is rejected. Lost members, splits, divisions and great heartaches are the result.

Confusion, Babylon reigns, and God's Kingdom is divided against itself.

When Jesus came with His Gospel of the Kingdom of God, He came to set the captives free from the Babylonian rule that had enveloped God's people and permeated their religious system.

In her early years the church was the family of God, a redeemed community within every community, unstructured, without special buildings, hymn books, head offices, constitutions, hierarchies, church boards, Missionary boards, building funds, Popes, Archbishops, Priests, Nuns, women's meetings, Sunday schools, seminaries, Bible schools, para-church organizations, and everything else associated today with "proper Christianity". All these things appear important to the natural minds of men, but are totally irrelevant in God's Kingdom. Jesus can build His Church without them, and in fact they hinder Him.

In the early church everybody experienced **real church life**. No young people were sent away to learn about God and His Word in a special school. Their school was the community in which they lived - **the family of God** - all the believers in their town. The apostles came and lived with them, and worked for their living in the area for months or even years.

Apostles formed Christ in the disciples by living with them, demonstrating Him, and teaching them to do all the things that Jesus had commanded them. Then they departed, leaving the local church to find its own way under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

They did not even have Bibles to guide them. No Pastor was sent from some Head Office to lead and guide the new church. Slowly, painstakingly, over many years, lives were formed, and within these communities, GOD began to make prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. The Holy Spirit decided matters. There were no "graduation ceremonies" producing raw young "Ministers of the Gospel", who had become "Reverends" by passing examinations.

The people, those ordinary people which the Scriptures call the church, began to recognize the ministries functioning in their midst, and said, "God has given us a pastor or prophet or prophetess". These words are not titles but simply describe functions of certain believers who only Jesus can gift and enable.

The pastor or prophet or any other gift of the risen Christ did not then become "part of the clergy", but simply functioned as part of the body, no better, no more important than the serving girl believer who washed the floor. **THE WORD OF CHRIST WAS NOT FORGOTTEN.**

"...whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave, just as the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve..." (Matt. 20:26-28)

All the believers in the town were collectively known as the church. The name of the town was only added to identify those believers by locality, so we have the church at Corinth or Rome or Jerusalem. Individually "they were known as disciples, not church members. The false concept that a building in which we meet is called a church was only introduced by Satan after many years. The church could assemble together but they could not "go to church", and would have been astounded if anybody had asked which church they belonged to.

It would only be after many years of the experience of real church life that the Holy Spirit would cause apostles, prophets or evangelists to be sent out from these local churches, and they were anointed by God, not appointed by men. They went without Bibles or prepared sermons or notes, but the Holy Spirit directed them and they **imparted LIFE** instead of lectures.

When they came to any town where there were other believers they were immediately received as part of the church, because there was no difference except in the name of the locality. They all loved and served one another because that was the most basic and most important command of the King. There was no need or place for human organization or structure because relationships within a large family, united by one Spirit are all that matter.

Problems arose when some of the Jews, who had been raised in the Jewish religious system, tried to introduce circumcision as a necessary qualification for salvation. (Acts 15) The greatest opposition to the Word of God preached by Paul came from those in the religious systems of the time, both Judaistic and pagan. An example is the record in Acts 19 of the happenings in Ephesus.

Large numbers of Scribes and Pharisees believed in Christ, but their

worldly concepts of religious structures followed with them, and so Satan was able to introduce the spirit of Babylon to the church. Structures, organizations and the pyramid form of control cannot function without rules and regulations. The traditions and laws of the Jews were Satan's best weapon to confuse and entrap the un-renewed minds of many fledgling disciples.

The life in the Spirit that is the normal Christian life is impossible if we allow rules and laws and traditions of religious structures to restrain and contain us. Paul warned the Philippians:-

“Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision: for we are the true circumcision WHO WORSHIP IN THE SPIRIT OF GOD and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.” (Phil. 3:2,3)

When Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman who had five husbands, He declared plainly that man-made places of worship, including Solomon's temple, were no longer required by God. He announced that God only wants worship "in Spirit and in Truth", which can be anywhere that a person joined to God's Spirit happens to be. There are no "holy places" or special buildings for people to meet with God in His plan for His Church.

"Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall you worship, the Father. You worship that which you do not know; we worship that which we know, for salvation is from the Jews. BUT AN HOUR IS COMING AND NOW IS when the TRUE WORSHIPPERS SHALL WORSHIP THE FATHER IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH. For such people the Father seeks to be His worshippers. God is SPIRIT and those who worship Him must worship IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH." (In.4:21-24)

Our Church buildings, temples, sanctuaries and Holy Places have assumed such dominance over our minds, that we cannot imagine how to meet without them. They have become the centre of our Christian life and subtly replaced our homes as the most important meeting places. While we can worship together in great numbers, fellowship is only experienced on an intimate basis and is impossible in a large crowd. You cannot fellowship the back of somebody's head.

When I use the word fellowship, I use it in the New Testament sense which has a deeper meaning than our modern understanding, which is generally limited to mean attending church.

The first chapter of 1 John deserves careful study, for he writes about their fellowship with the Father which he desires others to experience and enjoy. New Testament fellowship is sharing every aspect of our lives in deeply intimate relationships with God and other Christians.

Formal religious services conducted by clergy with passive audiences, and no open ministry, preclude this fellowship and prevent the Holy Spirit from leading our meetings. Church buildings, pews, podiums, altars, etc., subtly serve to enforce the hold of Babylon over the natural mind. They hinder the Spirit of God and prevent the ensnared saints from becoming the church that God desires.

They do not stop us from being born again or filled with the Spirit. They do not stop us from worshipping together, or listening to preaching and teaching, but large meetings are only a very limited aspect of fellowship.

God's children remain His family even when they choose to live in the Babylonian captivity, but how He longs for them to return to His spiritual Jerusalem, where the spirit of the world has no place.

Chapter Three

AUTHORITY AND SUBMISSION IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Without submission there can be no formation of God's character and nature in our lives.

Christians are those born of God's Spirit through their faith in Jesus Christ and what He accomplished at Calvary. They are saved and destined for heaven when they die. However, God's salvation is also intended to have a profound effect on our earthly lives, which is why scripture exhorts us "**to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.**" (Phil. 2: 12)

This scripture has nothing to do with us working to get to heaven. Jesus takes care of that. It is the other aspect of salvation as applied to our lives on this earth that this is talking about. If we live in obedience to the teachings of Jesus we enjoy the benefits of salvation from the world, and we can experience and enjoy the privileges of being God's children.

Jesus has no problem getting us to heaven. That part of His salvation is a free gift. He does, however, have a great problem with our free wills, (which He never over-rules) and He longs for our voluntary submission to His teachings and the will of God.

Submission must be voluntary or it is nothing more than subservience. Submission of our own desires and selfishness to the desires of our Lord and the needs of others is the natural result of obeying Jesus.

Obedience to Christ is the only real evidence that we love Him.

All our religious activities, knowledge of scripture and good works can be rooted in self and are worthless if we are not in submission to Him. The only measure of our love of Jesus is how much we obey His teachings.

The whole objective of our submission is THAT CHRIST BE FORMED IN US.

The New Testament teaches us to submit ourselves to God and then resist the devil who will flee from us. But the devil will flee only because of our submission to God. It also teaches us to submit to one another, but the purpose of submitting to one another is only that we may become more like Jesus, the firstborn of many brethren. We are enjoined to receive rebuke and correction from those that love us and care for our souls. We are also exhorted to submit to authorities appointed by God.

A submissive attitude is therefore essential for those who would grow to maturity in the Kingdom of God. However, the nature and function of authority in the Kingdom of God is diametrically opposed to the nature and function of worldly (Babylonian) authority. We must therefore have our minds renewed in this area or we will be ensnared by the enemy, who

consistently takes the good things of God and warps our understanding, thereby making them unprofitable for us and hindering our true spiritual growth.

Over the centuries Satan introduced worldly structures of authority and worldly concepts of authority and submission into the churches. As a result most Christians have these worldly concepts, and have no idea that they are unacceptable in the kingdom of God.

The worldly concept of authority means power to rule others, to enforce your will, your opinions and your decisions upon those under you. The worldly concept of submission means subservience and unquestioning obedience to leaders. Often this obedience stems out of fear of those in authority.

If a Christian has this understanding he will be open to Satanic deception in a most subtle form. In his genuine desire to please God and not be rebellious, he will try to submit to any ordained minister or elder. Women will do the same and submit to their own husbands, in some cases even when his demands are ungodly, or his behaviour intolerable, even Satanic, and think that they are thereby pleasing God.

This kind of blind submission and unquestioning obedience is not what God requires and actually hinders spiritual growth and the extension of the Kingdom of God.

If we desire to come to maturity in Christ we must understand how government in the Kingdom of God functions, and that we all have a responsibility not to submit to wrong or deceived leadership, and especially immature or worldly leaders.

According to scripture, we create authority over our lives by our submission.

"Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey...?"

(Rom. 6:16)

Submission to wrong authority is therefore foolishness. We have individual responsibility to be discerning about what we obey, and to whom we present ourselves in submission. Our first obligation is always to submit ourselves unto God.

Submission to our King always takes precedence over everything else. Submission to other Christians should be subject to one criterion. "Are they those that truly love me unconditionally and is their main concern **to form more of Christ in me?**"

If their main concern is to conform you to their beliefs, doctrines, rules or constitution of their religious organization or "church" then be wary, or

you may find yourself a slave of something other than Christ.

Belonging to a church which has a pastor or elders and obeying them is not necessarily submission in the sense that God requires it. You are responsible to discern whether they have been appointed by God, or whether they have been placed in authority through a worldly hierarchical system.

In the Kingdom of God every concept and principle is totally opposite to those in the world system, which is the design of the Prince of this World. The government of God is therefore exactly opposite in nature and function to the way government works in the systems and structures of the world.

HIS GOVERNMENT WILL ALWAYS PRODUCE PEACE AND JOY IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Any form of church government that does not produce peace and joy in your spirit must therefore be questioned. If it dominates, coerces or takes away your own decision making process, then it is **NOT** from God, and you must resist and reject it. Failure to do so will ultimately bring you into miserable religious bondage and you will either stagnate in spiritual childhood doing what you are told and conforming to the system, or you will lose your peace and joy. This happens because the Holy Spirit within you is in disagreement with the spirit of the world working in the religious system.

All the religious systems of the world have the same understanding of authority and submission.

Judaism demands obedience to Rabbinical authority.

Islam demands that its Ayatollahs and Mullahs receive total obedience from the faithful.

The Roman Catholic Church subscribes supreme authority to its Pope, with its Cardinals, Bishops and Priests forming a pyramid structure of authority, to which the good Catholic submits.

Throughout the Protestant denominations, right down to House church movements, churches are structured so that the pyramid form of control operates.

Authority is exercised by those above. Coercion, manipulation, rejection and even force are the methods by which worldly authority is exercised. This may be blatant or very subtle, but if anyone does not conform and submit to the leaders, these are the weapons that are ultimately used.

This is all in direct rebellion against the clear command of Jesus, who forbids the EXERCISE of authority in His Kingdom, among His disciples.

"You know the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them, IT IS NOT SO AMONG YOU, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall 'be your slave." (Matt. 20:24-27)

Until God's children have a common desire to obey Christ and become His trained disciples, the kingdoms of this world can never become the kingdom of Christ. The words of Jesus are not taken seriously by Christians, and a powerful spirit of deception causes us not to see that He is our ultimate authority. If King Jesus says it then that should settle it. However, we are so bound by worldly concepts that we use scripture verses to contradict His teaching and then follow our wrong understanding of these verses rather than obey the Lord. Jesus clearly taught that those who lead or rule in His church may not lord it over others, or exercise their authority in the manner of the world. In the Kingdom of God we are commanded to become servants of those we lead. An apostle, elder, pastor, husband or any other leader may not act any differently to Jesus, who never forces anyone to submit to Him. Jesus gives instructions and then allows His disciples to obey or disobey Him. He never threatens, manipulates or coerces them. More wonderful He never rejects or stops loving them when they disobey Him.

