



The Voice of the Call of God

by Marjorie Merz Fennell

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Amen

INTRODUCTION

In the first of his epistles, Peter encourages us whenever our faith is tested by fire, and to the degree we share the sufferings of Christ in that trial, that we are to fix our hope completely on the grace to be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. These are encouraging words to let us know that at the end of every affliction a greater revelation of the Lord Jesus Himself awaits those who persevere in faith!

In July 2009 after such a trial, I was directed of the Lord to go on a two-week missionary trip to Los Angeles through WOW Jam International. While on that trip, I heard these words from the director of LA Mission on Skid Row who was sharing with us the vision of their particular ministry and how we as Christians ought to live our lives. In the middle of his thought he paused and slowly began to expound on it with these words, "...you know - the Voice - the Voice of the call of God - that is on our lives."

Those words resonated within my spirit throughout the rest of that trip, and even for several weeks after my return home to Sunnysvale. The Holy Spirit continued moving in my heart to consider what they actually meant, and thereby brought me into studying them to teach them in a monthly fellowship time for women called "Come Up Higher." This ten month period of time beginning in September of that year finished its course in June 2010. Little did I know as I started that what the Lord actually had in His mind was this book you are about to read!

The chapters of this book are actually the written form of my study notes for each of those ten monthly teaching times. Although there is an element of teaching within each one, the content is more in the form of proclamation that imparts truth. Every chapter builds on the previous one so it is best to read them in sequential order one chapter at a time. This is not a book to be read in one sitting. Instead, read each chapter slowly and contemplatively...not rushing through or ahead. Give plenty of time for the Holy Spirit to anoint His utterances to your heart so you may drink deeply...consider, ponder and take in truth.

As you read The Voice of the Call of God you will see that I often speak of God as "Elohim"...the original Hebrew word. This is to heighten our awareness of God in His own eternal, triune Person. Also, I use a series of dots throughout the text as well as the word "Selah" in

various places where it is my intent to cause the reader to slow down and pause - a holy pause that brings you into deeper reflection.

As the day of the Lord Jesus' return is quickly approaching us, Christians are to be found looking ahead to that day while they abound in His work here on earth: Matthew 24:42-47. There is indeed a message within the chapters of this book that the Holy Spirit wants His church to hear! Revelation 13:9

Finally, the call of God on our lives is a high and holy one. Much like a diamond, it indeed has different facets which make up the whole. What is set forth in this simple book is one facet of that high and holy calling into eternal glory. The question pondered is what is its purpose and how is that holy calling as a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:5, 9-12) to be worked out in our lives here on earth? To answer that two-fold question a part of the Father's grand picture and eternal desire for the body of Christ is presented in chapters 9-10. After all, a part of His calling on our lives is that the Church go and bring forth much fruit...fruit that remains!

May the Lord Jesus now lift up the light of His countenance upon you and bless His word to a listening ear. Then as the Holy Spirit brings you into the unveiling of The Voice of the Call of God, may you be filled with the knowledge of the Father's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding and in the revelation of His eternal Son Jesus Christ. May you indeed have a new partnership and fellowship with your Lord and a new loyalty to Him in the days ahead as you give heed to the voice of the call of God on your life!

All for His glory,

Marjorie Merz Fennell

December 29, 2012

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1

The Opening Words of Divine Revelation

*The voice of the LORD is upon the waters;
the God of glory thunders, the LORD is over many waters.*

Psalm 29:3

Some opening thoughts:

It will be in our times together that we will see these two truths

- God's voice
- and His calling on our lives

...coming together, intertwining, and becoming one with a very specific purpose in the mind of God for us.

One of Job's complaints in the midst of his deep affliction and suffering was that God seemed to be silent. He interpreted the silence he heard as God not talking to him. When Job's three friends finally stopped talking with him, Elihu then stepped forward and responded to Job's complaint with these words:

*For God may speak in one way, or in another,
yet man does not perceive it.* Job 33:14 NKJ

Does not perceive means Job perceived it not: God had indeed spoken, but His voice speaking passed by unnoticed!

The word *speak* in this scripture means *said*. It means...

- to arrange logically, words to speak; to lay out in order...the words themselves having come from the thoughts of the mind
- thus, logically speaking.

To speak one must have a voice.

In Hebrew, the word *voice* means *to call aloud* or *to call out loudly*.

- The voice is the vehicle through which words are said aloud...what you hear me saying out loud is my voice speaking to you!
- The voice is characteristic of the one who is speaking. It has sounds and tones and pitches through which thoughts, feelings, and personality are said aloud...making it distinct and separate from all other voices that may be speaking at the same time. It identifies the one speaking. (Daniel 10:5-6)

This principle of knowing a person by their voice is seen in the relationship of King Saul and David. “...and Saul knew David’s voice, and said ‘Is this thy voice, my son, David?’ And David said, ‘It is my voice, my lord, O king.’” (1Samuel 26:17)

We know now that the person and the voice are inseparable; in fact, they are the same. In the same way, God’s voice is distinctive and characteristic of Himself. (Psalm 29) His voice is majestic. Like the sound of thunder and like the sound of many waters it is full and transcends all other voices. His voice...

- surpasses all other sounds,
- is entirely independent of man,
- and inspires awe when heard!

For the mouth of the LORD has spoken:

His voice speaking says that it is He who is speaking.
(Ezekiel 10:3-5)

This is what Saul of Tarsus understood when a light from heaven shined around him as he came near to Damascus. He heard the Voice speaking to him, *"Saul, Saul why do you persecute Me?"* Saul immediately responded to who he knew was speaking to him with this earnest question: *"Who are You, Lord?"* Just like when Moses heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the burning bush, Saul was asking Him to identify Himself with His name. From this shining light all about him came the answer: *"I am Jesus whom you are persecuting: it is hard for you to kick against the pricks.* (Exodus 3:4; 11-14; Acts 9:3-5)

This principle of knowing when God's voice is speaking to you is also what the apostle John understood on the island of Patmos. Being in the spirit on the Lord's Day, he heard the same Voice behind him saying, *"I am the Alpha and the Omega, who is and who was and who is coming, the Almighty."* John immediately turned to see the Voice speaking with him, and in turning he did indeed see! (Revelation 1:10-16)

Now we understand that our starting point in knowing God, His Voice, and His call on our lives begins with God Himself! Here there will be revelation knowledge that affects the very core of our hearts...a definite and decisive experience where He encounters us through His Word. For indeed, He the LORD is where everything starts and where everything ends. (Isaiah 41:4; 65:17; Revelation 21:5)

Let's begin now...

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You gave birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

Psalm 90:2 NKJ

Have you ever thought about the size of the universe in which we live: a system of thousands and millions of stars? Toward the outer rim of one of these galaxies is a star of medium size and moderate temperature which we call the sun. Yet the sun is a million times larger than the planet we live on! In fact, it is spinning even now toward the outer rim of our galaxy, the Milky Way, at 12 miles per second while trailing the earth and all the other planets with it. At the same time, the whole solar system is being swung in a gigantic arc at 200 miles a second as our galaxy itself rotates like a gigantic stellar pinwheel. (Isaiah 40:21-26; Psalm 104)

That fact can take your breath away, but as Myer Pearlman writes in Knowing the Doctrines of the Bible:

“We live in a universe whose immensity presupposes a mighty Maker and whose beauty, design, and order point to a wise Lawgiver. But who made the Maker? We can keep going back from cause to effect, but we cannot keep going back forever without admitting a ‘Forever’ being. That Forever Being is God, the Eternal One, the Cause and Source of every good thing which exists.”

In the Old Testament of the Bible the English word *God* reads *Elohim* in Hebrew. The word *elohim* is actually a

plural form of *el*; and in this way it indicates that God sums up within Himself the completeness of all that He is...all that is Divine. In God's Word, the Bible, the word *Elohim* is especially used when His Person and omnipotence are being described in bringing something new into existence. His omnipotence is...

- His freedom and power to do all that is consistent with His nature
- and His absolute control and holy sovereignty over all that is or can be.

God in His omnipotence is the active and ever present Creator!

Selah

The use of the word *Elohim* in His written Word also foreshadows and speaks of the Blessed Trinity. *Elohim* is God the Father, the Son, and the Spirit...infinite, eternal, unchangeable, and one in...

- Being
- holiness
- power
- truth
- wisdom
- justice
- goodness
- mercy
- and glory!

This Elohim is...

- the one true God,
- the living God in the fullness of His power!

There is no other God but Him. As the Creator of all things, Elohim alone is the source and cause of every good thing that exists. (James 1:17)

To know this God, we must come humbly and reverently to Him through His inerrant Word – the Holy Bible. Here is His spoken word written. Only here can you and I come to know Elohim intimately through hearing what He has already spoken!

The Opening Words of Divine Revelation

The word *revelation* means that God has made known to us truths and realities that we cannot discover for ourselves. Our greatest need is for an illumination of that revelation. Without it, we walk only in the shadows of this life, groping at best for what is right in front of us. When divine revelation comes to us by the Holy Spirit's illumination from the Word of God, we have light to walk by and can now think rightly of this God.

We can look into the Bible and discover the opening words of divine revelation. Where are they? From the gospel of John in the first sentence of the first chapter, we are brought into the first word...or utterance...of divine revelation.

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. John 1:1-2

Here the apostle John elevates this phrase *in the beginning* and immediately takes us into another realm...when there was nothing but God...a realm known as eternity. In this beginning...which is the first...we are in eternity, which precedes the beginning of time and baffles our finite

minds! Before Earth was created and before all creation itself we now see who was there.

The Word – the 2nd Divine Person of the Trinity – being preexistent was there in the beginning before time from all eternity. Never alone, He was with God...always in an eternal and loving relationship with God the Father and the Spirit. Being the Son of God, His specific role and function within the Godhead is that of Divine Expression. As the Word of God, He brings a manifestation of the essence of God in audible terms...the Voice speaking. Thus, He is the perfect revelation and the utterance of God Himself.

We can understand more readily now why the Lord Jesus said of Himself that He spoke just as the Father told Him. For whatever thought the Father confides in Him, this – and only this – He speaks. He answered the critical eye of the Pharisees with these words: *“You know neither Me nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also...He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me. I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness.”* (John 8:19, 12:44-46)

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light.” Genesis 1:1-3

In this beginning, Elohim did indeed create the heavens and the earth. Something had happened, though, for we see in verse 2 that – because of a past judgment by God on Satan – spiritual darkness was withholding light from the earth. Darkness in this verse means that misery, destruction, death, ignorance, sorrow, wickedness, and

obscurity were over the face of the waters. What a sad plight! For where there had once been light and life there was now ruin and emptiness with surging masses of water...like a vortex erupting and churning and spewing and wasting waters everywhere.

In verse 3 we begin to see the beautiful interaction of the Godhead in their perfect unity of essence and nature; while at the same time in the distinction of their Persons according to function! For God

- the Father confides the thought of His mind with the Word
- the Word gives the precise utterance and expression of that thought
- and the Spirit bears witness with the Word speaking the thought of the Father bringing it into manifestation.

In this beginning when God created the heavens and the earth the stage was actually being set for what would come later in creation. *"And the Spirit of God was hovering..."* In these words, we see the Spirit of God - who is the Spirit of Christ - looking down through the corridors of time to a future date in time and a future age. In holy anticipation, the Spirit - the 3rd Divine Person of the Trinity - was waiting for the Word to utter the Father's thought so He could bring the beginning of that expression into manifestation.

Notice that on the first day God answered this darkness with what was missing. The Word said, *"Let there be light."* Here the rumbling of His voice speaking, breaking the silence and dispelling the darkness. Here the beginning of

something new that was going to happen. He spoke...and immediately there was light!

Like a bolt of lightning that hits its mark, Elohim with one spoken word of His power immediately brought order out of chaos. From this point on He would bring everything into its ordered being. For immediately there was light: bright and clear...the initial waves of light energy coming from the earth. Elohim had indeed penetrated and dispelled the darkness...a new beginning! (Psalm 33:4-6)

In the orderly placing of things in His creation God on the 4th day placed light bearers in the heavens as permanent generators and reflectors of the light waves; and on the 6th day the Word then said, *"Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness..."* (Genesis 1:26)

Another beginning in the mind of Elohim

Now that the groundwork has been laid out for us here with the opening words of divine revelation, let's briefly move on to another beginning and revelation before we move on to the next chapter in this book.

For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 4:6

Here we see the saving work of God's grace in our hearts! For here, the saving influence of God is not a command for light to shine out of darkness. Instead, God Himself shined in our hearts, and in that Light we at once knew His glory in the face of His Son!

Selah

- Initially to give us true sight...a sense of our own sin and to see our lost state apart from Him,
- then, to cause us to see both the suitableness and fullness of His Son as our only Savior...the only One who can truly save us from death and can fully satisfy our need for God,
- and ultimately, to warm our affections and draw out our desires after Him as a disciple. (Song of Solomon 3:1-4; Matthew 13:51-52)

The eyes of our understanding having been illuminated... opened...at that moment with the revelation of His Son

- God then gave us more grace to freely receive by faith that which cost us nothing
- and immediately our hearts were cleansed from sin with the precious shed blood of His Son Jesus Christ
- that we might also be reflectors of the Light into a darkened world around us!

Facing the daily challenge of personal commitment

Having instructed the twelve apostles, Jesus said to them: *"...freely you received, freely give."* (Matthew 10: 8)

To volunteer means to offer freely...it means there are no strings attached to that offer. It is what young men do when they enlist in an army. They show up freely presenting themselves...ready now to lay down their lives as living sacrifices...a free will offering of themselves.

Having seen the Lord sitting upon a throne high and exalted with His glory filling the temple and the seraphim crying out to each other *"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts,"* Isaiah in the light of His glory also saw the condition of his own heart. His immediate response to that revelation was one of genuine repentance: *"Woe is me, for I am ruined."* Through that humbleness of mind and deep contrition, God then freely and deeply cleansed Isaiah's heart from sin...the all of it.

Then Isaiah heard the voice of the LORD saying, *"Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?"* Isaiah responded spontaneously, *"Here am I. Send me!"* In Hebrew, his response literally means: *"Behold, me!"* Isaiah said in effect that he was now ready for service; not by coercion, but with the disclosure that he had received a full pardon of his sin. His will fully engaged now with God's will in joining Him in His activity on earth...a grateful response for His forgiveness. Isaiah offered himself freely to God in service...he volunteered...he showed up! (Isaiah 6:1-8)

Your people will volunteer freely in the day of Your power; in holy array, from the womb of the dawn, Your youth are to You as the dew. Psalm 110:3

Such is the marvel of God's grace for those whose hearts have been illuminated with the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of His Son Jesus Christ.

"Then I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'"

2

Having An Eternal Awareness

After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things." Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne. Revelation 4:1-2a

For the sake of clarity: Everything that is true of the Father is equally true of the Word and the Holy Spirit, and everything that is true of the Word and the Holy Spirit is equally true of the Father. They are of one substance and so one in power. The glorious Trinity in the unity of the Godhead...

- the eternal Father
- the eternal Word
- and the eternal Spirit

...are not three eternals, but one with their glory and majesty equal. From within the Godhead One speaks, as in these examples in scripture:

- the Father (John 1:33; Matthew 17:5)
- the Word (Genesis 1:26; Joshua 5:13-15; John 14:25)
- or the Spirit (Ezekiel 11:5; Acts 13:2)

They are the eternal Elohim working out an eternal purpose by decree.

To recognize the voice speaking to you, you must know the one speaking.

There is a knowing about, which is hear-say...an objective evaluation that is external; and then there is a knowing personally, which is face to face and intimate...it is internal.

To be aware means to be conscious *or* cognizant of someone or something.

- *conscious*: to have an awareness of one's existence, sensations, and thoughts
- *cognizant*: to be fully informed...having sure knowledge and the recognition of it

It implies being mindful or heedful of what someone has said or done.

Having an awareness of God begins in the Bible "the Holy Scriptures" the written and inerrant Word of Elohim. Within its pages, you are reading the very words of God Himself – the Eternal One – who desires you to know Him personally through His spoken Word!

Think of a picture gallery that has many beautiful portraits within it all pointing to their artist and the object of his love. You will soon discover in the Bible as you read it that it, too, is adorned throughout – from its opening pages to its very closing sentence – with God's revelation of His eternal Son, the King of glory!

- the Word of God who was from the beginning, (John 1:1-3)
- the Coming One (Rev.1:7-8)

- the Son of Man (Matthew 16:13-17)
- the precious bleeding Lamb of God (Isaiah 53:1-12)
- the Messiah who reigns (Acts 2:29-36)
- the living One who has the keys of death and Hades (Revelation 1:17-18),

The wonder of His glory, whether it be hidden in...

- prophecy or history
- parable or miracle
- type or anti-type
- allegory or narrative

...is that a humble heart and a listening ear may come to know the Triune God personally here in the scriptures in His infinite and transcendent excellencies! He, the eternal God before whom seraphim can only bow and veil their faces and cover their feet and call out to each other, "*Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts, the fullness of the whole earth is His glory*", desires for you to know Him in the same way....in His Divine worth and His indescribable glory. (paraphrased from A Gallery of Christ's Glory by A. Pierson)

Here an Eternal Awareness of God

The Hebrew word for *eternal* means *the front*...as in the fore part and that of first place, and therefore the one most easily recognized. Timeless in existence God has never had a point of origin or a place of beginning outside of Himself. He simply is. He has always been and ever will be. Thus, He alone is God....and there is no other.

You and I can know that the east comes before the west simply by observing where the sun rises. In the same way, you and I can understand that God is the *before* God and,

in light of that truth, in first place before anything else came into existence. For when there was nothing and no one, there was God...and only God...eternally existing...needing and requiring nothing outside of Himself! This intrinsic essence of His Person – that of being eternal – is indeed what makes Him and sets Him apart as God. Being eternal there are no other gods before Him, and there can be none after Him!

There is only one true God. He is His very own reference point: I AM. He alone exists outside of time and is *before* all creation. (Exodus 3:11-15; Job 36:26)

- In the beginning, God...(Genesis 1:1)
- God...(Hebrew 1:1 NKJ)

God being eternal, all creation...

- heaven itself
- angelic hosts
- galaxies
- planet earth
- man

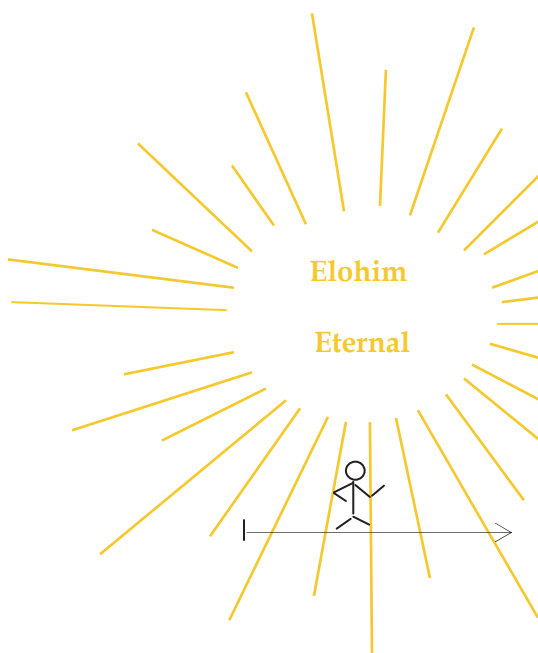
...revolves around Him! He is the center and their point of origin. Without beginning and without any interruption, unending and perpetual, Elohim is unaffected by time: whether past, present, or future! The eternal Elohim...God the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit...inhabits all eternity!