When James and John were hoping to sit on the right and left hands of power, they were still immature with worldly concepts of leadership and authority. They had not yet attained the servant mind of Christ. Their unrenewed minds were competitive so they were maneuvering for senior positions. Likewise the other disciples, who became indignant at their request. (Matt. 20:24)

So Jesus called them together and taught them the difference between worldly authority and authority in His Kingdom, revealing their totally different nature and spirit. We may paraphrase what Jesus said as follows:-

"You know how authority is wielded in the world system, but in My Kingdom it is not like that. You must learn to be servants of those you lead and teach, and you may not exercise your authority by appealing to your office, your ministry, or anything, in order to make others submit to you. You may not use the promise of reward or promotion or status to manipulate people as it is done in the world. The Kingdom of God does not function like that. You may only serve and lay down your desires and life for the good of others, just as I am demonstrating by my own life and teaching."

(Matt.20:25- 28)

Jesus is our "pattern son" and we never see Him coercing, manipulating or forcing anyone to obey Him or follow Him. He boldly proclaimed the Word of God and if His Word was rejected He made no attempt to enforce it, or beg people to follow Him. Never does He use His spiritual authority to

control others in any way. Likewise, the Holy Spirit never controls us or takes away our decision-making process. He will guide and lead but never over-rules our slightest resistance to Him. .

God is Love and He waits for us to voluntarily submit to Him only because we love and respect Him.

Leaders in the Body of Christ are not above their Master and they too must wait until others voluntarily submit to them out of love and respect, and because the anointing of God upon them is recognized. Spiritual authority is something that the King forbids us to use in order to enforce unwilling submission. Whether you are an apostle, pastor, elder, bishop or a husband giving headship to a family, you are limited by the same commands of Jesus, if He is your Lord and Master.

The New Testament clearly teaches us to obey our leaders and to submit to their authority. It is therefore very easy to produce by biblical theology a wrong understanding of Church government, which will produce autocratic leadership, and subservient followers, who do not understand the nature and spirit of Kingdom authority.

While scripture exhorts believers to obey those that care *for* their souls, **it does not exhort leaders to demand submission of others to their leadership or ministry. Husbands are exhorted to love their wives, not to demand submission or enforce their wills and dominate their wives. It is only the wife who is enjoined to submit to her own husband.**

To "rule well" in the Kingdom of God is very different to being a ruler or authority in the world system, but since worldliness has invaded every religious system, we find many Christians in leadership behaving like worldly authorities. Some husbands dominate their wives, destroying many a Christian woman's decision making ability, and in some cases destroying their marriages. Satan triumphs and the poor, deceived couple have their lives destroyed, simply because of ignorance about Godly spiritual authority.

Pastors, elders or deacons in most church structures take affront if opposed by members of the flock. Status is sought and guarded, while power is wielded to make others conform. There is little difference between such churches and a worldly business structure. If the Chairman or Directors make decisions, then dismissal results if the employees do not agree and obey. In the churches there are various forms of excommunication that are applied, using the same worldly philosophy.

In the Kingdom of God **THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS CLERGY' AND LAITY.** This concept is in direct conflict with the New Testament teaching that all God's children are priests, with direct access to God. It is only heathen who need priests to approach God on their behalf. It is only in Babylon that clergy exist, dividing God's family into classes, and allowing the mind of Satan to control the minds of those in captivity.

Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are not clergy, but simply men and women in the body of Christ. We cannot manufacture those gifted people and produce them like we produce professional lawyers or doctors. Only God can anoint and give us these essential members of His church, but we need discernment to recognize them.

The clerical hierarchies which function in other religious systems have no rightful place in the church of Jesus Christ. The division of clergy and laity found in Islam and Judaism produce structures, which however functional, are opposed to God's design for His church. She is to be a living organism, not a religious organization

Leaders in the Body of Christ need to understand that Paul's teachings on submission are not injunctions to leaders to exercise authority over those they care for in their fellowships.

From the viewpoint of our natural, mind, it appears unrealistic to place one in a position of authority, and then tell him that he may not exercise authority over those he leads. However, we are not to consider things from the viewpoint of the natural mind, which is the viewpoint of the world, but we must learn to see things with a renewed mind, the mind of Christ.

Jesus Christ, the Lord of all creation, is our perfect example of Kingdom authority. He never exercises it over His disciples. He sets examples and gives commands, but never enforces our submission. More than that, He does not cry, rage, sulk or reject us when we fail to obey Him. His love and grace toward us is totally unaffected by our lack of submission to Him. Jesus always waits for our voluntary submission, which is the only valid form of submission in His Kingdom. Our desire to obey Him, which is the only measure of our love for Him, must come from the laying down of our own willfulness, without any coercion from Him, or He does not want it. **This is the nature of authority and submission in the Kingdom of God.**

We should only submit our lives to authority or leadership in the Body of Christ that demonstrates the nature of Christ. True spiritual authority that originates from God, proceeds out of an anointing and a renewed mind, the mind of Christ. It is not a title like "Reverend, Pastor, Elder, Evangelist, Prophet or Apostle which has been bestowed by other men operating in Babylon. Neither is it precluded because a leader has been born and raised in Babylon.

Men and women to whom God has given HIS authority are not known by their titles, offices, intellectual ability or even their Bible knowledge. They are to be recognized by their humility and servant hearts.

A pastor formed by God is kind and merciful and does not seek his own way. He will not be concerned about your non -attendance at meetings, to "support" his preaching, or whether you agree with all his theology. His main concern will be the conduct of your daily life, your heart attitudes and

relationships. His main objective will be to see **more of Christ formed in you.**

If your leaders' objectives are to make everyone conform to their "theology or concepts" and to build bigger and better structures and organizations, then you must question whether they understand that spiritual growth has nothing to do with numbers, or all having the same theology.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH IS ENTIRELY RELATED TO THE DEGREE THAT GOD'S LIFE HAS GROWN IN YOU.

Beware of submitting your life to church leadership which does not clearly understand this, or you will be led towards wrong objectives, and your spiritual growth will be stunted.

Having proper objectives is essential for every disciple of the King and His Kingdom. Without the right goal it is not possible to understand or teach submission correctly. Paul defines the correct goal of sound teaching in his first epistle to Timothy.

"The goal of our instruction is love, out of a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith." (1 Tim. 1:5)

Submission needs to be understood in this context, because the only purpose of submission is that through it we allow God and our brethren to conform us to the image of Christ. This requires the renewing of our minds until we learn to think, speak and act like God does. This will take many years and some, if not much, suffering, but the transformation takes place in the heart. It is our inner man who grows, until we are no longer "mere men" like the Corinthian babes, but spirit men who are led by the Spirit of God.

Submission is not a legalistic doctrine to be enforced at all costs, because we have found a doctrinal basis for it in the New Testament. Submission is an ATTITUDE OF HEART which is needed before your will can become aligned to the will of God.

Those who have no desire to receive teaching, rebuke and correction from other disciples of the King and His Kingdom, have not yet "willed to do the will of God", and cannot be disciplined. However, if we are sincere in our desire to become His disciples, we must not remain gullible, unthinking children, but learn to be wise in God's ways so that we do not submit unwisely.

There are four levels of authority in DECREASING IMPORTANCE, which every disciple must understand:

1. God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
2. The Scriptures - as you understand them.
3. YOUR OWN CONSCIENCE.
4. Other Christians, or secular authority.

The authority of your own conscience is a higher level of authority than that vested in any other human being. Every man and woman has the right to obey their own conscience under God. No other person has the right to violate our Christian conscience. It does not matter whether that person is a secular authority, a husband, a pastor, an apostle, an Archbishop or the Pope. On the descending levels of authority scale they are all in a category lower than our own conscience.

Unquestioning obedience to church leaders may not be spiritual submission, but foolishness, leading to deception. If it brings us into bondage to a religious system and the traditions of men, it is not what God desires. It will result in disobedience to the King, which leads to **"a bad conscience, and insincere faith"**.

Sincere faith is believing in your heart. It is not giving mental assent because some other person tells you what you ought to believe. Romans 14 teaches us that if we do anything against our convictions before God we are sinning. We must therefore resist any attempt to coerce or subjugate us against the innermost convictions and prompting of our own hearts. Resistance to that "still, small voice" within you is resistance to the Holy Spirit, who is infinitely wiser than any man.

It is the Holy Spirit who is disturbing the hearts of God's children in Babylon, and it is He who is calling us out of there and into the New Jerusalem.

As we grow in spiritual understanding and have our minds renewed, we will find that the "church" we belong to will become inadequate, and the Holy Spirit will urge us to move on. Most church leaders will not understand this, and strive to keep "their church members". When they find that they cannot hold us they may decide that we are deceived or demonized, or that we are unruly rebels.

Believers who experience such situations are often bruised and hurt by the lack of wisdom of such leaders who strive to persuade them to stay, and then reject them, or malign them when they break free.

We must have humble and gentle hearts toward such leaders, for they have not yet understood what the Lord is doing today. They are frightened that those who leave "their church" will contaminate the thinking of those who remain. They sincerely believe that those who disagree with them are wrong, and so they struggle to protect their "little kingdoms".

Likewise, if you are a pastor, and the Holy Spirit is calling you out of the system, you may face misunderstanding, anger and even severe hurt from the people who wish to control you. This is the natural fleshly reaction of a church board, elders, deacons or a congregation to some thing they do not understand.

If the Holy Spirit is leading you out of a church membership or leadership situation, do not be disturbed by the lack of understanding of those you are leaving. **Do not let their rejection of you, or their maligning of you, affect your love for them.**

If they cannot understand your need to obey the Lord rather than their traditions and concepts, then have compassion for their spiritual blindness, and remember that it is only by the grace of God that you have had your eyes opened. It is also only by the grace of God that we grow in spiritual understanding and wisdom.

God loves all His children equally, whether they are obedient or disobedient. THOSE WHO REMAIN IN BABYLON OR THOSE WHO JOURNEY ON TO THE NEW JERUSALEM ARE EQUALLY PRECIOUS TO OUR WONDERFUL FATHER.

Chapter Four

ESCAPING FROM BABYLON

Only by leaving Babylon is it possible to enter the New Jerusalem, yet our old established concepts of Christianity are so entrenched in our minds that it is difficult to escape from Babylon completely.

This great Mother of Harlots is beautiful, enticing and familiar. We are so bound by her charms that it is extremely hard for us to see her most attractive "churches" as her harlot daughters. Nevertheless we can not escape until we are able to discern between good and evil, and see things as God sees them.

Every building called a Church or Cathedral is subtly used as a tool by Babylon to bind people to itself. Sadly, the building divides and separates the true local church, which consists of every Christian living in that locality. It may satisfy the ego of its builders, and gratify the senses of its congregation, but all the work and money spent to establish a church founded on a building is ultimately wasted, for it simply ends up as another monument to the deceptions of Babylon the Great.

The members of these "churches" work for the growth of their numbers and the expansion of their organization, being unaware that they are building within the walls of spiritual Babylon.

The doctrines and rules that the leaders impose upon their groups create artificial divisions among all the believers in that locality. Christians living in one locality do not assemble together recognizing each other as members of the same body. Instead they assemble according to which denomination they belong to, and will travel right across a city to avoid assembling with their next door neighbours, who belong to another denomination. What would the apostle Paul think about this mad behaviour. Traditional concepts of church membership, pastoral care, and even making disciples within the system, bind people to certain leaders, organizations and structures.