Being eternal, He upholds all things and is self-sufficient and able to meet every need you or I may ever have. (Matthew 6:25-34; Deuteronomy 33:26-28) In the midst of your circumstances you may be wondering right now or even questioning, “Where is God?” or “What is God doing?”

Since He is eternal and always present, the answer comes back to us from the scriptures that God is being God...

- who upholds all that fall, and raises up all that are bowed down (Psalm 145: 14)
- who will revive the spirit of the humble, and revive the hearts of the contrite ones (Isaiah 57:15)
- who will render vengeance to His adversaries, and will be merciful to His people (Deuteronomy 32: 39-43)

What is God Doing?



At all times, He is being who He is. Being eternal, you can't get away from Him...you can't out run Him...and you can't hide from Him. God is, and God will ever be. Do you think at times that God is letting you down? Can you see the impossibility of it? Live near to Him...knowing Him personally for who He truly is: eternal. In the light of His eternal Person, all other things will come into proper perspective, and appear as they really are. (Exodus 15:11)

What the apostle John knew:

By inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the apostle John especially brings out for us some of the deepest and most intimate and personal things concerning this eternal God in the very first chapter of his gospel.

“...and the Word was with God...”

John 1:1-2

John introduces us here to the 2nd Person of the Trinity as being *with* God. The words *with God* give us an initial picture of the relationship of the Word and the Father and the Holy Spirit as always being together in a living union...face to face...love answering love. Here there is a communion in which they see themselves and reflect themselves in each other, the face being the likeness, and therein the reflection of that person. Can you imagine such light and intimacy as this? (1Timothy 6:13-16; 1John 1:5)

Now we can go a little deeper in these words *with God* and with a closer look, we see now the relationship of the eternal Word and the Father together. (Proverbs 8:22-31) In the eyes of the Father as He gazes into the face of the Word...He sees Himself in His Son; and in the eyes of the Word as He also gazes into the face of the Father...He sees Himself in His Father.

For the eternal Word of God is...

*“... the only begotten from the Father...
who is in the bosom of the Father...”*

John 1:14, 18

The word *begotten* in verse 14 is *only-born*. It's what we say of the only child of its parents, meaning their sole one. The

word *begotten* unveils the Word for us in this scripture as being the Father's own Son: His sole and unique and only one of a kind Son. The word *begotten* also comes from a root word meaning to stay in a given place, state, relation or expectancy. Thus, the word here also means to remain or be present always. Being the Father's one and only Son, He had no beginning and will always be what He has ever been...the Father's Son of Promise...in personhood, relationship, fellowship, function, and purpose throughout all eternity. (John 5:17; Genesis 3:15)

The word *bosom* speaks of both nearness to and personal intimacy with. They go hand in hand with each other. It has within it the sense of reclining. This word reflects the eternal inner bond of God the Father and His only begotten Son. The Father and Son, inseparably united in each other are always in direct fellowship with each other and ever enjoying their love together. In such a place of intimacy the Son is privy to all the Father's secret thoughts and designs while being at the same time the One in whom the eternal purpose was purposed...and would be carried out.

Even while He was here on the earth, the Word of God – Jesus of Nazareth forever remained in the bosom of His Father. Never for a moment did the Son leave this place of deepest affection, union and fellowship with His Father...nor did the Father with His Son.

The apostle John came into the awareness of this eternal truth because of the way Jesus in His humanity referred to His Father:

- “...yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.”
(John 16:32)

- “...I am in the Father and the Father in Me;” (John 14:11)
- “...for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.” (John 17:24)

“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”

Matthew 3:17b

A child in its mother’s womb is already what it will be. It is at birth that they then step into that destiny. *Beloved* here translates *only* and literally means *brought you forth*... much like what happens when a child is born. In a similar way, it is also used for a king bringing out his son before the people to anoint and proclaim him king along with his father. This announcement came immediately after Jesus’ obedience to being baptized in water by John the Baptist. Having just been anointed with the Holy Spirit, the Father proclaimed those solemn words to the listening ear of John the Baptist. (Psalm 2:7; 1King 1:32-40)

Always the Son and always the Christ in eternity, He stepped into time when He took on flesh in the womb of a virgin named Mary. Having come through the royal lineage of David He was born in Bethlehem and named Jesus: *Yahweh is salvation*. Born a king, this Jesus was in reality the eternal Word...the one and only Son...the living Christ...even before the foundations of the earth. Such is the dignity of the eternal Word of God! (Matthew 2:2; Proverbs 8: 22-31)

We can humble ourselves before God...the Father, Son, and Spirit...in reverential awe when we realize for the first time or in a deeper way...

- that it was the only begotten Son...the One in whom the Father had such fellowship and

delight...that was given by Him to be the sacrificial lamb for our sins...(Genesis 22:2; John 3:16)

- and that it was the living Christ...the King of glory...who came down from heaven to be put to death on the Cross of Calvary as the ransom for our sins. (Romans 5:6; 1 Corinthians 15:3)

This one God, Elohim, who is and who was and who will ever be has done such marvelous things for us! (Psalm 98:1)

What John the Baptist knew:

"This is He..."

John 1:30

Even from within his mother's womb, John's reference point in life was the Coming One...a reality that shaped his entire earthly life and ministry! Being the forerunner of Christ, the King of Israel, John looked and lived for the sure promise of His coming as foretold by the prophets and the law throughout the Old Testament.

One day in his ministry of heralding His coming, John saw Jesus. It was at that moment of recognition that he understood Him not only to be the Son of God come from heaven...the pre-existent Christ...but also on His first mission on earth. With this, John cried out to those around him: *"...Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He on behalf of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'"* (John 1:29-30)

John the Baptist knew his calling and his strategic place in the scheme of things from God's eternal perspective...and he lived there. He had an eternal awareness that comes

only from time spent within the scriptures. He was not the Christ. He was to be a voice through which God would speak to prepare His way...that His Son might indeed be received by His people and have the preeminence among them. This John knew.

From within his mother's womb, John rejoiced at the presence of his Lord who was yet within Mary's womb...here in the presence of the Christ's eternal and divine nature, His incarnation, and His glory. That never changed for John. In light of this, John's joy was complete when he saw people flocking to Jesus instead of him. Jesus was now the Voice speaking. John reminded his disciples that he had said he was not the Christ...*"but I have been sent ahead of Him. He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice."* (John 3:29)

John the Baptist knew he was the friend of the Bridegroom and so stood as a servant ready to execute His slightest wish. In this place of service, he not only heard Christ approaching but also personally witnessed Him issuing His commands which he himself delighted to fulfill. John's greatest joy was that he was able to hear Him conversing with His Bride! His joy had indeed been made full. John then answered his questioning disciples and said, *"He must increase, but I must decrease."* His servant always, John was beheaded shortly thereafter. (Genesis 49:10; Numbers 24:7,17; John 3:25-29)

What Jesus knew:

"...for I am from Him, and He has sent Me."
John 7:29

Reflect now on these words from J.C.Ryle's Expository Thoughts on the Gospels, Vol. 3.

“The knowledge of which our Lord here speaks, is that peculiar and intimate knowledge which is necessarily implied in the unity of the three Persons of the Trinity, in the Godhead. There is a high and deep sense in which the Son knows the Father, and the Father knows the Son, which we cannot pretend to explain, because it is far above our capacities. (John 10:15) The Jews knew nothing rightly of God the Father. Jesus on the contrary could say, ‘I know Him,’ as no one else could. ‘Neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.’ (Matthew 11:27)¹

The expression “I am from Him,” must not be confined and cramped down to mean only that our Lord had come down like any prophet of old, with a message and commission from God. It declares the relationship between God the Father and God the Son ‘I am from Him by eternal generations, - always one with Him, -always equal with Him, - but always a distinct person; - always the only begotten Son, - always from Him.’

The expression “He hath sent Me” is, like the preceding one, something far more than the mere assertion of a prophet’s commission. It is a declaration that He was the Sent One, - the Messiah, the Prophet greater than Moses, whom

¹ Expository Thoughts on the Gospels, v.iii, by J.C. Ryle, Reprinted by Baker Books 2007 All rights reserved.

the Father had always promised to send: - "I am the Seed of the woman sent to bruise the serpent's head. I am He whom the Father covenanted and engaged to send for the redemption of a lost world. I am He whom the Father hath sent to be the Savior of lost man. I proclaim myself the Sent One, the Christ of God."

Bishop Hall paraphrases the two verses thus: "Ye mutter secretly that ye know me, and the place of my birth and parentage; but ye are utterly mistaken, for I have a Father in heaven who ye know not. I came not of myself, but my Father is He that sent me, who is the God of truth; of whom ye, after all your pretences of knowledge, are utterly ignorant. But I do perfectly know Him, as I have good reason; for both I am from Him by eternal generation, and am by Him sent into the world to do the great work of redemption."

Selah.

What is to be our eternal awareness of Him as Christians?

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth..."

Revelation 21:1

There is indeed a day coming when Jesus the Christ will come again to usher in His eternal kingdom in its fullness of power here on the earth. The Bible plainly instructs us in this. In view of His second coming and universal reign over all nations, the question for us is, "What manner of people should you and I be?"