These churches with their clergy and laity can only exist provided they have regular meetings. They have to meet for Sunday services, prayer meetings, youth meetings, women's meetings, etc.

All these meetings at set times on set days allow men to control the congregations, but they preclude the Holy Spirit from directing His church.

If the Holy Spirit is allowed to direct the church, leaders will only call an assembly of the whole local church, when God wishes to make something known to them. It is Babylon that demands that a Minister preaches to a scheduled Sunday meeting, and men's tradition that forces him to do so. Apart from meeting on the first day of the week, there is no New Testament basis for our traditional rituals of Sunday services and sermons in

a building called church. Acts 20 tells us that the disciples living in Troas came together to eat a meal with each other on Sunday, and that Paul spoke to them until midnight. Perhaps he started while they were still eating, who knows, but it was certainly nothing like our tradition of a sermon, sandwiched between hymns on a Sunday morning. They were gathered together in an upper chamber, not on a ground floor, and not in a building called church. They never conceived of the meeting place as the "House of the Lord", for they knew that their human bodies were His house. They certainly did not eat a tiny wafer or scrap of bread and drink a thimble full of wine and call that communion. They had discourse among themselves and everybody was able to speak or sing. They all participated in what we today would call "open ministry".

How delighted our Father would be if all His children in one locality gathered together **TO MINISTER TO HIM IN ADORATION AND PRAISE, instead of assembling separately to conduct various ritualistic services according to their particular tradition.**

The call of the Holy Spirit "to come out of Babylon" is creating a vast disturbance in churches everywhere in the world. Thousands of believers are no longer content with their churches and many are confused, but we must hear what He is saying and be willing to move on.

We should all understand the lesson from Exodus that **"when the cloud of God moves on we must follow or be left behind"**.

Whenever God ends a period in the development of His church, He gives a new vision to some of His people while they are still in the old place that He wants us to leave behind. We must not be deceived like many pioneers in past moves of God, who have been subtly deceived into settling down with the new thing, and allowing it to be absorbed by the old system. We must learn from their mistakes and continually seek a new vision of the future, not allowing our present understanding to stop us from moving on in God's purpose.

At the beginning of this century the outpouring of the Holy Spirit ended up with new Pentecostal denominations. Later the "Charismatic Move" affected many in the older denominations, but "the new thing" was simply absorbed by Babylon the Great.

Now the Gospel of the Kingdom of God is being proclaimed and we see much turmoil as a result. Sins, once hidden, are being publicly exposed, Christian organizations are coming into disrepute, churches are splitting or collapsing, and new groups are forming within the walls of Babylon. We should not allow this to alarm or confuse us, because the hand of God is involved in all these things.

Our natural minds will tell us that all this turmoil is of the devil. Nevertheless, **God is in full control** and what is happening is the result of

preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. The Government of God is the one thing that Babylon cannot absorb or contain.

The Lord is no longer willing to accept our denominational divisions, our concepts of churches, para -church organizations, religious institutions, Bible schools and seminaries. He has exposed all these things as being bound in spiritual Babylon, and He is calling us out, and into His New Jerusalem.

To be associated with some visible organization means nothing. To know Christ and have an intimate personal relationship with Him is everything. He must be restored to His rightful place as "**the Head of every man**". (1 Cor. 11:3)

The Gospel of the Kingdom of God, when received in good soil, enthrones King Jesus in the heart of the believer and He reigns from **within**, because the Kingdom of God does not come with signs to be observed. It is only Babylon that can be observed with its visible towers. The Kingdom of God is invisible to the eyes of flesh, and can only be seen and understood by the eyes of the Spirit, because it is the reign of God within us. (Luke 17:20,21) **There is no way we can keep moving on in the purpose of God unless we are willing to separate ourselves from the Babylonian church system, and obey the voice of God that calls from heaven:-**

"COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE, THAT YOU MAY NOT PARTICIPATE IN HER SINS AND THAT YOU MAY NOT RECEIVE OF HER PLAGUES." (Rev. 18:4)

The first step necessitates dropping our traditional church attendance and activities, and spending time in quiet personal fellowship with Father. This may be for a short or prolonged season, but only the Holy Spirit can show you that. This is essential to allow the Holy Spirit to renew our minds **until we acquire the mind of Christ, and His Name is written in our foreheads**. Only then will we understand His will and align our lives with his purposes and his objectives. Most Christians who are serious about God are heavily involved in Christian activities, various meetings, projects, outreaches etc. Too often we are so busy working for God, that we have little time for Him.

Because of false concepts of churches being buildings where we must meet on Sundays etc., it is difficult for our minds to conceive of different ways for the body of Christ to meet and function. In defense of the existing system the carnal mind will immediately quote the scripture:-

"Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another and the more so as you see the

day approaching." (Hebrews 10:25)

The deceived saints wrongly presume that the church meetings of Babylon are the only way to assemble together, when in reality most of them have become an abomination to God. It is possible to assemble together in a home, a workplace, any public building, a warehouse, a park, under a tree, or even a sports stadium for big worship meetings. Special buildings called churches where one sits in audience rows, watching professionals performing up front, were not designed by God and are not necessary for us to assemble together, or to be taught.

It is possible to use a church building for a true local church assembly, but it creates problems because of its old associations. The seating arrangements are normally unsuitable for open meetings, which are best when everyone sits in a circle or square, facing each other, and not only backs of heads.

Church buildings erected for the exclusive use of a denomination or sect are powerful tools of Satan to divide the local Body of Christ. These buildings, named after a particular group, stand in competition with each other no less than several competing banks in one city.

Nearly all our traditional kinds of assembling are really for the purpose of building and extending our little kingdoms, to indoctrinate our members, keep them together and increase their numbers. All these meetings are essential for the raising of money to keep the systems going.

It is true and important that we should assemble together, but we can do this in many ways without following the traditional forms of Babylon, which actually have their origin in Judaism and Pagan religions.

There is nothing in the New Testament to support the idea that Christians must meet in special buildings, at fixed times to hold religious services, and that everything should be organized and controlled by professional clerics.

1. CHURCH IS NOT A MEETING.

2. CHURCH IS NOT A BUILDING.

3. CHURCH IS A WORD TO DESCRIBE BELIEVERS IN CHRIST.

4. A LOCAL CHURCH IS ALL BELIEVERS WHO LIVE IN THAT LOCALITY.

Jesus made it quite clear that He is present in the smallest assembly of His people, when He said: "**Where two or three have gathered together in My Name, there I am in their midst**". (Matt. 18:20)

The Old Testament teaches us that God can regard religious activities as

an abomination in His eyes. Even our most solemn services and sincere efforts to please Him in our flesh can be a stench in His nostrils.

God commanded Israel to offer sacrifices to Him, to keep the Sabbaths and to assemble together. However, when it had become a form and a tradition of religious observance to do these things He was angry and said:-

"Hear the word of the Lord you rulers of Sodom. Give ear to the instructions of our God you people of Gomorrah. 'What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?' says the Lord. 'I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed cattle, and I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls and goats. When you come to appear before Me, who requires of you this trampling of My courts? Bring your worthless offerings no longer. Their incense is an abomination to Me. New Moon and SABBATH, THE CALLING OF ASSEMBLIES - I CANNOT ENDURE INIQUITY AND THE SOLEMN ASSEMBLY. I hate your New Moon festivals and your appointed feasts. They have become a burden to Me. I am weary of bearing them. So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you. YES, EVEN THOUGH YOU MULTIPLY PRAYERS, I WILL NOT LISTEN. Your hands are full of bloodshed.'" (Isaiah 1: 10-15)

Like Israel of old, the church has made a **religion out of assembling together**. Most of our services, even communion services, have become religious rites that are an abomination to God.

The Holy Spirit has no say in the conduct of our services. We plan and arrange our meetings at set times, with a set order of service for hymns, prayers and sermons. We sing choruses, pray, preach and even prophesy at our meetings because it has become the custom to do so, and not because we are directed to do so by the Holy Spirit. We often include "items of song" which primarily entertain the people. At the end we are asked at the door, whether we enjoyed the meeting.

How sad that nobody stops to enquire whether our God enjoyed the meeting.

The deception of religious observance being substituted for walking in the Spirit was a problem even in the early church, which is why Paul had to write these words to the Galatian church:-

"But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain."

(Gal. 4:9-11)

If you have heard the call of the Holy Spirit to come out of Babylon, it is essential to stop this type of assembling and forsake all our Babylonian traditions. It is often necessary to cease all religious activities for a season, to allow God to show us what He desires. Because of the continual meetings and other church activities which we accept as proper Christianity, we have very little time for true fellowship with God.

Only when we truly give ourselves to loving and pleasing no one but our Lord Jesus will God show us how to assemble together, and how to worship Him in Spirit and in Truth.

God desires us to worship Him, but true worship is a spontaneous response of love. To speak of "entering into a time of worship" is a nonsensical expression. When we worship somebody, we have that love rising up in our hearts continuously. It is not something that can be switched on mechanically by the leader of a religious meeting, making an announcement.

It is an abomination to have a "worship leader" striving to work up enthusiasm in a congregation, urging them to "sing louder", as if God is deaf. How His heart must break at our pitiful attempts to manufacture worship, which is not an unfeigned outpouring of love from our hearts.

This is not to say that there are no genuine worshippers within the walls of Babylon, for God always has His Daniels, Shadrachs, Meshachs and Abednigos. There are millions of genuine lovers of God who unknowingly are imprisoned and know nothing of the deceptions of the spiritual Whore City. Since their minds have been programmed by the system, they continue with its forms and methods, and despite the set forms of tradition their genuine love for Jesus rises up to the Lord. It is to some of these ones that the Holy Spirit communicates and reveals the truth of Babylon the Great in due season.

To face the fact that nearly all of our religious activity is not God directed and not of His design is difficult, when we have lived in Babylon

for many years. However, until we question and reject most of our traditional beliefs and concepts, we cannot escape the Harlot's enticing arms. We must have our minds renewed in many areas, and it is helpful to know the origin of our traditions and some historical facts to appreciate how far our churches have deviated off course.

In the early church, meetings were mainly in homes or any place large enough to accommodate everybody. They were not religious services with an order of worship. Christ was central, and they came together to share HIM, not to hear a professional cleric's sermon like we do. There were no buildings called churches, in which they held Sunday services. There were no clergy and laity as we understand them today. All the people were able to minister and participate actively, like any family meeting together. It took centuries for church meetings to degenerate into a large audience listening quietly, to a professional minister, and participating only when he allowed them to stand, sit, sing or speak.

Around 325 A.D. Constantine made Christianity the Roman state religion. Both he and virtually the whole city had Pagan minds and were steeped in Pagan culture and religious beliefs.

All religions, Judaism, Islam and Pagan, need PRIESTS, TEMPLES, ROBES, ALTARS, SACRIFICES, and produce traditions of ritual worship. It was therefore natural for the Roman state religion to require these things. No doubt the Jewish influence and its unseen Babylonian spirit of religion also affected their thinking.

Church buildings were first erected because they thought that they needed bigger meeting places for increasing numbers to meet together, when homes became too small. In Rome the earlier Christians met in the Catacombs because of persecution by the State. After Constantine ended the persecution, it did not take long for the pagan influence to require a temple, priests in robes and laid down rituals.

Buildings in those days had no windows, so candles were needed to lighten their dark interiors. Eventually children were given the task of bringing in the candles, and this is the origin of altar boys and lighting candles in "churches".

The dark and dank buildings with their congregations of unwashed believers became more and more unpleasant as the years passed, and so incense was introduced to cover the bad odors.

Today, many churches continue with these ludicrous rituals which have nothing to do with Christ or His church.

Over the next 200 years Pagan influence further corrupted belief. Pope Gregory the Great introduced "sacred relics"; the bones of special "saints" which were thought to have magical powers, and are revered by many to this day.

It was the influence of Pagan magicians that produced the hideous doctrine of Transubstantiation; the doctrine that the bread and wine are magically transformed into the actual substance of Christ's flesh and blood in the Eucharist.

We must face the fact that it is from these superstitious, primitive, Pagan minds that our present day rituals of Sunday services originated, and are conducted in special buildings, misnamed churches. When Martin Luther broke with Rome, he left very little of the forms of meetings behind, as they had become part of European culture and tradition.

The Protestant Reformation was almost entirely intellectual and theological, and left the traditions of meetings intact. Luther is probably to blame for the Protestant concept of Pastors and a Presbytery. Having escaped from Rome, he simply wandered down another street within the great Harlot city of Babylon the Great.

The functions of the Catholic Priests included officiating at weddings and funerals (for a fee), visiting the sick, conducting Mass on Sundays and orating to the faithful. Luther simply altered the Mass to Sunday services, and continued with the other things he had done as a priest, and so our modern day concepts of a pastor and pastoral duties did not come from Jesus or His apostles.

Despite his incredible intellect, John Calvin further entrenched the unspiritual concepts of meetings, and so we have continued with the system which holds us in Babylon to this day.

From these spiritually unenlightened and Medieval days we received our traditional concepts of churches, pastors, Sunday services and sermons, pulpits, pews, liturgies, choirs, robes, altars and all that makes up our totally false ideas of "proper Christianity". **There is nothing in the New Testament to justify our present day concepts of these things.** A New Testament pastor was a gift from Jesus Christ in the same way that He gave apostles, prophets and evangelists. Our concept of Reverends or Pastors trained as clergy, ruling over congregations, did not originate in the mind of Christ, but in the carnal minds of Medieval men.

Meeting in a special building, reserved for the conduct of our religious activities, at set times on set days, may comfort our consciences and satisfy our cultural traditions, but most such meetings have become an abomination to God, no less than the solemn assemblies of Israel eventually became to Him.

Prior to Constantine, the pagan Roman Emperor Diocletian, who persecuted Christians, divided his empire into provinces called Diocese. Then he appointed rulers over each diocese, and each ruler was known as the Vicar. What a perfect example this is of the way that Babylon controls us, when we continue to use such terms in the church.

The church that Jesus Christ began is one that:-

Had no buildings called churches, cathedrals or chapels. Had no liturgy, or order of service.

Had no denominations.

Had no clergy or laity.

Had no constitution or rule book.

Had no Hymn books, tracts, or offering plates. Had no choirs and committees.

Had no Sunday schools.

Had no Seminaries or Bible schools.

Had no Para-church organizations.

Escape from Babylon is impossible until we are able to comprehend that JESUS CAN BUILD HIS CHURCH WITHOUT ANY OF THESE THINGS. God may choose to use them, and He does so because of His grace and patience with our ignorance or foolishness, but that does not make them His best way or His desire for us.

When our spiritual eyes are opened, and once we begin to question the church system, we will find ourselves in conflict with those who have not yet understood the deceptions of Babylon the Great. Well meaning and very sincere brethren will strive to persuade us of our error and fight to protect the doctrines and practices of the system. We may be classed as rebels, deceived, or even demonized, and a rupture of previously loving relationships is inevitable.

This will lead to our rejection, and then we must face a spiritual wilderness experience in the process of escape from Babylon.

Chapter Five

THE WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE

Once we are led by the Holy Spirit to reject the Harlot church system we will undergo a spiritual wilderness experience. We must understand that we have not passed this way before. Each one of us is a pioneer and there is no clearly marked road for us to follow.

The hardest thing for most of us is that those who remain behind do not understand that we are looking for a city whose builder and maker is God. Precious friendships, loving relationships that we have enjoyed in "our church" suddenly turn cold and sour. We have to face misunderstanding, false accusations of back-sliding, rebellion and deception, and painful rejection from those we love, but who suddenly lose their love for us.

At this point we are very vulnerable to the Harlot's emissaries, who will try to persuade us to return, join another group, or at least engage in some "Christian activity". To no longer preach, teach, sing in a choir, or enjoy meetings when you have done so for years, is a devastating experience.

However, it is our flesh that misses the meetings, the singing and music, and the warmth of those old relationships, and desires us to return to Babylon or Egypt. It is lonely, cold and hard in the desert, yet it was there that Moses was prepared by God, and it is there that we too can learn to "love not the world" and rely only on God and gain Christ. There are no "religious crutches" for us to lean on. No religious activities in which to hide our true condition from others and ourselves.

It is only by steadfastly refusing temptation to return and having intimate fellowship with God for a long period that we can escape the many invisible chains of Babylon.

After a time we are able to see beneath the gilt adorning the Harlot, and then we can truly hate her, but **we must always love those who remain bound in captivity.**

It is essential that we never forget that God has no "lone rangers" in His church. Always we must be aware that the Body of Christ is made up of many members, and we must allow God to join us to others. **We no longer join something, but simply discover those to whom God decides to join us.**

God, in His own time, will join us to others, and we must be patient and allow Him to do this without trying to help Him. We are "**living stones**" and Jesus is the architect and builder of His church. **We are not the builders, but the material with which He builds.** We must simply be willing and obedient to Him.

His church is a family. It bears no resemblance to the churches, structures and organizations that we have created. The church that Jesus is building is not an organization, but a living organism, a beautiful woman, **"clothed in fine linen, bright and clean - the Bride of Christ."**

The unresisted reign of Jesus Christ in our individual hearts creates tangible unity in the Spirit. We need nothing to bind us together, because we know each other by the inner revelation of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit within us creates the loving spiritual relationship which is all that is necessary for us to enjoy fellowship with the Lord and each other. Nothing more than being led by the Spirit is needed for the Body of Christ to function, and for its members to relate to one another.

When self is dethroned and our King is enthroned in the hearts of any two believers, they enjoy a perfect, peaceful, joyful relationship. There can be no discord or division, **BECAUSE THE KINGDOM OF GOD HAS COME.**

* * * * *

Father is infinitely wise, gracious and merciful, but He loves us and therefore will discipline us, in order that we may share His holiness. He teaches us in many different ways, and speaks to us within the limitations of our individual understanding, which is bounded by our environment, culture and experience.

He knows everything about us, even the most secret thoughts of our hearts, and He will allow us to be tempted by our own desires and by the enemy. If we fail the test, we will not progress, but experience again and again the same problems until we learn to overcome them.

There are only three roots of all kinds of evil. When we examine sin of any description we will always find that its origin will lie in **PRIDE, LOVE OF MONEY OR SEX.**

Men love status, power to rule over others, and when they have it, pride will cause them to retain it, very often at the expense or hurt of others. Men will often lie to impress their listeners with their own importance, or boast of their achievements, and pride is the root of the lie. Pride manifests itself when we resist correction or instruction from those that love us. Pride causes us to stand up for our rights, and prevents us from apologizing or humbling our selves. Pride will cause us to lay blame on others or the devil for our problems, when we are the cause of the problems ourselves.

Scripture is sometimes mistranslated and often misquoted, **"love of money is THE root of all evil."** When it actually states that **"love of money is A ROOT of all kinds of evil."** Men will kill, steal, and assault

others to gain wealth or possessions. They will also lie, defraud, cheat and embezzle for the love of money.

Sins that have their root in sex include adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lust, rape and sometimes murder. Deceitful behaviour, lies and theft often have their root cause in wrong sexual desires or relationships.

These three areas of our lives must come under His Government if we are to share in His holiness. **The Bride MAKES HERSELF READY and it is our task to clothe ourselves in fine linen, bright and clean, and this linen is our righteous behaviour.** (Rev. 19:7,8)

Having left a Babylonian church and refused to join or start another, we will experience hurtful misunderstanding and rejection. These unpleasant experiences test our faith, but if we endure to the end and do not give up, we will grow in spiritual maturity. We must embrace these trials gladly in order that the peaceable fruit of righteousness be manifest in our lives.

If we allow bitterness and resentment to result from hurtful relationship experiences, we will not move nearer to the New Jerusalem, but sojourn longer in the wilderness. When we are hurt and rejected by the church system, we must see it as an opportunity to grow in brotherly kindness, forgiveness, humility, patience, long suffering and Christian love.

Turn to Father for comfort. **Fellowship with Him. If you know others who are hearing the same call you may also find fellowship with them.** However, if they have also been hurt and rejected, do not commiserate with one another, or you will only satisfy your flesh and the devil by criticizing those who remain in Babylon. Remember that it is only by the grace of God that Babylon has been exposed to you by the Holy Spirit. You are no better or more important to God than His other beloved children who are still in captivity and remain blinded by the Great Whore.

Until the Holy Spirit reveals to others the truth about Babylon we cannot explain these things to those in captivity. There is a veil before their eyes. Spiritual things are only spiritually understood and discerned, and the carnal, religious mind is unable to receive that which contradicts its intellectual knowledge.

It is often wise to never explain and never complain.

Jesus never tried to justify Himself or explain to His religious accusers, and we do well when we follow His example. If we have left Babylon of our own choosing, it should only be **for the love of Christ and submission to his will.**

Alternatively, if you have been spewed out of the system involuntarily, then see it as the gracious hand of God delivering you from captivity. Religion tears families apart. We do not need religion. We need **to know**

Him. Intimate knowledge of Christ is attained outside the camp. A bride's most intimate moments with the Bridegroom are not experienced in public or observed by others. When we are alone in the wilderness, there is nobody else to turn to except **Him**, and that is wonderful, and the best thing for us.

Our journey through the wilderness is usually slow, and may take a long time. If we have spent many years in Babylon, it can take years because a de-programming process must take place in our minds. The evil spirits of tradition and superstition and our deceiving religious culture need much time to be fully exposed, rejected and cleansed from our minds.

For most of us there is an overpowering feeling of guilt when we stop attending meetings, and drop all our previous religious activities. We become confused, for we do not know what to do when we stop doing the things that "Christians do" according to tradition and "popular belief".

There is also a very great danger that we may become ensnared by the world when we are alone in a spiritual wilderness, and it is therefore important that we resist temptation and shun evil companions in this period.

The wilderness experience will also cause some to give up and return to the carnal, well ordered security of Babylon, but those who persevere to the end are overcomers.

There are seven promises to the overcomers:

- 1. They are granted to eat of the tree of life. (Rev. 2:7)**
- 2. They will not be hurt by the second death. (Rev. 2:11)**
- 3. They will be given some of the hidden manna and a new name known only to the one who receives it. (Rev. 2:17)**
- 4. They will receive authority to rule over the nations with a rod of iron. (Rev. 2:26)**
- 5. They shall be clothed in white garments and not have their names erased from the book of life, but have their names confessed by Jesus to His Father. (Rev. 3:5)**
- 6. They will be made Pillars in the temple of God (the Body of Christ) and have the name of God (Jesus - Saviour) and THE NEW JERUSALEM written upon them. (Rev. 3: 12)**
- 7. They will sit down with Jesus on His throne as He sits with the Father on His throne. (Rev. 3:21)**

Only when the Name that is above every name is written on our foreheads, do we have the mind of Christ. However, like all God's promises there is a condition to be fulfilled before we can receive them. These seven promises are received only by those **who endure and overcome**.

Father desires each one of His children to overcome:-

The world. The flesh. The devil and his demons.