In pondering this question, first let the promise of His soon return both strengthen you and encourage you to devote yourself entirely to Him! Then set as your own personal goal to live a life worthy of this Jesus, the Sent One. Stay focused on Him now, the author of your faith, through the daily reading and study of His Word...and in your service to Him. Commit yourself to grow in relationship with other believers as well...for without each other there can be no true fellowship and personal growth. Worship the Lord Jesus through the obedience of faith. In this way, you will progressively enter into an eternal awareness of Christ's incarnation and promised return; and, like John the apostle and John the Baptist, be discovered faithful when He, the King of glory comes again. (Revelation 22:20)

"Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen."

1Timothy 1:17

3

The Bridegroom and the Bride

Draw me after you and let us run together! The king has brought me into his chambers. 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. Song of Solomon 1:4a; Revelation 19:7

A Personal God - A Personal Call

God's Call is Personal: God's call to each one of us is a personal call. It is one that is spoken by Him to you...in such a way that you hear Him calling you and you respond to Him...God speaking to you! Your response to Him...or lack of it...will determine what happens next.

What does it mean to be personal? Think about what it means:

- done, made, or performed in person: *a personal appearance*
- one for or directed toward a particular person: *a personal favor*
- of or pertaining to a particular person; one's own; private: *personal affairs*
- concerning a particular individual and his intimate affairs, interests, or activities: *I have something personal to tell you*

God's Personal Touch: "There is no touch in the universe like the touch of Jesus' nail scarred hand. All who touch Him are made whole. All who are touched by Him discover salvation, healing, deliverance, and power. The Master's touch makes all things new." (Author unknown)

Victorious Love - His Plan in Creation

"...and they shall be one flesh."

Genesis2:24

The origin of all creation and life is God. The first chapter of the book of Genesis, a book of beginnings, makes this very plain to us. Here there is also the record of God who creates by decree...Himself speaking...an utterance...the utterance of His own mouth. By command, He brought forth galaxies, stars, planets, and this planet called earth...all of which were a manifestation of His creative glory, wisdom and power. From the immense expanse of the created universe...to the very pristine beauty and order of nature on earth...a stage was set on which the drama of love would unfold.

For in that very moment of bringing His Divine order and structure into its proper being in the beginning...in that very moment when He Himself said it...His power went forth out of His mouth to accomplish and sustain it. Thus, in every *Let* in the first chapter of Genesis, you will read shortly thereafter, *"...and it was so."* (Isaiah 55:10-11; Psalm 33:8-9)

Note: please remember that the earth we see today is not the one that existed then.

These words of His fixed order, *God said* are found ten times in the first chapter of Genesis. As you read, watch for

the beauty and strategy in which they are laid out...and what was in the mind of Elohim. One clue is that the first seven times are in the third person...meaning impersonal; while the last three are in the first person...meaning personal!

Man's destiny is indeed like a gift remaining to be fully unwrapped. We can understand this more as we study the scriptures. When we look into the words: *And God said* we begin to realize that what He has always had in mind...when spoken...is only the beginning of what will happen.

Let's look at the eighth *God said*...eight being His number of new beginnings. Here we see Elohim's wisdom: even though last and from humble matter indeed, it would be the beginning...the setting in place...of His highest and everlasting purpose in all creation. For here in verse 26 God brings forth its final glory through the creation of man.

Then God said: "Let Us make man in Our image, and according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." Genesis 1:26

The Man: his arrival

A creature of a different kind...indeed a new creation in the earth...man would be the starting point of a larger purpose. Although a finite creature, he would be made in the image of his Triune God and according to His likeness. Elohim would create man (singular), male and female (plural). They would be capable of knowing Him together in the deepest bond of intimacy in both union and

fellowship with Him...capable of receiving and reflecting His glory together while at the same time representing Him on Earth. (Matthew 19:4-6)

A closer look at man:

- made in His image: literally means 'to shade'...e.g. a silhouette...and thus a shadowing forth... a representative head or figure
- according to His likeness: a resemblance: similar in nature, form, appearance and function...like a son that looks just like his father...and carries out his will (Luke 3:38; John 6:38)

What was in the mind of his Creator? As a son and as the federal head of his own race, the man (singular) would have dominion and authority over all Elohim's created order in all of the cosmos...realms yet lying unexplored and awaiting his arrival!

The man was formed by the LORD God from the dust of the earth...from a damp mass of the finest earth. He was a sculptured work, and into his nostrils God breathed His breath...the Spirit of life...and at that very moment the man became a living soul. (Genesis 2:7; Zechariah 12:1)

"The importance of this cannot be overestimated as we think and study and pray. It reveals the essential spirituality of mankind. It denies that man is a creature having a spirit and declares that he is a spirit having a body. That which makes him a human being is not his body but his spirit, in which the image of God originally lay." (from Man the Dwelling Place of God by A.W. Tozer)

Marked off in this way from the rest of God's creation, the man was a standing image, not of himself, but of the LORD God. Of absolute holiness and innocent of sin, his very nature and soul and body were morally pure. Formed upright in body with intelligent reasoning and speech, the man stood blameless before his heavenly Creator as a son with the capacity and the freedom to respond to...

- Him
- other human beings
- and his environment.

The man was the highest representation of God possible in the earth short of the incarnation of His only begotten Son. As God's kingdom representative, he would rule as God would while...

- manifesting His character and authority in the earth,
- expressing His dominion over the earth,
- displaying His indisputable power over the works of darkness,
- and subduing His archenemy, Satan.

In the Garden:

God planted a garden in Eden, and then placed the man in it. God's garden was a place where the man would continue to grow in the presence and fellowship of His Creator and in the discoveries of His love. The hallmark of the man's life being lived in the presence of his God was to be one of reverential worship and obedience to Him as the Sovereign of all creation. For in order for him to be the

representative of His authority on Earth, he must remain subject to Him as his head. The man's ability to reign in life would rest on his continued obedience to his Creator's rule as King over of all...and could extend only as far as his faithfulness to obey God's explicit command to him. (Genesis 2:15-17)

Before God spoke the thought, He knew it would not be good for the man to be alone: separate...by himself...apart...solitary. It was the man who needed to be brought into the awareness of his own aloneness; and this God did for him. God called his name Adam. (Genesis 2:18-20)

"... then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from man, and brought her to the man." Genesis 2:21b- 22

A Woman: her arrival

As the last of God's creative works in the earth, the woman would be His crowning act of creation. *To crown* means to:

- bring to successful completion...to complete, finish, consummate
- and/or to confer honor, dignity, or reward upon.

A special act of creation would indeed be necessary by Adam's Creator to form a suitable helpmeet for him...one corresponding to him. In light of this, her composition could not come from the dust of the earth, but would be from a part of the man himself!

Consider for a moment this thought from Expositor's:

“The Divine plurality of ‘Us’ and ‘Our’ anticipates the human plurality of the man and the woman thus casting the human relationship between the man and woman in the role of reflecting God’s own personal relationship with Himself.”

Selah

This God knew before He created the man. For in the mind of God, the woman was to be designed and built by Him from one of his ribs and its attached flesh. She would come out of his side...a place close to his heart. Corresponding to him...and so in correspondence with him...she would be his companion and helper. As a suitable partner for him...in fact, an aid...she was to come alongside of the man to be at his side and be his helper in fulfilling all God had in mind for their lives together. (Genesis 1:28-30)

In this way from the very beginning in God’s mind, man’s creation entailed a holy partnership of male and female...a husband and a wife. Just like sunlight and a green meadow when they come together...they fuse...and intermingle...and are made one for the other. For when Adam saw the woman he stood in awe as he recognized his own likeness in her...his other self or counterpart...she being in substance the same as he!

They had been made in the image of God according to His likeness, the man first and then the woman, now his glory. Being in her God given place of true dignity and worth at his side now, she the crowning act of God in creation. (1 Corinthians 11:7-9)

As a man and as a woman, they each brought something unique and necessary to this relationship of covenant love called marriage. God then speaks to them personally as a

couple for the first time: they are to be fruitful with children. By raising godly seed, the earth would be replenished and filled with their Creator's glory. Then God gazed at all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. His finished work now completed. (Genesis 1:27-31)

Note: Sexual *union* can only take place between a man and a woman...for it is the woman who came out of the man; in this way they were made and fitted for each other...He created them male and female to become one flesh in holy marriage... a couple.

The Bridegroom and the Bride

This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

Ephesians 5:32

The creation of the man and a woman...Adam and Eve...was a signal to all of God's creation that His glory would forever be seen in the earth through the combined expression of male and female in a relationship called marriage. (Genesis 2:21-24) In God's mind, their creation was in fact a microcosm of Christ and the church. For included in the Genesis account of man's creation...and then throughout all the rest of the scriptures...are all the shadows and types of Christ and His Bride, the church. For man's high calling and destiny and sublime glory originated within the Trinity before the foundations of the earth and will be seen and fulfilled in Christ the King as He reigns on the earth with His Bride. (Ephesians 1:4; 2:7; 3:10)

From distant worship to the closest intimacy

There is no one nearer to a man than his wife...so, too, for the risen and ascended and enthroned Christ and His

Bride. For all those who believed on Him as Lord and Savior in the moment of conversion...

- having at that moment been born of the Holy Spirit,
- having been cleansed by washing with the water of God's Word,
- and having been brought near to God by the Lord's own sprinkled blood

...are in intimate relationship and communion with Him *and* Him with them: for He is in them and they are in Him. They are now one body. This is the mystic union of the body of Christ of which the scriptures speak: all believers are members of His body of which He is the head...bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh.