This takes time, for there is seldom a quick and easy entrance into the New Jerusalem. Our journey is better understood as a process of transformation, and each one will progress according to their will to die to self and live for Christ.

Our Lord Jesus Christ must replace man as the Head of His Body, and He alone must be given the **first place in everything**.

Chapter Six

JESUS CHRIST TO HAVE FIRST PLACE IN EVERYTHING

"He has delivered us from the authority of darkness and transferred us to the Kingdom of His Beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. And He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For in Him all things were created, in the heavens and on the earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities - all things have been created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also the head of the body, the Church, and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that HE HIMSELF MIGHT HAVE THE FIRST PLACE IN EVERYTHING. For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of the cross, through Him I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

(Col. 1:13-20)

It is abundantly clear that God desires our Lord Jesus to have the first place in everything. We may talk about "Renewal and Restoration" and it is obvious that the Body of Christ needs both, yet we have tremendous inability to give our King first place in our personal lives and in our "churches".

In order to give Jesus the first place, your will and mine needs to be voluntarily surrendered to Him, so that He might live His life in us in reality.

THE WORD OF CHRIST MUST THEREFORE BECOME OUR FINAL WORD.

We have to learn to give Him the pre-eminence and to focus our minds on His sayings, His way of life and the example of His life on earth.

Jesus is Lord of all. **His Lordship extends over all scripture**, and we are not at liberty to take any teaching from the Bible and use it to contradict the Word of Christ. We must also examine our traditions and reject those that do not have their origin in Him.

Jesus gave specific instructions to His apostles, but over the centuries His commands have been gradually abandoned through the subtle deceptions of Satan. The instructions of the King have been replaced by the doctrines and traditions of religious organizations, and these have become the accepted standards of Christendom.

Jesus commanded His disciples to make disciples for Him and His Kingdom, not members of our own choice of churches and religious organizations.

Jesus commanded His disciples to bring new disciples under His government, by teaching them to do all the things that He had commanded them. (Matt. 28:19-20)

Why then do we openly defy our King by making “church members” of over 40,000 different denominations, sects or groups, which only exist because the founders or leaders are divided over their differing beliefs and teachings?

The unpalatable truth is that **not one group obeys the Lord's commands**, for if they did, they would not denominate themselves, and all their converts would be taught **TO DO** all the things that Jesus taught His first disciples.

Christian leaders are often so busy building their structures, conducting their services, and teaching whatever their group believes, that the words of Christ which do not fit into their concepts, are overlooked or ignored. Their concepts of Christianity are usually very sincerely held, but they are unaware that they are bound in the deceptions of Babylon.

Viewed from His viewpoint we are all rebels, defiantly pursuing our own way, instead of His Way. Our seminaries and Bible schools perpetuate this unwitting rebellion, because traditional systems, structures and beliefs have more control over our minds than the Word of Christ.

We believe IN Christ, but without being aware of it we have actually reached the point where we generally **do not BELIEVE Christ**.

All of us need to review our theological pride and presumption in thinking that we have the right answers, and test our beliefs and practices by the **Word of Christ**.

Do we love Jesus? Do we **do what He says**?

"He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me... If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word... He who does not love Me does not keep My words..." (See In. 14:21-24)

We must become very conscious of the fact that when Jesus said these things He was not referring to scripture. He was referring to **His words**. Those that He was speaking to His disciples, and which He clearly states **are THE WORD OF GOD**.

"The word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's Who sent Me. These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you."

(Jn. 14:24-25)

If we sincerely desire to give the Lord Jesus Christ the first place in everything, we must repent of our ideas of what we should believe and teach. We must return to the doctrine of Christ. We must also rediscover the New Testament meaning of the Word of God.

Without the Scriptures we would have no intellectual way of knowing what Jesus taught, or what God requires of us, since we live nearly two thousand years after the resurrection of Christ.

That the Scriptures were inspired by God, and in that sense, that He is their author is a fact, and not debatable for those of us who have been born again of God's Spirit.

To call the Bible the Word of God in the sense that He inspired the individual writers, is not wrong, yet through our continual use of this phrase to describe the Scriptures, we have, to an alarming degree, lost our ability to understand what these words mean where they are written in the New Testament. The enemy takes innocent concepts and subtly twists them so that they eventually become erroneous, and we lose sight of truth. This is how he overcomes the saints on such a huge scale and keeps us bound in Babylon. It is not blatant sin that is our problem, but the subtle deceptions of Satan that bind God's people and prevent us from escaping his city.

Before millions of Christians can be set free from the deceptions of Babylon, they need their minds to be renewed in this area. For many of us, especially "fighting fundamentalists" and "Word people" (incidentally part of my personal background) it is heresy to point out what follows. However, if you are a sincere seeker after truth, and you ask the Holy Spirit to guide you, you will find it correct, however unpalatable it may seem at first.

We have become so accustomed to calling the Bible the Word of God, that when we read this phrase in the New Testament, we immediately think of the Scriptures. As a result we cannot understand what we are reading, because almost without exception, "The Word" or "The Word of God" always refers to **Jesus or HIS MESSAGE** when you read these phrases in the New Testament. Until you understand this, and therefore comprehend what you are reading, you will be most subtly deceived and not be able to do what God has said.

Christianity has deviated so far off course, that those of us who desire to give Jesus the first place in everything, have no alternative but to abandon the whole mess, and start again. It is impossible to build on the rubble of our past experience, because the traditional understandings of Babylon are in that rubble, and must be excluded from the new foundations.

"No foundation can be laid except that which is Jesus Christ" wrote the apostle Paul. Yet in 40 years of Christian experience and investigation of many denominations, I have never found one group which in their founda-

tional teaching instructs new believers to do everything that Jesus taught.

New converts are usually told to read the bible, pray, attend meetings and witness to others. They are then instructed in the beliefs and doctrines of the group they join. By contrast Jesus clearly commanded His apostles to make disciples and teach them to do everything He had taught them. When did our King change His instructions? If He says that His teachers must teach others to do what He said, we are rebels if we disobey.

We are built on the wrong foundation and can never grow into the fullness of Christ as a result.

It is only **"the pure milk of Jesus' Words" that makes us grow to spiritual maturity**, according to the apostle Peter, and if anybody knew the truth it must have been the first apostles. Jesus said:

"If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for my sake shall find it."

(Matt. 16:24,25)

In those days when a man was carrying his cross to his crucifixion, he was to all intents and purposes a dead man. He had lost all his rights and the control of his own life. When Jesus tells us to deny ourselves He is saying that we must die to self and surrender our wills to Him if we want to follow Him and share in the life of God.

Only when we surrender our souls, with all their selfish desires, to the reign of the Spirit of Christ, will we give the Lord Jesus Christ the **first place in everything**.

Chapter Seven

THE WORD OF GOD

Jesus Christ is the living and abiding Word of God. He came from heaven to bring us a message from God which is **The Word of God**.

It is both Jesus Himself and His teaching which is The Word that God desires us to hear and obey. To the early church "**The Word**" did not mean a book, but **either Jesus Himself or His message**. In the years which the New Testament describes, the New Testament had not yet been written, and so Satan could not deceive them into thinking that the New Covenant was also a "covenant of the letter" and not of the Spirit. When some of the Jewish believers began to think along these lines, Paul corrected them in his epistles. (2 Cor.3:6)

We must also remember that when the New Testament books were first written, each gospel, each epistle and then the book of Revelation, was read and understood as a complete entity in itself. When a letter was received from Paul, it was read out loud to all the believers, the church, in that place. It was read like any letter, from start to finish. There were no chapters or verses, and very few people could read, and so they did not compare New Testament scripture with New Testament scripture to understand the contents of the letter.

The 20th century mind set of evangelical and Pentecostal bible believing Christians (of whom I am one) makes it hard to face this reality. Nevertheless in the early church, systematic theology and demands to be biblical did not exist, and their concept of sound doctrine was far removed from ours.

Apostles taught the early church to do what Jesus , Christ had taught them. Paul states:-

"If anyone advocates a different doctrine, and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing..." (1 Tim. 6: 3-4)

What Christ had said to them was the Word of God in the minds of all the disciples. His message, the gospel of the Kingdom of God was The Word carried everywhere by His disciples.

When, therefore, a church received an epistle and read anything concerning "**the Word of God**" they immediately thought of Jesus and His Words, His teachings, **NOT A BOOK**. When James wrote "**be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only**" he was not exhorting us to "do everything

the bible teaches".

When his epistle was read aloud the hearers understood that he was exhorting them to be "**doers of the Words of Christ**", and not just hearers who then did not do what He had said.

To His apostles, Jesus entrusted His message from God the Father to mankind, which is the Word of God. It took Satan many centuries to gradually draw our attention away from this simple truth, and subtly focus our attention on the Bible as "**The Word**". By doing so he blinded our minds, so that our thoughts are programmed to replace the living Word, Jesus Christ the King, and His message, His teachings, His commands, with the Bible. The result of this subtle deception is that while we are fighting to defend the scriptures as the Word of God, we are unable to consider rationally anything that even remotely contradicts our mind set.

Some who read this book will immediately assume that what I am explaining is an attack on the authority and inspiration of the Holy Bible, which it is not. We should all understand and believe that:-

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for teaching and forming God's children, and preparing them for every good work". (2 Tim. 3:16, 17)

The bible is totally reliable and we must depend on it in perfect confidence that God inspired its record for our benefit. However every word written in the bible was not spoken by God. He also wants us to be taught by its record of the failings, sin and ignorance of men, which it records, so that we should not fall into the same errors. When Job's comforters gave him advice, they spoke out *of* their human wisdom, and were not speaking the Word of God. God was in fact angry at the ungodly advice that was being given, and said to Eliphaz the Teminite:

"My wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends, because you have *not* spoken of Me what is right as my servant Job has." (Job 42:7)

The book of Ecclesiastes contains many contradictions against what God has actually said. It includes statements that are true, others that are partially true and others that are totally false. (See Eccl. 3:18-20,6:6, 7:16,8:15,9:5, 10:19) Nevertheless God inspired it to be written and included in the Bible to show us how utterly futile it is for men to live only by humanistic understandings. Solomon, the writer, was once the wisest man who ever lived, yet as he aged he drifted away from God falling prey to the seductions of the world. He indulged his fleshly desires with hundreds of

wives and concubines, acquired great wealth and had virtually unlimited power to enforce his will upon others. He wrote Ecclesiastes late in life and his conclusions that life is futile and not worth living are the result of his living "under the sun", away from God and no longer being led by the Holy Spirit. Despite this, the Lord uses him to show us that his foolish conclusions are the tragic result of not living under the government of God, and that we should not be similarly deceived by human intellect. .

The record of David's sin with Bathsheba is not the Word of God, but was recorded for our instruction, that we might understand how the lust of the eyes and flesh can entice and destroy us. God was very angry at David's terrible sin so we know that we should not behave like that. It also helps us to understand the forgiveness of God when we truly repent. This is what Paul meant, when he wrote that **all scripture is inspired by God, and profitable for us to learn from, in order that we might be trained in righteousness and equipped for every good work.**

The bible is of incalculable value to us. Nevertheless it is unwise to call it the Word of God, for it contains history, the thoughts of men and the lies of the devil, as well as true words of God. Although God inspired its writings, we need to discern the difference between its recording of **what God has said**, and that which **God has not said, but has been written for our example and instruction.** Our God has given us minds, and we have a responsibility to use them.

For example, it is unwise of us, and insulting to God, to call the sayings of Satan "the Word of God" simply because those lies are recorded in scripture. Jesus himself stated that whenever the devil speaks he lies, for he is the father of lies.

When the High Priest accused Jesus of blasphemy (Matt. 26:65) he was not speaking the Word of God. This simply records a religious cleric angrily stating what his carnal, highly learned human mind honestly believed to be true, while trying to defend his misunderstandings of the Old Testament Scriptures.

The New Covenant was not designed by God to be a covenant of "the letter" but a covenant of the Spirit. Our Father desires us to come into a personal relationship with Him, in and by the Holy Spirit. He gave us the Bible as a tool or map to help us toward this end. The sons of God are led by the Spirit of God from within themselves, not by laws and regulations, backed by somebody's interpretation of bible verses, which may or may not be correct.

We have no apostles today who lived with Jesus and heard Him teach, so we must rely on the Bible and the Holy Spirit to re-discover the doctrine of Christ. I say "re-discover" because I recall with amazement and no little horror, the book entitled "The Doctrine of Christ" which I was given when

studying theology years ago. The book contained not a word of what Jesus had taught, but simply described the historical Jesus, who He was and what He did.

Some professional ministers, evangelical, Pentecostal or from the oldest denominations, look at me quizzically and enquire what I mean when I state that we must return to the doctrine of Christ as foundational teaching. Their incredulous question is, "What do you mean by the doctrine of Christ brother?"

The doctrine of Christ is the teaching of Jesus to his disciples both by word and example.

Since it is nearly impossible to find Christian leaders today who teach new believers to do all the things that Christ commanded, we who desire to give Him the first place, and live in His Kingdom totally, must re-educate ourselves.

We can begin with a red letter edition of the New Testament and learn all His recorded sayings, and major on doing what He said.

The parables are all given to show His true disciples the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, and how it functions upon the earth. The Holy Spirit reveals their meaning to those who follow Jesus and obey His Word. Jesus promised that if we obey His Words, and thereby prove that we love Him, then both He and the Father would come and make their abode within us.

God gave us the scriptures that we might use them to guide us into the realm of the Spirit. The bible is not an end in itself but a means to an end. It does not teach us that those who know the Scriptures well are the sons of God, but it states clearly that it is those who are led by the Holy Spirit who are the sons of God.

Our minds must be renewed until we all have the mind of Christ, and our relationship with God is no longer in the natural, but in the Spirit. This is how it was with the first apostles, as Paul states in First Corinthians. We can paraphrase what he was saying about having the mind of Christ as follows:-

"We apostles discuss God's wisdom with those who are spiritually mature. Things which the eye has not seen or the ear heard, (You cannot read them in a book or be told by another Christian) but things of God's Spirit which are revealed to us apostles by the Spirit. And so we apostles discuss spiritual things in spiritual words which you Corinthians can't understand because you are still spiritual babes, HAVING DIVISIONS AMONG YOU..."

...We apostles have the mind of Christ, BUT YOU DO NOT BECAUSE YOU STILL HAVE JEALOUSY AND STRIFE AMONG YOU, FOLLOWING INDIVIDUAL LEADERS OF YOUR OWN PREFERENCE, showing yourselves to be still in the flesh and NOT SPIRIT MEN.” (1 Cor. 2:6-3:4)

What would Paul say to us today if he were to see the way we follow denominations and individual groups of leaders **of our own preference?**

Things of the Spirit can only be understood in the Spirit and are foreign to the natural mind. We must take heed of Paul's warning to the Ephesian church, so that we do not approach the things of God intellectually, only in our natural or unrenewed mind.

"This I say, therefore and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer as the Gentiles who walk in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of their ignorance, because of their hardness of heart, and they having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality, for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. But you did not learn Christ in this way IF INDEED YOU HAVE HEARD HIM AND BEEN TAUGHT IN HIM, JUST AS TRUTH IS IN JESUS, that in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and THAT YOU BE RENEWED IN THE SPIRIT OF YOUR MIND and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.” (Eph. 4:17-24)

The Gentiles or heathen are excluded from the life of God, and we must grasp the incredible fact that to belong to Christ means that we are chosen to share in the very life of God. We are IN Christ, He is IN us, and He is in eternal fellowship with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. We can continue to stumble along, living by the guidance of our souls until we die and go to heaven, or we can put on the new self and live out of our spirits, in continuous fellowship with the Lord.

Disciples of King Jesus and His Kingdom are **"not to walk in the futility of our natural minds"**. We are to have our minds renewed by learning and obeying the teachings of our Lord Jesus.

General Bible knowledge, while having value, will never conform us into the image of Christ, which is our Father's objective. Unless Christ is being formed in us we can have perfect intellectual knowledge of the whole Bible, but fail to grow spiritually at all.

Our difficulty today is that it is hard to find other Christians who have heard Christ and been taught in Him. If you approach any ordained clergyman or devout church member for instruction, you will be taught all that they believe, according to the doctrines and traditions of their particular denomination, group or sect. They might claim that all their teachings are based on "the clear teaching of the Word of God", by which they mean the Bible, and not Jesus Christ. The deception is that there are hundreds of different groups who do not agree on their understanding of "the clear teachings of the Bible".

Without being aware of it, nearly the whole of Christendom is in rebellion against the King and His Kingdom, for we have failed to obey His basic instructions on what we are commanded to do and to teach.

"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of every nation, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THAT I COMMANDED YOU; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matt. 28:18-20)

Jesus does not instruct us to make church members of denominations, but disciples of the King and His Kingdom. Jesus does not instruct us to teach catechisms, homiletics, hermeneutics, psychology, the doctrines of our denomination, church history, the Bible, or anything else that the natural mind of man can invent.

Who has bewitched us that we **blatantly disobey Him** and neither do or teach what He taught? We must repent of our disobedience and restore the King to His rightful place as **"the Head of every man"**.

In His prayer recorded in John 17, Jesus clearly tells us that His words are the Word of God that He wants us to keep.

"I manifested Thy Name to the men that Thou gavest Me out of the world. Thine they were and Thou gavest them to Me and THEY KEPT THY WORD. Now they have come to know that everything that Thou hast given to Me is from Thee, FOR THE WORDS THAT THOU GAVEST ME I HAVE GIVEN TO THEM."

(In. 17:6-8)

"I HAVE GIVEN THEM THY WORD." (In.17:14)

"Sanctify them in the truth, THY WORD IS TRUTH." (In. 17:17)

If we can break away from our habit of calling the Bible the Word of God, and refer to it as the Scriptures, many of our false concepts will be exposed. **This will not alter the fact that every word of Scripture was inspired by God, and is of great value to us, but we will discern correctly THE WORD that is of paramount importance.**

Jesus had to rebuke the religious leaders because they would not listen to Him, and preferred their own understanding of the Old Testament scriptures. It is an amazing phenomenon that religious Christians will likewise argue heatedly to defend their mind's natural understanding of the scriptures, yet refuse to obey the true Words of Christ.

"And the Father who sent Me, He has borne witness of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form. AND YOU DO NOT HAVE HIS WORD ABIDING IN YOU FOR YOU DO NOT BELIEVE HIM WHOM HE SENT. You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life, and it is these that bear witness of me, and you are unwilling to come to Me that you may have life." (In. 5:37-40)

Devotion to the Scriptures and failure to believe Jesus Himself will earn the Lord's rebuke. Until we grasp the truth that Jesus and His teachings are what the New Testament calls the Word of God, we will not correctly understand what we are reading and hinder our spiritual growth. Obedience to Christ is the only way to grow in the Spirit, and to be given increased faith by the Lord.

It is important and excellent to know the Scriptures, but mere knowledge of them does not make us more like Jesus. More of Christ in us equals more spiritual growth. We are to become conformed to the image of the Son, not merely a people who can quote Scripture verses.

The apostle Peter instructs us to **"desire the pure milk of the Word"**. When he wrote this letter there was **no New Testament**, so he was not telling us to desire the pure milk of the Bible, but more of the pure milk of the Words of Jesus. It is obedience to the Words of Jesus that brings spiritual growth.

Peter starts his letter by telling us that **"we have been chosen to obey Jesus Christ"**. (1 Peter 1:1, 2) and then he writes:-

"...fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born not of the seed which is perishable but imperishable, THAT IS THROUGH THE LIVING AND ABIDING WORD OF GOD (referring to Jesus). For all flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers and the flower falls off, but

THE WORD OF THE LORD ABIDES FOREVER, and THIS IS THE WORD THAT WAS PREACHED TO YOU." (The Word of Christ) Therefore putting aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisy and envy and slander, long for the PURE MILK OF THE WORD (Christ's Message) THAT BY IT YOU MAY GROW in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord, and coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected by men, but choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones are being built up as a spiritual house for a Holy Priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

(1 Peter 1:22-2:5)

Remember that the first recipients of this letter had all received teaching from the apostles long before they read this. True apostles of Christ do not disobey Him in their choice of foundational teaching, so we can be certain that the first readers of Peter's epistles had been rooted and grounded in the doctrine of Christ. They immediately understood that the word of Christ's message which had previously been preached to them was the pure milk of the Word.

Some of the many references to the Word of God, which in context can only mean the message, and not the bible are:-

"And the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, 'It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables... But we will devote ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the word'... And the Word of God kept on spreading..."
(Acts 6:2,4,7)

"Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent them Peter and John."

(Acts 8:14)

"...Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence. This man summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the Word of God... Then the Proconsul believed when he saw what had happened, being amazed at the teaching of the Lord." (Acts 13:7,12)

The New Testament contains two very important statements, made by Paul and John, which stress the importance of the Words and teachings of Jesus. Unfortunately they are generally ignored by those who claim to teach God's Word.

1. Paul writing to Timothy instructs him in the essence of sound doctrine, which is teaching right attitudes and relationships, and he concludes:-

"Teach and preach these principles (referring to all he has already written). If anyone advocates a different doctrine, and does not agree WITH SOUND WORDS, THOSE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, HE IS CONCEITED AND UNDERSTANDS NOTHING; but has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions and constant friction between men of depraved mind and DEPRIVED OF THE TRUTH, who suppose godliness is a means of gain." (1 Tim. 6:2b-5)

2. John warns us that anyone who does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God, and he says we should not have fellowship with such people.

"Anyone who goes too far and DOES NOT ABIDE IN THE TEACHING OF CHRIST DOES NOT HAVE GOD. The one who abides in the teaching HAS BOTH THE FATHER AND THE SON. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting, for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds." (2 J n. 9-11)

Every bible-believing Christian who sincerely desires to become a disciple of the King and His Kingdom will do well to meditate carefully upon these two passages of Scripture, and measure his beliefs and doctrines by them.

May we all humble ourselves and repent of our failure to give our King who is the Word of God, and who brought us the Word of God, His proper place as Head of the Body.

Chapter Eight

THE NEW JERUSALEM

"And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband." (Rev. 21:2)

"And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues, came and spoke with me saying, 'Come here, I shall show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.' And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear Jasper." (Rev. 21:9-11)

The New Jerusalem is the eternal, beloved companion of God. She is the Bride of Christ, the wife of the Lamb. She is without spot or blemish or wrinkle, having been sanctified by Christ who gave His life for her, and cleansed her by washing her with His Word, the gospel of the Kingdom of God. He did this that He might present her to Himself, holy and blameless. She is the church of Jesus Christ and He loves and nourishes and cherishes her just as we do our own individual bodies. He does this because every believer is a member of His body.

The last two chapters of Revelation describe the Bride, who is being formed over many centuries, for she is composed of every generation of believers. The book of Revelation is a revealing of what is happening in the spirit realm, where there is no time as we know it. These things were happening before John was told to write them in a book, they happened during the rest of his life on earth, and they will continue to happen until all the purposes of God with men are fulfilled.