His Bride was claimed by Him for marriage through the Cross of Calvary and His sprinkled blood on it. This is what was in the mind of His Father before He sent His only begotten Son to earth to make an atonement...a covering...for man. This is also what Jesus was inviting the outcast Samaritan woman to at Jacob's well in Sychar! (John 4:7-24)

John the Baptist, the Lord's forerunner, also knew Him from the Old Testament scriptures as the Bridegroom. Jesus knew this of Himself as well. Through His own words and in many of His parables, He wants us to understand that there is indeed a profound heavenly mystery before us:

- Mark 2:18-20
- Matthew 24:36

- Matthew 25:5-6
- Matthew 26:29
- John 14:1-3
- and others

**Here is the evidence that Jesus Christ is the Son of God:
He has the bride!**

The Lord's mission in His first coming: the Son of God would come from heaven to give Himself up for His bride. Love paid her price. His life laid down on the Cross of Calvary would be the payment for her hand in marriage in order that she might be set apart as His bride. Separated now from the world, she would be made a partaker of His heavenly calling and gifts through the Holy Spirit until that appointed time of consummation set by His Father. At that time, He would return for her, catching her away and she at that time being presented to Him as His crown...the glorious church. (Ephesians 5:25-27)

Note: The veil worn by a girl pledged in marriage was always put on whenever she left the house of her parents; it communicated to others that she had already been spoken for and belonged only to her spouse, and as such, was presently awaiting her wedding day.

Like Eve who was brought forth out of Adam and joined to him on the same day, the church was formed and betrothed to her Lord in marriage on the day of Pentecost. Jesus Christ, the Living One and last Adam, having been exalted by God His Father to the highest place of authority and power over all created things in heaven and on earth and under the earth, received the Holy Spirit...the Promise of His Father...as a perfect Man. The Lord Jesus then poured out this same Spirit on His bride on that day as the

seal of her redemption. (Genesis 2: 23-24; Acts 1:4-5; 2:1-4, 33; Ephesians 4:30)

Like Adam in his vital relationship with God when he was in the Garden of Eden and before he sinned, the church also exists and functions now from her vital relationship with her risen and ascended Lord Jesus Christ: her head...the source...the fountain...of her life. She lives in humble submission to Him while awaiting His return...lying under obedience to Him...where she discovers and experiences the joys and wonders of His deepest love, care, and protection. (1 Corinthians 6:17; 12:12-13; Ruth 3:7-9; Ephesians 5:22-32 NKJ; Genesis 2:9; John 15:5; Revelation 21:6)

Note: Ruth said to Boaz: “...spread the corner of your garment over your maidservant for you are a close relative.” Her request of him is a picture of a Middle Eastern practice of the casting of a garment over a woman being claimed for marriage.

Victorious Love - His Plan in Creation

*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.* Revelation 19:7

The consummate event toward which all history is moving is Christ's return for His Bride! He being the victorious Lamb of God is her Bridegroom...the King of kings. There is quickly approaching the catching away of His Bride...the meeting with Him in the air...for her marriage to Him. This is the blessed hope of the church and the final triumph of Christ when their time of betrothal comes to its end. She...having been prepared by loyalty and suffering...will be ready then to enter into her full experience of salvation and glory while reigning with her beloved Spouse! With the kingdom reality of the age to

come starting...the coming kingdom of Christ in actual reality...beginning with His millennial reign here on earth with her at His side and in the world thereafter...the finished work of the Cross will be in full manifestation for all to see! (1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18; Revelation 19:7; Matthew 13:43; Revelation 21-22)

“Our ascension with Christ will not merely be in spirit as it is now – our participation in the ascension will, as it were, blossom forth in its true splendor; and then we shall shine as the sun forever in the kingdom of the Father.” (Bone of His Bone by F.J. Huegel)

When we think of a bride many words come to mind. One of those words is *purity*. Paul was very jealous for his spiritual children in the interval between their conversion (their betrothal to Christ) and their glorification (their presentation to Him.) His passionate concern for them in that interval was their exclusive and pure devotion...their undivided loyalty...to Christ.

Being the Bride of Christ, that purity is what you and I are to guard. Especially watchful that our minds and affections are not deceived in such a way that we let go of our single-minded faithfulness to Christ...our unwavering perseverance in faithfulness and our tenacious loyalty to Him as His bride in spite of any kind of fierce adversity. Through the vigilance of reading His word and prayer, rising above the circumstances and seeing through the eyes of faith...looking ahead to that glorious day indeed...when the glorification of Christ in you...and you in Christ will be consummated!

***The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!”
And let the one who hears say “Come!”*** Revelation 22:17a

4

The Wonders of This Love

For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority. Colossians 2:9-10

“We are face to face here with the mystery of God’s eternal mind; and it is so high above us that we should not even begin to try to understand it. We must come humbly to it and look at it and receive it.” (An Exposition of Ephesians by Martyn Lloyd-Jones)

This mystery is truth hidden in God’s eternal mind until He chooses to disclose it to His children. This is His wisdom. It is not of this age, neither can it be known by your intellect. The wisdom of God has been from the beginning...before the laying of the foundation of the world. When the Holy Spirit speaks it...as He illuminates it...and you hear and you hold your focus there...it comes into view. (1 Corinthians 2:6-12)

A view involves *focus* which means to concentrate on...

- by adjusting the setting of a lens
- to converge at a point of focus
- to produce a clear image to see with

What God had in mind: To have something in mind means to have it in thought, perception, feeling, will, and memory. It involves individual consciousness, memory, and recollection in such a way that it is never forgotten.

The focus of thought then gives its attention to either the desire or purpose of the mind...there is a remembrance.

For the infinite, eternal Elohim it means in simplicity the entire span of time covered by remembrance based entirely upon His decree. (Numbers 23:19) His divine decrees come from within the infinite depths of the mind of the Godhead...all working together:

- the Father's wise plan
- through the Son's willing obedience
- and by Holy Spirit's powerful working.

Way Back Then

What to remember:

“God had the plan of redemption in mind before the creation of the world, and it would have remained unknown had He not revealed it in Christ. Believers live by a secret, the essence of which is Christ and His glorious purposes for the world.” (New Spirit Filled Life Study Bible by Jack Hayford)

1. Where it all started:

“...who works all things after the counsel of His will...”
Ephesians 1:11b

At the start, this scripture helps us to understand the truth that Elohim's original and only purpose was a deliberate and advance plan capable of producing new things and it originated in the counsel of His own will. His thought in its very inception, “...but will God indeed dwell on the earth?” (1 Kings 8:27) began with Him in eternity past before

anything happened...before anything was created. Thus, the plan is and remains eternal in Him.

2. And where it would all be accomplished:

*"This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which
He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord..."*

Ephesians 3:11

The things God had in mind before any of the ages began are the very things which in the mind of God are already accomplished...such is the mind of Elohim! It is only in time that they are actually being fully brought forth...carried into effect and realized. It's all been secured for us now through the incarnation, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Christ Jesus...having been sent forth from heaven by God...and is awaiting its fullest manifestation in the days ahead. (Hebrews 1:1-4; Galatians 4:4-5; Isaiah 52:13-15)

This is why we can say that Christianity is not a modern religion. It does not just date back to Jesus' birth in Bethlehem or even to the book of Acts with Peter's first sermon. Christianity is the only "religion" that dates itself from within Elohim's eternal plan formed before time began. Throughout the Old Testament the plan begins to unfold for us to see: the world's redemption would in fact spring forth from a Savior suffering the penalty of man's sin and then glorified and ascended to the throne of Elohim. First, though, a divine work of preparation was carried out by grace...until the fullness of time came. Then God the Father sent forth His Son to accomplish it.

As we continue to move along in this chapter, remember the right way whenever you are approaching His eternal purpose and the foreknowledge of God. Start with, *"I know*

nothing." (1 Corinthians 8:2) Remember, too, that the controlling element in His plan is His glory. It's that simple. We can start now with this in mind.

The Call to Obedience

"They heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day." Genesis 3:8a

A Recap: Adam and his wife fell in sin. What does it mean to fall? For them it meant they were undressed...no longer clothed with God's glory. They had collapsed internally instead and were now naked. By their own choice...an act of their will independent of His...they had come to know evil experientially. Having walked away from their God, at that moment they passed out of life into the beginning throes of spiritual death. They lost power and the light went out: in darkness and no longer innocent of sin, they bottomed out and were hiding now in that state of sin.

The Divine Approach: The scene opens with the sound of the Coming One from all eternity. Adam and his wife heard the footsteps of Him approaching them. They knew the sound...His manifested presence...His voice calling them in His name and in His glory. Much like thunder that increases in its intensity...more and more, getting louder and louder with each one of His steps. It was Christ coming to them...He never missing a beat in the wind of the day...the evening breeze of the Spirit...a new day starting now - the beginning of an unveiling of a state of grace for sinners.

(Zechariah 4:6-7)

Note: According to the order in creation in Jewish thought, a day starts in the evening. (Genesis 1:5)

The Significance Here: By initiating and making His approach to them as the LORD God at this time in their lives...for the first time, He begins to move in His redemptive name. For in the use of these two words together - LORD God - comes the revelation of Christ: God the Son coming here in His saving, protecting, and preserving activity as man's Redeemer.

- So Christ - the eternal Word - being man's Redeemer as well as his Creator, initiates and begins to engage Adam in conversation, to awaken in him a sense of his own sin...to bring him to a place of faith...a place of repentance and confession of that sin...with an examining question that asked of Adam, "*Are you hiding?*" (Genesis 3:9-11; Revelation 3:19)
- After Adam agreed to his pride and his own sin, he heard in the consequences for their sin Elohim's promise in recovering man's lost estate. Having immediately exercised faith in that promise, Adam called his wife's name Eve...mother of the living. Christ then made a suitable garment for them that would indeed cover their nakedness. (Genesis 3:13-20)

Not just forgiven, Adam and Eve were now renewed. While acting under Christ's authority and according to His direction, Adam sacrificed an animal...the innocent dying for the guilty. A garment was then made for them by Christ from the skin of that animal - a covenant having actually been cut through this first sacrifice...the promise made earlier now in full motion.

With this sacrificial death - one which provided garments for Adam and Eve - we are given a foreshadowing of the

garment of salvation: the robe of Christ's righteousness.
(Genesis 3:21; Matthew 7:30; Galatians 3:27; 2 Corinthians 5:21)

The Wonders of This Love

"...He chose us in Him..."

Ephesians 1:4

The Plan: The eternal plan of Elohim for His kingdom of heaven and earth...harmonizing and overflowing and functioning together as one, being full of His glory...began in eternity past before the ages began. The springboard of the plan being His Divine choice that He accepts all who believe in Christ as their sacrificial Lamb, it originated wholly in the freedom of His very own thoughts and grace and loving counsel, and all out of the good pleasure of His will. This eternal determination came from the Divine Mind whose foundation of His kingdom would be Christ.

The choice He made: to select or pick out and have a people of His own. Like a bouquet of flowers, this body of people would be made up of both Jews and Gentiles from all the nations...the masses of mankind...who would all be found in Christ, wherein each would be called personally by God Himself to be in union with His Son through the gospel of Christ in time. In this way each one would be without any fault; each one Christ's very own prized possession standing holy and blameless forever, each highly favored by Elohim before the throne of grace.

The choice you make: to personally accept His gift of salvation and eternal life in Christ through a genuine repentance of sin and faith in Him alone - or reject it.

God's wisdom: These chosen ones were selected in Christ before He laid the foundation of the world. Having thus

been chosen in Him and having had this election prior to their call to salvation, each one would come to Him through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit and be sprinkled with the shed blood of His Son Jesus Christ. This favor was granted to them in eternity so His blessing might actually come to each one out of a mass of others based entirely upon mercy and this definite eternal choice of God the Father. (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 1 Peter 1:2; Romans 9:21-24)

The eternal orchestration in time:

- First, came the foreordained eternal will of God the Father who selected that each one be in Christ (Ephesians.1:4)
- Next, comes the sphere of the setting apart work of the Holy Spirit in time who brings that particular sinner into an act of believing faith in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:2; Romans 10:8-10)
- Then, the Lord Jesus Christ...being the Lamb of God who gave His own life blood on the Cross for their sin...answers their faith in Him by cleansing them in that same precious shed blood. (Hebrews 9:11-14; 10:14)

This beautiful dance called grace. A set apart person for Elohim...having been chosen in Christ before the world began...having an eternal appointment with Him by divine grace and for eternal glory...and having believed upon the Lord Jesus Christ, each one in time stands now forever holy and blameless before God the Father in love.

“This refers to a present, searching gaze of God into the inner character of the saint, not to a future

judgment at the Judgment Seat of Christ. And it is not a searching gaze in a critical attitude which looks for faults, but a satisfied, delighted contemplation of the reflection of the holiness and spotlessness of the Lord Jesus in the character of the saint, for Alford says; 'implying an especial nearness and dearness to Him - and bearing a foretaste of the time when the elect shall be before (enopion) the throne of God (Rev.7:15).'" (from Wuest's exposition on Ephesians)

Through the Holy Spirit's searching gaze, He sees down into their innermost being and sees the image of Elohim in them - the Lamb of God!

The wonders of this love: As D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones so eloquently expounds in his exposition on the book of Ephesians, what can be greater or more staggering than this truth: Elohim thought of you and me by name in the counsel of His own good will in eternity. There "*He chose us in Him...*" and loved us then. We see here He not only conceived the plan, He knew each one in it. It's not so much that those who have been chosen by God are in His mind and heart now; it's that they have always been there! As believers, we are in Christ now only because we were there before He laid the foundation of the world. For this scripture in Ephesians 1:4 does not refer to our being in Christ at conversion, but instead to our being in Him before time!

The Price: This eternal plan would necessitate the shedding of a perfect man's blood: for all would fall short of the glory of God through their own sin. The law of retribution came into effect...a life for a life...for without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of their sin. But whose blood?

"Behold, the Lamb of God!"

John 1:36b

The strategy: The same eternal decree that appointed the elect to salvation, at the same time appointed Christ to be their Savior! Being fully committed to His Father's plan for them, Christ would come from heaven to earth to act on their behalf...to be their Redeemer by lowering Himself into the obedience of the death of a cross. For the One to redeem them must be without sin, and therefore must come from outside their race...yet, at the same time must be a part of it and work within it! (Romans 3:21-26; Hebrews 10:4-7)

The Redemption: The thought above is best understood from the Oriental laws of kinship involving next of kin. Here redemption is always a deliverance of a person from some form of bondage based solely on the payment of a price by a near relative. Having the right to redeem as a kinsman-redeemer, their functions included all kinds of actions whereby persons and properties within the family were bought back and restored from alienation to their proper position and relationship.

When it happened: In the Bible, redemption is a divine activity that reaches far back into eternity when God the Son became the Redeemer of the elect according to the will of His Father on behalf of His chosen ones. For in that moment of eternal election, Christ wholeheartedly agreed to secure their eternal redemption by being their kinsman-redeemer: He would be sent forth in the fullness of time to lay down His life as a sacrificial offering for their sin...something neither angels nor men could do! He Himself became the God-Man...perfect God, perfect Man...the Word who became flesh...to be the sacrifice for

their sin...the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (John 1:14; Revelation 13:8KJ)

For within the Godhead in eternity...

- the Father set the price
- the Son agreed to that price
- and the Holy Spirit forever bears witness to that price paid by the Son and accepted by the Father.

The gift: Having been already divinely elected to grace, the gift of righteousness would come to each chosen one as they believed into Jesus Christ through His redemptive death on the Cross...

- to remove from each one the guilt and shame of their sin
- to clothe each one with the Divine righteousness
- thus, making each one fit for His holy presence!

"Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the earth.'"

Matthew 25:34

The Purpose: Elohim's eternal purpose in recovering man's lost estate is indeed far reaching:

- Through the grace of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ on the Cross of Calvary, access to God the Father is available through the Holy Spirit for every select one in Christ who has believed. Each one can stand with confidence now before God the Father, and call Him their Father...Abba...for indeed He is! (Ephesians 2:18; 1 John 3:1)

- It is through the body of Christ...made up of all the select ones with Christ Himself as the head...that the glory of God's grace is being displayed to all the angelic hosts who gaze in wonder at such grace. For none of them have ever seen Christ in His human nature...the God-Man...in heaven! For Jesus, having paid the price for our sin, is now seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high and crowned with glory and honor. The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, He is there and His children are with Him. (Ephesians 3:10-11)
- At the end of this present age when the Lord returns, there will be the summing up of all things in Him as it was in the beginning when the universe was one harmonious arrangement of things. At that time, the cosmos was united to God and each other in perfect peace and friendship by His acts of creation...this union being the beginning of the creation that was in the mind of Elohim. That union will be restored once again with a new heaven and a new earth with new inhabitants; those who have been glorified in Him. Here Christ and His gathered ones...the church... will be reigning together throughout eternity. (Ephesians 1:10; Revelation 3:21-22)

The wonders of this love: Before the foundations of the earth, God the Father actually had in mind for us a kingdom. Do you see now that anyone who is born of the Holy Spirit is certainly a part of a much larger picture involving a glory in which all of His saints are to share? Your personal salvation actually demonstrates to you and others the Blessed Trinity's faithfulness to what was planned and decreed long ago in eternity for His glory...and yours. Selah (Matthew 13:35; Revelation 1:5-6)

Behold, I and the children whom God has given Me.

Hebrews 2:13b

Surely, there is nothing more glorious than this: that God the Father should be pleased to make us His children ...

- that He might reveal these very things to us
- while making us partakers of them even now
- and for a future kingdom, grace, and salvation

...that will come at our Lord Jesus' return. (Matthew 11:25-26; 2 Thessalonians 2:14; 2 Corinthians 5:1-5; Philippians 3:20-21; Mathew 25:31-34)

The Father's actual selection of you in Christ does indeed play a vital part in His eternal choice...that which He planned and accomplished for His chosen ones in eternity. This is why you and I should bow our hearts to Him and continually thank our Father for the Bible and its teachings, which unveil not only His grand design, but their glorious fulfillment! As the revelation of this mystery...hidden since the foundation of the world...has come into clearer focus for us, we can truly echo these words sung in a song: *"Holy is the Lord God Almighty...the earth is filled with His glory!"*

In closing this teaching now: Listen to the prayer Paul prayed from the amplified translation for the saints at Ephesus after having shared this very mystery with them.

For this reason [seeing the greatness of this plan by which you are built together in Christ], I bow my knees before the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for whom every family in heaven and on earth is named – [that Father] from Whom

all fatherhood takes its title and derives its name. May He grant to you out of the rich treasury of His glory to be strengthened and reinforced with mighty power in the inner man by the (Holy) Spirit [Himself] – indwelling your innermost being and personality. May Christ through your faith [actually] dwell – settle down, abide, make His permanent home – in your hearts! May you be rooted deep in love and founded securely on love, that you may have the power and be strong to apprehend and grasp with all the saints (God’s devoted people, the experience of that love) what is the breadth and length and height and depth [of it]; [that you may really come] to know – practically, through experience for yourselves – the love of Christ, which far surpasses mere knowledge (without experience); that you may be filled (through all your being) unto all the fullness of God – [that is] may have the richest measure of the Divine Presence, and become a body wholly filled and flooded with God Himself! Now to Him Who, by (in consequence of) the [action of His] power that is at work within us, is able to [carry out His purpose and] do superabundantly, far over and above all that we [dare] ask or think – infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, hopes, or dreams – to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen – so be it. (Ephesians 3:14-21AMP)

Now with more light having come your way, you may find yourself moved in spirit, just like Paul, to pray this same prayer for those who are in Christ as His soon return is quickly approaching us!