It is important to realize that most spiritual things involve process rather than events, because the marriage of the Lamb may well be a process rather than a single occasion as we automatically presume from our earthly experience.

Paul wrote to the Ephesians about a great mystery of Christ and His church becoming one flesh:-

"For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church." (Eph. 5:31-32)

It is possible for us to enter the New Jerusalem, to be come part of the Bride, and one flesh with our Lord, while we are still in our earthly bodies. This is why the Spirit and the Bride say "Come." This is why the Lord says to His church in Babylon, **"Come out of her My people..."** for He does not want us to be participators in her sins and to receive the plagues He piles upon her in judgment.

The book of Hebrews was written around 68 A.D. and in it we read:-

"But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel."

(Heb. 12:22-24)

Revelation was written many years later, around 95 A.D. and so in 68 A.D. there were believers who **"had come to the Heavenly Jerusalem"**. However the influence of Babylon had so deceived and penetrated the churches in the next 27 years, that it was necessary for the Lord to:-

Rebuke the seven churches in Asia, each city church separately, for varying offenses to God. Exhort all who read Revelation to "Have an ear to hear what the Spirit says to the churches". Exhort all to be Overcomers. Reveal the deceptions of Babylon the Great which had already overcome and imprisoned the saints. Tell all believers to **"Come out of her, My people"** and that both the Holy Spirit, and those already in the Bride, joined in the same cry.

"And the Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.' Let the one who hears say, 'Come.'" (Rev. 22: 17)

"I Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches." (Rev. 22:16)

"Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near." (Rev. 1:3)

These words of Christ have application to every believer in every church in every generation. God gave this Revelation of spiritual things to Jesus in order that Jesus might give it to His bond-servants. (Rev. 1:1)

New Jerusalem, as described in Chapters 21 and 22 of Revelation, has

both present and future aspects. When she is complete in the future, she will consist of a great throng that no man can number. Her measurements, 1500 miles in height, 1500 miles in length, and 1500 miles in width, (Rev. 21:16) reveal that she will eventually have billions of people. One day Jesus will bring **ALL** of His beloved church to Himself, and many who lived and died in earthly spiritual captivity will come to the heavenly city. However, we must be concerned with the present, and allow Father to take care of the future.

While we remain in our earthly bodies we are being called to be part of her NOW. We can be part of her now, only if we love Jesus enough to obey Him, and heed the call to come out of Babylon. Because of our obedience, both Jesus and the Father come and make their abode with us, as Jesus promised.

"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him."

(Jn.14:23)

This obedience is not a legalistic one, but stems out of the loving, joyful relationship of a bride's desire to please her Lord. It has no connection with duty or obligation. It is the loving response of our hearts when the enormity of His love for us floods our souls, and we enter into His rest, and cease from our own religious labours.

It is the inevitable result of our intimate personal fellowship with Jesus, Father and the Holy Spirit.

Only overcomers inherit these things in this earthly life, not every believer. If therefore we desire to enter the New Jerusalem now, we must learn to be overcomers.

"He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be His God and he will be My Son." (Rev. 21:7)

The twelve Apostles of the Lamb are the foundation stones of the city wall, and they are adorned with precious stones, which reveal the spiritual maturity of the overcomer disciple. Special meanings were attributed to each of these stones by the ancients, and they can be related to our spiritual growth. They show progressive stages both in our spiritual understanding and our individual relationship to Jesus Christ.

Precious stones are formed under great pressure, and each one of us who overcomes will experience some kind of suffering, stress and pressure, while God is forming us into His Bride. May the Holy Spirit reveal to you the necessity for you to be adorned with some of these stones, as you

journey to Zion, the city of our God.

Many years ago I asked the Lord to reveal the meaning of the precious stones, adorning the foundation stones of the New Jerusalem, in Revelation chapter 21. Some years later I was given an old book, which contained a section headed, "The ancient meanings of Precious Stones." As I was reading it, the Holy Spirit suddenly enlightened me to understand what follows. May He also enlighten your understanding of their spiritual meaning, when applied to your own personal spiritual progress.

JASPER is opaque but impure quartz found in metamorphic rock. **It denotes process of change**, and every believer undergoes this metamorphosis from the moment we are born of God's Spirit. Although it is precious and beautiful, Jasper is lacking in brilliance and rarity, being found in abundance, just like the millions who believe in the Lord. It always contains impurities, just like all of us.

SAPPHIRE means free from enchantment. It shows that we are no longer bewitched by the charms of Babylon. **It also denotes repentance** and indicates that we have given up all our arguments with God, and abandoned all the religious traditions that were once so important to us. Repentance is an on-going attitude, a permanent characteristic of the overcomer.

CHALCEDONY denotes progress to less impurity. It is less cloudy than Jasper. As we respond to the call of God to be Holy as He is Holy, we reject all impurity of thought and deed. The more intimate our personal relationship with the Lord, the more we grow like Him, and the more we hate and reject sin. The Bride makes herself ready, and clothes herself, by her righteous acts, in fine linen, bright and clean. (Rev. 19:7, 8)

EMERALD discovers false friends and ensures true love. It denotes ability to discern the false from the real, and this ability is given to us by our Lord as He sees the sincerity of our hearts toward Him. True love for Jesus can only be given when we are no longer deceived and captivated by the beauty of the whore city, and He has not only the first place, but the only place in everything. We can also come to a point in our spiritual growth when we are able to see through those who profess to be friends but are not.

SARDONYX is believed to ensure conjugal felicity, success in love and wedded happiness. This speaks of the Bride's faithful relationship to Jesus. Adornment with this stone means that we have no further adulterous relationships with Babylon. We enjoy an intimate personal love relationship with Jesus, which fills us with joy, and makes everything else unimportant

by comparison.

SARDIUS (RUBY) is found in the breastplate of Aaron. (Ex.28:20). Every believer is a priest, and can intercede with God, for those without Christ, and can also proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom. As we function as priests for the unbeliever, we are adorned with this first priestly stone.

CHRYSOLEITE is supposed to be the antidote for madness and denotes freedom from evil passions. When we are entirely free from the subtle form of religious madness that held us in Babylon, and which is not The Way, we are freed from the evil passions which made us love her, and with which we loved her. Then we are adorned with Chrysolite.

BERYL is the second stone found in the breastplate of Aaron. As our fellowship with Father matures we progress in understanding and ability to function as the priests of God. We function like Jesus functioned in His humanity, representing and revealing God to others when we are adorned with Beryl.

TOPAZ denotes fidelity and friendship, which grow out of a long and close personal relationship with the Lord.

"You are My friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his Master is doing: but I have called you friends, for all the things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you." (Jn.15:14-15)

Topaz is reserved for the completely loyal and trustworthy friends of Jesus, who also unconditionally love one another.

CHRYSOPRASE shines in the dark. Jesus said that His disciples are to be the light of the world. We can only be the light of the world when Christ has been formed in us, and He is manifest in our lives to those about us. Many Christian activities in Jesus Name do not glorify God and we sometimes act and speak in an ungodly manner. Chrysoprase is reserved for those who reflect Christ in their attitudes and behavior, and thereby shine in the darkness of the world.

JACINTH is translucent, allowing the passage of light, but the stone diffuses the light so that the bodies beyond it cannot be clearly distinguished by the person looking at them through the Jacinth. Every prophet is adorned with Jacinth being able to receive directly from God and reveal His light and truth to others. Those who receive it through the prophet do not see or hear these things quite so clearly. Before we can be adorned

with this precious stone we have to grow in fellowship with God, until we can receive the things that the eye cannot see and the ear cannot hear.

AMETHYST denotes sincerity and is a preventative from violent passions. In all of us there is a desire to appear spiritual in front of other believers. We may speak or act unspiritually when unobserved by our brothers and sisters, and the degree to which we do this reveals the hidden insincerity in our hearts. As we mature in God we cease to worry about the opinions of others and overcome this desire to be well thought of and of good reputation. At this point we become truly sincere and allow our true nature and inner feelings to be seen by all. Then if there is unrighteous anger, impatience, intolerance or other sinful impurities hidden inside us, they are revealed and our violent passions exposed. Those that love us and care for our souls can then help us to overcome these things, and be delivered from their spoiling effect on our inward walk. Only those who have willingly become of no reputation and have truly died to self can be adorned with Amethyst.

The Holy Spirit will reveal to us much more concerning these things if we will hear the voice of Jesus and become rooted and grounded in the Word of Christ.

The Lord reveals much more to us about the Bride of Christ in these last two chapters of Revelation. He states plainly many things which we need to hear and heed.

The New Jerusalem has no temple or sanctuary in it, for the Lord God and the Lamb are its temple and sanctuary. (Rev. 21:22) How unlike the city of Babylon with its cathedrals of stone and glass, the bricks and mortar called "churches" or "sanctuaries" or "the house of the Lord" by the captive and deceived saints.

Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life may enter the city. (21:27) Its gates are always open, waiting for the Kings of the earth to bring their glory into it. How God longs for His royal priesthood to make themselves ready and so enter His city. (21:24, 25)

The bondservants of the Lamb have His Name written on their foreheads, for they have renewed minds and have developed the mind of Christ. (22:3, 4)

They serve the King of Kings, not some organized religious institution or man-made structure. (22:23)

The New Jerusalem is people. God's children who have become His bondservants and friends and His bride. Through them flows **the water of God's life**; a Spirit river which originates from the throne of God in the hearts of those who have truly enthroned Him there. (22:1-3)

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Tree of Life and He yields His fruit continually, every month of the year. The leaves of the tree are those disciples, rooted and grounded in Christ who have been **illuminated by God and reign in life, bringing healing to the nations, both spiritual and physical.** (22:2-6)

"Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and everyone who loves and practices lying. I JESUS HAVE SENT MY ANGEL TO TESTIFY TO YOU THESE THINGS FOR THE CHURCHES. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star. And the Spirit and the Bride say COME. And let the one who hears say Come. Let the one who is thirsty come, and let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost." (Rev.22:14-17)

Jesus clearly states that all these things are for the churches, which means every born again believer in Christ. The Spirit and the Bride are saying **"COME"** to the children of God who make up the churches, because they are held captive by Babylon the Great.

The ones who **HEAR** and respond, also say **"COME"**.

Let those who are thirsty come out of Babylon and bring their glory into the New Jerusalem and take the water of life without cost.

Chapter Nine

ENTERING THE NEW JERUSALEM

"But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel. See to it that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less shall we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven. And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, 'YET ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO THE HEAVEN.' And this expression 'Yet once more,' denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things in order that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore since we receive a Kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire."

(Heb. 12:22-29)

When these words were written to the Hebrews they were being reminded of the awesome presence of God when He gave the commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai. Exodus chapters 19 and 20 record that great fear of the Lord came upon all and then Moses said:-

"Do not be afraid; for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may remain with you, so that you may not sin." (Exodus 20:20)

We modern day Christians have very little fear of the Lord, and often forget that our loving heavenly Father is also God the Judge of all, and that His righteous wrath can come upon all who persistently refuse to obey His commandments. In this present day His judgment is falling on churches, men and ministries, for the time has come in which He is once more shaking both heaven and earth. His rebellious and sinful church is being scourged and disciplined because of His Father love. When we see Christian ministers of international reputation exposed as charlatans, whoremongers and greedy

for gain, we should examine ourselves and ask Him to reveal any sin in us. Each one of us needs to bring our lives and lifestyle under His judgment. This great shaking is taking place for He is no longer willing to tolerate our Harlot Christian religion with all its traditions, and the way we separate our secular and religious lives.

We need to understand that it is the Holy Spirit Who is calling us out of Babylon, and that we are unhappy with the church system because the Spirit of God within us is unhappy with it. He also has a greater purpose in calling us out, for He still loves all men, and He desires us to become like Christ, so that His love will become tangible and real to a world that is sick of religion.