5

The King is Coming

The crowds were going ahead of Him, and those who followed, were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD; hosanna in the highest!"

Matthew 21:9

As we approach this particular chapter, we come to the holy hush of His manifested Presence within the veil. Here God's dwelling place...the most holy place...His throne room where God Himself is seated and the Lord Jesus Christ reigns. His manifested Presence here inside the curtain...solitary and alone with Elohim! Not a place to rush in and out of, the Lord Himself being your dwelling place...and you His...in this union and intimacy of spirit where you meet with Him and He with you in the secret place of the Most High God.

To Declare God Fully, He Must Be Seen

"I will set My tabernacle among you."

Leviticus 26:11a NKJ

In the book of Genesis - all in shadows and types - there was a river flowing out of Eden to water God's garden; one of its tributaries then flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there was gold and the bdellium and the onyx stone. Here the Spirit of Christ is gazing down through all the ages to the glories ahead of the new heavens and the new earth when the new Jerusalem will be coming down from heaven, God's eternal dwelling with men and theirs with Him...His delight always having been

to be in uninterrupted and intimate fellowship with His children forever. (Genesis 2:10-14; Revelation 21:1-3; 19-27)

First a better understanding: The word *tabernacle* in the scriptures can be used as a noun or a verb. As a noun, it means a residence or dwelling place...a place where one lives...and so, in this way, a covering. Just like a tent of cloth, the word has within itself a sense of being portable and thus...

- suited to be moved about from place to place
- as well as being conspicuous from a distance.

Now a quick overview: In the Old Testament, the living Elohim, pitched His own tent of meeting called the Tabernacle: the house of His glory and the tabernacle of Testimony. All within the heavenly things themselves were made visible here on earth. For the whole tabernacle was a Divine object lesson for God's people: a visual aid intended for their learning, and a picture that would portray for them in a very vivid way a specific design...a fashion...a pattern...first and foremost of

- the actual Person of His only begotten Son Jesus Christ
- along with the true gospel of salvation...a salvation that would be by grace through faith alone...totally apart from any human effort, works, or merit
- thus, demonstrating man's proper access to God and his communion with Him
- and of heaven itself...and the holy city...in which God Himself will dwell...the new Jerusalem.

Now for a more concentrated gaze within the third veil: that most sacred place of all - the innermost room called the holy of holies -

- here the actual dwelling place of Jehovah Himself,
- here the prescribed meeting place for Him and the children of Israel through a high priest,
- and here the separated and hallowed place where His Shekinah glory manifested!

When used as a verb the word *tabernacle* means *to dwell*...which has in itself the connotation of both inhabiting and walking about in. As we will be seeing, the same Elohim who dwelt in His tent of meeting in the midst of His people in the wilderness...now fully dwelling

- in Christ Jesus in the midst of His disciples during His earthly life,
- in the midst of each believer's heart upon faith in Him,
- and in the midst of His chosen ones, the Church, on the day of Pentecost.

Where to start: There can be no question about the validity of the truth. Truth is always true. You can argue with it...and even flat out deny it...but you cannot change it. One may come to the truth only in the humblest of manners: to meditate upon it, and assimilate it through Divine revelation. The truth is inerrant and always holy and remains forever the truth!

As we move forward here in the truth, we dare not be in a

hurry, rushing through it like those fools who rush in where angels do indeed fear to tread. For so great is the mystery that we are about to enter into, and so profound and holy and majestic is the truth and what it is saying to us...so august and incomprehensible to our own finite thinking...that our approach to it can only be from humbled hearts upon our knees. (Isaiah 6:1-3; Ecclesiastes 5:1-3)

In light of this, let each one of us stop and be very careful to pray first: *"Father, may the same Holy Spirit who overshadowed Mary and conceived Jesus Christ, Your only begotten Son in her womb, now overshadow my heart and work in me this very blessed truth."*

What lies before us...

The King is Coming

"...and the Word was made flesh..."

John 1:14

The Holy Spirit announcing here in this verse the absolute reality of the incarnation of the second Person of the Godhead...the eternal Word...continues His introduction of Him in the previous verses with this one word *and*...a conjunction. With that word, the Holy Spirit is bringing our thinking back to verse one and immediately connects the truth of that passage to *"...the Word was made flesh."* At this particular juncture He is helping us to recognize, perhaps for the first time, that the exact same Word who was with God in the beginning and was God...the pre-existent Son of God...Christ, the second Person of the Trinity...the Executor of the Father's will and the Creator of all things...this very same Person became flesh. At the onset, the Holy Spirit wants you to be very clear in your

thinking; the incarnation does not mean that God the Son in any kind of general or vague way entered into or dwelt or filled a man. Rather it specifically means that He, the eternal Word of God, actually became...was made...began to be...flesh. The Word who began to be flesh was indeed a true man!

Notice, though, that Christ did not simply take on a human body as some would say. Instead, He went beyond that and assumed the entire human nature by having for Himself a human spirit, soul, and body...a body with all its present limitations and frailties. He did this in order to identify Himself completely with the human race, yet at the same time be without sin or any kind of moral defect. (2 Corinthians 5:21; John 4:6, 31; Matthew 9:36)

You may wonder, "*Why so?*" Ponder here for a moment: If the eternal Word had not in this way taken on the whole man, neither could He heal the whole man. For it was through the gateway of Mary's virgin womb and His human birth, that the eternal Word entered into a new dimension of existence...not a new being. Here at this juncture - "*and the Word became flesh*" - two very distinct and perfect natures...that of the Divine and that of the human...

- truly,
- perfectly,
- and undividedly

...united and integrated as one in the Person of Jesus Christ.

Pause and reflect for a moment: The Word of God being now the unique Son of God through the overshadowing work of the Holy Spirit in His mother's womb: He being of His eternal Father's substance before the world began while at the same time being of the substance of His mother Mary born in the world. In this way in one body, He is indeed the Son of God and the Son of Man. Thus, the Word of God became flesh through this union in which He took on and assumed the nature of man: He the God-Man forevermore.

And the angel said to Mary, and then to Joseph also, "*You shall call His name JESUS.*"

"It is a great wonder to realize that the Holy Spirit framed the body of Christ within the virgin's body, but the wonder and mystery are intensified when we remember that the Holy Spirit united Deity and humanity together. God and man were combined by the Holy Spirit and formed into One Person. This is a great mystery, baffling explanation, and one which the angels pry into with adoration. Oh, beloved, how incomprehensible is the mystery! Through the Holy Ghost our Lord became not God and Man, but the 'God-Man.' He was truly 'God manifest in the flesh!' "²

This is indeed a revelation that only God can give...and it is only given through His Son. Within this mystery is the miracle that the eternal Word became what He previously was not, though He never ceased to be for one moment all that He was before! As the incarnate Son of God, this Jesus

² All About God in Christ, by Herbert Lockyer © 1995 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., Peabody, MA Used by permission. All rights reserved.

- the eternal Word - would exercise in His human existence the same powers of omnipotence He had in eternity. Thus, while tabernacling here on earth, He would effectively reveal His Father to mankind. (Luke 1:35)

The manner of this union and what we have just heard cannot be explained by our own finite minds – of this be assured; but the truth of it can be clearly seen through the Holy Scriptures. The truth of the incarnation is the foundation of the gospel of Christ and consequently of our faith. This incarnation is what we are to firmly believe with all our hearts as Christians.

One comes to faith in the same way that the apostles came to believe: that which was from the beginning they heard...and their eyes saw; and that which they looked upon and beheld...their hands handled. In a like manner, we will come into the same illumination of the eternal Word being manifest in the flesh through our diligent seeking and reading of the Word of God in the Bible. (Ezekiel 40:4)

Moving along now: As you delve into the scriptures, you'll begin to see that Christ has in fact been coming into the world from the very beginning...from the eternal counsels of the Godhead. He, the Bridegroom of the church, has in fact been advancing to claim His Bride! By moving towards His Son's incarnation first by many preparatory promises and successive revelations, but also by a lineage of descent through both Joseph and Mary. The following words by Herbert Lockyer from his book All About God in Christ can now bring us more light.

“Take Matthew: This first Gospel sets out to show the kingly descent of Him who was ‘born king of the Jews,’ and so our Lord’s royal or legal

descent is traced back to King David. In writing for Jewish readers 'the gospel of the kingdom,' Matthew realizes that it is imperative, at the very outset, 'to establish Christ's earthly claim to the throne as the successor of King David.'

Take Luke: On the other hand, Luke presents Christ as the perfectly Human One, the Son of Man, that is, as the One who became the Representative of Man; and so in his Gospel he lays stress upon His human history, and in the genealogy he gives, he proves the natural descent of Christ by traveling back to Adam."³

Note: The writers in both Gospels are showing that Jesus had the proper genealogy to qualify as the Messiah. Although Joseph was not His biological father, in the Jewish mind the man who raises a child is the legal father. The apostle Matthew then is perfectly correct in tracing Jesus' descent through Joseph, and in this way establishes that He indeed had the proper genealogy to qualify as the Messiah.

Having a right understanding...meaning you are clear minded...of the union here between deity and humanity is especially tantamount to your faith as a Christian: it being its bedrock. Indeed many heresies have especially attempted to discredit this particular truth throughout the centuries: these heresies are the doctrines of demons that have actually been perpetuated through both ignorance of the scriptures and unbelief...and many times with half-truths...which is no truth at all. Always remember that without the whole truth of John 1:14 there can be no gospel at all.