Jesus wants us to become the manifested Sons of God, and so close to Him that we will be able to do what He did, and eventually even the "greater things" that He promised His disciples would do. We are a long way from becoming like Him, but if we have ears to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches today, and we respond by abandoning everything in order to live in submission to Jesus, then we will see the world stand in awe of the Body of Christ. We shall also see the greatest harvest of souls in history.

Jesus desires us to experience His Way of life so that the glory of God shines from us in such a way that the lost will be drawn to Him. As we walk in His Way and fellowship with Him, the Spirit of Christ manifested in us will change the world, not our dogmatic verbal arguments and defense of our religion. As we walk in His Way and fellowship with Him He will restore the Holy Spirit power we read about in the Acts of the Apostles. The insipid, almost powerless life that characterizes most Christians, must be replaced by even greater power than that displayed by the first disciples.

Entering the New Jerusalem is a process which first requires us to truly die to self, and allow Jesus to have the first place in our hearts. This means that we must learn to be truly humble and become servants, losing all thought of self importance. We need at least one or two other believers with whom we share our lives intimately and entirely, for that is true fellowship.

Above all we must have intimate fellowship with our Father and our Lord Jesus through the Holy Spirit. This fellowship is the sharing of our whole life with God. It has nothing to do with the shallow relationships we have experienced in attending church meetings, which we commonly call fellowship. **This fellowship**, which the apostle John wrote about embraces every aspect of our lives. It requires us to become aware of His constant presence within us and to seek His glory in all that we do and think. It is when we experience this kind of fellowship with God that we receive revelation from His Spirit, and begin to have the mind of Christ.

"What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, that you also may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." (1 Jn. 1:3)

Jesus enjoyed fellowship with the Father and the Holy Spirit before His incarnation. The indescribable fellowship of the Holy Godhead is eternal, and this fellowship continued during the short 33 years of His life on earth. This fellowship seeks only to love and to serve and to glorify the others within the fellowship, and we need to grasp the miracle that we are called to join in and be part of this fellowship.

Consider the fellowship that those who followed Jesus enjoyed with Him, and how He taught them to be servants of one another. Intimate fellowship with God must lead us to desire only the good of others within our fellowship, as we understand what it means to be great in the Kingdom of God. John and the other Apostles knew what this meant, and this is why he wrote these words for our benefit and instruction, and that our joy might be complete.

The Holy Spirit is calling millions of God's children to come apart from their religious activities and to spend time alone with God. Ministers who have been widely known bible teachers and conference speakers, evangelists and pastors are hearing the same word from the Lord. Some are responding by canceling their engagements, withdrawing from public life and waiting in prayer upon our God.

Yet once more God is shaking the heavens and the earth, and He is removing and destroying the trappings of religion and the things that we have created. This will continue until the only thing which cannot be shaken remains, the Kingdom of God.

Those who are hearing the call, "Come out of her My people", are assailed with doubts, fears and confusion. The evil spirit of tradition and the power of social conventions bring questions to our minds. What will we do about marriages and funerals without their conduct by "the church"? What about Sunday schools? It will help you to get past these barriers when you grasp the fact that there is no basis in the teaching of Jesus or the New Testament for our present day Christian ideas of these things.

It is possible to be married by a civil authority according to the laws of the land. Any believers can gather thereafter to bless the couple and pray with them. No "ordained minister" is necessary for a couple to be joined in the sight of God. In some countries only ministers of registered churches with approved constitutions are granted a license to marry people. This is all part of Babylon's control, but we do not need to be bound by it.

Funeral services are of no relevance in the Kingdom of God. God's children can only rejoice when one of us goes to be with the Lord. A burial

or cremation of the earthly body by any person is perfectly in order. There is nothing holy and sanctified about a "church funeral service", although tradition will try to keep us ignorant of this and insist on its necessity in order to bind and hold us in Babylon. Acts chapter 5 records the death of Ananias, a sinful believer, and that he was buried without even his wife being invited to the funeral.

"And the young men arose and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him. Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened." (Acts 5:6, 7)

Sunday schools did not exist until 1780 when they were started to give the poorest children an opportunity to learn to read and write, combined with religious instruction. Sadly they have replaced God's plan which is for parents to instruct their children in the ways of the Lord. Religious instruction from others is better avoided by children of Spirit led parents. Our children can be filled with the Holy Spirit at a very early age, and learn to hear His voice and walk in His ways by the example and teaching of their parents, whose responsibility it is to disciple them. They can be baptized in a swimming pool or river, and even a bath tub will do. No special cleric is needed to baptize a believer, **for this is the work of every disciple.**

The insistence of certain denominations on officially baptizing their people is motivated by the same worldly spirit that causes a rancher to brand his cattle. Now they are ours, and nobody may take them away from us.

Because the world system controls the churches of Babylon, tradition and social custom have become so important that they have more power over people's minds than the Word of God.

The carnal mind will even appeal to scripture to enforce traditional understandings, and unwittingly perhaps, support the hold of Babylon over believers, to stop them leaving the gilded city.

To justify church buildings and traditional meetings it will be pointed out that Jesus customarily went to the Synagogues, and that the first disciples met in the Temple. However, Jesus lived under the Law, and He could not have kept its requirements perfectly outside the religious system. The Law required Him to attend meetings, pay tithes, keep the Sabbath and attend Jewish feasts and festivals. Only by doing so, and then giving up His sinless life at Calvary did He set us free from Moses' Law, and its religious system.

The first disciples were all Jews and met in the Temple because they did not yet understand fully what Jesus had accomplished. It took many years before some of the early Christians grasped the fact that there was no

longer any need to live under the Law.

In fact most of the Jewish believers remained zealous for the Law and thought that only Gentile disciples were free from its demands.

When Paul came to Jerusalem, just before his imprisonment, he told the elders what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry, and scripture records subsequently:-

"And when they heard it they began glorifying God; and they said to him, 'You see brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law; and they have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs. What then, is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come. Therefore do this we tell you: We have four men who are under a vow; take them and purify yourself along with them, and pay their expenses in order that they may shave their heads; and all will know that there is nothing in the things which they have been told about you, but that you yourself also walk orderly, keeping the Law. But concerning the Gentiles who have believed, we wrote, having decided that they should abstain from meat sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication.' Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself along with them went into the temple, giving notice of the completion of the days of purification, UNTIL THE SACRIFICE WAS OFFERED for each one of them." (Acts 21:20-26)

Scripture is telling us that the Jewish believers in Jesus were unable to fully understand the New Covenant in His blood. So strong was their tradition and religious custom that they even continued to offer sacrifices after the resurrection. They simply could not escape from the tentacles of Babylon which had enfolded the whole Jewish religion. God allowed the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70 to separate the Temple and the church.

The world system has such a powerful hold over our minds that we too will not escape fully and enter the New Jerusalem unless we, like Paul, count all things as "dung" in order that we may know Jesus in all fullness.

It takes time to be set free from our traditions and social customs and the religious beliefs that do not have their origin in our Lord. Only the Holy Spirit can do this as we worship God and submit ourselves to Him. As we come to know Him more intimately so He will show us what we must do, but our God is seldom in a hurry, so we must learn humility and

patience and await His direction.

The Holy Spirit also shows us the people to whom we are to be joined in fellowship. This is very different from "joining something", be it a group or so called house church. We can simply go about our lives and wait until we become aware that God has joined us to other believers. He does this in many ways, sometimes at a place of work, sometimes a sports club, sometimes through a business or social contact.

Relationships fashioned by the Holy Spirit are permanent and without stress or strain. There is a spiritual joining that endears us to each other as His love flows between us, and this cannot be manufactured, only recognized when it is there.

Very often God will join us to people that we would not choose for He is the One building His Body, not us. When we choose our relationships, we allow our personal likes and dislikes, and social conventions to influence our choice. God puts us together with people who will be profitable for our development, and help to conform us to the image of His Son. We must be prepared to accept criticism, rebuke and exhortation, as well as encouragement and support from those with whom we are joined in fellowship. Father knows who we need around us to smooth out our rough edges and shape our lives. When we make the choices we are likely to avoid those who annoy us, dent our egos, and reveal the flaws in our characters or the limit of our abilities. Yet all these things are essential if we are to be changed into His likeness.

The New Jerusalem, the Bride of Christ must be manifest upon the earth before Jesus can return. He is not coming back for a bickering, immature, unclean girl wearing grubby denim jeans.

His Bride will be a manifestation of Himself, composed of those who have made themselves ready. She will be beautiful beyond compare, pure and Holy, obsessed with her Husband, and counting all things loss that she may know Him.

"Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has MADE HERSELF READY. And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. And he said to me, 'Write. Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.' And he said to me, 'These are true words of God.'" (Rev.19:7-9)

The Lord is calling out His Bride, but we have to do our part and make ourselves ready. How small a thing it is to give up our religious traditions, our security in structures and organizations, and everything the world can

offer in exchange for being part of His Bride.

If you purpose in your heart to continue on your journey to the Bride City, remember that you only get there by the inward way. It is not accomplished by religious observance, acts of charity, bible study, verbal prayer and fasting. These things are good, but are all external and we do them by the exertion of self.

It is by the cultivation of our relationship with God within us in the Spirit that is the Way to the City. Learn to rest in Him and to know that you are IN HIM and He is IN YOU, and that His divine will is that we only do and say those things that He activates. The true meaning of being led by the Spirit means to walk in submission and obedience to Jesus. This obedience is not a mechanical response to law, but the result of our precious love relationship, which urges us from within to please our Wonderful Counselor and Saviour Husband.

Come to the place of complete inward spiritual peace and tranquility, regardless of external circumstances, relying and trusting only in Him, and not yourself or others. This is real faith, and it develops from our personal inward walk of fellowship with our Lord. Always remember that fellowship is sharing every aspect of your life with God, and not having certain areas excluded from that relationship. There should be no division between your spiritual and secular life.

HE IS THE WAY. HE IS THE TRUTH. HE IS THE LIFE.

May the Holy Spirit lead and guide you on your journey to the City of God, which is always a place of corporate fellowship, and may you never doubt that we and He can become one flesh, now in this earthly realm.

"Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless... no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body. For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. THIS MYSTERY IS GREAT BUT I AM SPEAKING WITH REFERENCE TO CHRIST AND THE CHURCH." (Extracts from Eph. 5:25-32)

APPENDIX

(Not Currently Available This Edition)

ISBN 0-620-16744-0

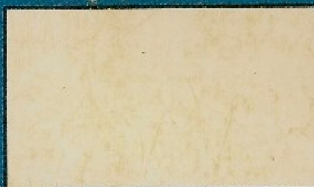


Is God calling you to move from Babylon to the New Jerusalem?

Revelation chapter 17 reveals the great harlot BABYLON THE GREAT as a spiritual city which reigns over the Kings of the earth. She holds us captive in a worldly church system where tradition has more power over our minds than the Word of God. Everywhere we can find confused Christians, who are disturbed in their spirits by traditional church concepts, or who have left a church through the prompting of the Holy Spirit, and are wondering what to do next. Many find themselves misunderstood, rejected and condemned for failing to conform to the traditional church system, but know in their hearts that they must look for the city whose maker and builder is God.

This book is an endeavour to help those who are starting down this strange road, and to encourage them to obey Jesus and to give Him the first place in everything.

If you are perfectly content with your church, and wondering what this is all about, then PLEASE DO NOT READ THIS BOOK ... IT IS NOT WRITTEN FOR YOU.



PUBLISHED BY:

**Successful Christian Living, P.O. Box 1613
Cape Town 8000
South Africa**