³ All About God in Christ, by Herbert Lockyer © 1995 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., Peabody, MA Used by permission. All rights reserved.

A Greater and More Perfect Tabernacle

"... and dwelt amongst us..."

John 1:14

The word *dwelt* here means to pitch a tent, and initially has within it the thought of being present by making oneself available through lodging having taken up residence and living there from that place. Jesus having been conceived and born of a virgin in Bethlehem and then raised in Nazareth...God the Son in the flesh now...He pitched His tent in the midst of God's people...never long in one place...on the move being about His Father's business on earth now. (Luke 2:6-7; Mark 1:9-11; Acts 10:38; Matthew 16:21)

Called Immanuel - God with us - God Himself is present to fulfill His covenant promises to the patriarchs through Christ's humanity. Much like Jacob's ladder on which God's angels were seen ascending and descending, Jesus Christ - spanning here the gulf between deity and humanity - descended to the earth that the redeemed might indeed ascend to God in heaven through the perfect atonement He would make on the Cross of Calvary. (Genesis 28:12-15; Ephesians 2:11-18; Hebrews 10:4-10)

A fuller picture: the word *dwelt* in this scripture is actually a tabernacle word for the Jews that...like the beacon of light in a lighthouse...pointed Him out for them. The word brings into our range of vision all the heavenly realities in His incarnation. For just like that first tabernacle in the wilderness, there was nothing outwardly appealing about Him...for those who beheld Him with their unanointed eyes saw no beauty in Him that they should desire Him. (Revelation 3:17-18)

And herein we see the King of glory...



The Holiest of All

He Emptied Himself
(Philippians 2:6-8)

To say, then, that Christ was in the form of God, is to say that He existed as essentially one with God. The expression of deity through human nature thus has its background in the expression of deity as deity in the eternal ages of God's being. Whatever the mode of this expression, it marked the being of Christ in the eternity before creation. As the form of God was identified with the being of God, so Christ, being in the form of God, was identified with the being, nature, and personality of God. Since Christ is one with God, and therefore pure being, absolute existence, He can exist without the form. This form of God Christ laid aside in His incarnation.

We understand Paul to say that Christ, being before His incarnation, in the form of God, did not regard His divine equality as a prize which was to be grasped at and retained at all hazards, but, on the contrary, laid aside the form of God, and took upon Himself the nature of man. The emphasis in the passage is upon Christ's humiliation. The fact of His equality with God is stated as a background, in order to put the circumstances of His incarnation into stronger relief.

Christ's great objective was to identify Himself with humanity; not to appear to men as divine but as human. Had He come into the world emphasizing His equality with God, the world would have been amazed, but not saved. He did not grasp at this. The rather He counted humanity His prize, and so laid aside the conditions of His pre-existent state, and became a man.

The general sense is that He divested Himself of that peculiar mode of existence which was proper and peculiar to Him as one with God. He laid aside the form of God. In so doing He did not divest Himself of His divine nature. The change was a change in state: the form of a servant for the form of God. His personality continued the same. His self-emptying was not self-extinction, nor was the divine Being changed into a mere man. In His humanity He retained the consciousness of deity, and in His incarnate state carried out the mind which animated Him before His incarnation. He was not able to assert equality with God. He was able not to assert it.

What Christ grasped at in His incarnation was not divine sovereignty, but service. The form of a servant is concerned with the fact that the manifestation as a servant corresponded with the real fact that Christ came as a servant of mankind.

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Some highlights now from within the tabernacle:

- behind the third veil of the tabernacle...the holiest of all
(Luke 4:34)
- within the ark of the covenant...Aaron's rod that budded
(Revelation 1:5-6)
- at the mercy seat of the ark...the meeting place between God and man
(John 14:6)
- and between the cherubim of glory...the manifested glory of Elohim
(Matthew 17:1-2)

"Now when Moses went into the tent of meeting to speak with Him, he heard the voice speaking to him from above the mercy seat that was on the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubim, so He spoke to him." (Numbers 7:89)

At the Feet of Jesus

***"...you will find a baby wrapped in cloths
and lying in a manger."***

Luke 2:12b

We must pause here in holy awe...long enough to make application of this truth in our hearts...and our lives that we might be ready for His return. Only as we look upward from this place of humbleness of mind will we see the purity and the glory of His Person...and from this posture, only He will be seen in us. Jesus Himself reigns in this place of adoration. For it is at the revelation of the Word of

God who began to be flesh that we truly begin to realize that we no longer need to draw attention to ourselves...we no longer need to make an impression on others. For it is here at the feet of Jesus that we, too, may step down and enter into the deepest humility and intimacy of true friendship with Him...and others as well. To see Him in His glory is what strengthens you in spirit and encourages you to remain faithful to Him while watching for His soon return...He, the Coming One.

For in the pitching or setting up of a tent there is first the fixing of stakes and pillars along with the fastening of cords that hold it in place. So, too, in Christ's humanity His body being the perfect sacrifice for our sin...first to be fastened to a tree...to be taken down and folded up...and then to be erected again without the breaking or loss of any part...His deity fully manifested in this body.

Brokenness...where there has been a death in our flesh experientially...is the gracious work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. It is a work that when properly submitted to by us will bring about a fuller expression of the incarnate and now risen and ascended Lord Jesus Christ; and not just in our lives, but on behalf of someone else's as well. On the other hand, prideful immaturity keeps us at arm's length whenever the heavenly Father is disciplining us in any area not yet fully yielded to Him. To the degree you see Jesus now is the degree to which you will be able to be in step with Him in His work on the earth today. That degree often depends upon brokenness.

Beloved friends, in light of everything you have just read in this chapter, listen very carefully now to the legend of two men who entered the celestial portals of heaven.

“The first was white robed and stainless, and when asked by the warder whence he had come and how his garments were so clean, he told how he had just passed a poor struggling traveler on this earth below whose cart had become entangled in a great swamp and how he had begged him to help him to extricate it, and with what difficulty and pain he had escaped the urgent call and kept his garments spotless to meet his Lord.

The second pilgrim followed, and his robes were soiled with mire and grime. Flushing crimson with shame, he explained that he had tried his best to keep his garments clean, but that, just as he reached the portals, he found a struggling wayfarer vainly trying to get his cart out of a quagmire, and that he could not refuse to put his shoulder to the wheel and help him out of his trouble, and so, he added, the marks are still on my once spotless robe.” (Christ in the Bible by A. B. Simpson)⁴

Galatians 2:20

Selah

⁴ Christ in the Bible Commentary by A.B. Simpson, © 2009 Zur, Ltd., Previously published by Christian Publications, Inc.. First WingSpread Publishers (an imprint of Moody Press) Edition 2009, The original Christ in the Bible Commentary series was first published in 1888. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

6

In the Holy of Holies

Has any people heard the voice of God speaking from the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and survived?

Deuteronomy 4:33

One of the most difficult words, concepts, or realities for anyone to understand in the Bible is the word *glory* as it pertains to the LORD. Yet, it is also one of the most important ones. To the natural man, it is but a foreign language, and for him there is no translation at all since the reality of Elohim's glory can only be discovered in Christ. On the other hand, for those who are spiritual - those who have been born of the Holy Spirit and are in Christ - the LORD'S true glory, in its multi-faceted meaning, is indeed a majestic and heavenly reality for them both presently and in the future. Much like the natural air you and I breathe and live in, His glory is not only the environment, but the purpose for which we have been called in Christ.

Like any artery in our physical bodies, the LORD'S glory is a major theme within the pages of the Bible. The thought alone almost takes one's breath away...here where one feels the brush of angels' wings. For this word carries within itself that which brings us into unhindered intimacy and full fellowship with Elohim. Then, too, like golden threads that are threaded and interwoven into a beautiful tapestry, the Holy Spirit has threaded the word *glory* all throughout the Old and New Testaments for our instruction and edification and glorification.

The joy in this chapter is that the LORD'S' glory is for those who have heard the gospel of Christ's glory and have personally received Him by faith as their Lord and Savior. As you will soon see, God's glory is to be not merely a hope for the future, but an eternal reality in the present that has actually been made available to each one of us through the incarnation of Christ.

Its essence, however, is awaiting to be discovered by those who are not satisfied with the mere presence of the Lord in their lives; but, like Moses, would dare to go beyond God's promise and press on in and say to Him in their desire to know Him more deeply and personally and fully...*"I pray, show me Your glory."* (Exodus 33:18)

Before we go any further, though, here are some important definitions to refer to as you continue in reading and reflecting on the truth in this chapter. These words are *italicized* for you in the text and are being used as springboards that the Holy Spirit can take to lift your eyes up and carry you higher in spirit, thus bringing you into more of an illumination of the fullness of the LORD'S glory.

- Adumbration: to prefigure indistinctly...a sketchy outline...to foreshadow...to disclose partially or guardedly
- Efficacy: having power or capacity to produce the desired result; ability to achieve results; effectiveness
- Effulgence: resplendent radiance
- Manifestation: the demonstration of the existence, reality, or presence of a person, object, or

quality...out in the open...therefore, a public demonstration

- Transcendent: superior to or notably above all others...pre-eminent...above and independent of the material universe
- Sublime: characterized by nobility; grand; majestic...of high spiritual, moral, or intellectual worth; not to be excelled; supreme...inspiring awe; impressive; moving...of lofty appearance...raised aloft; set high

The God of Glory

And the city has no need of the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.

Revelation 21:23

The thought in the word *glory* is that of seeing the unseen One who exists. Although Elohim is invisible to the naked eye, the evidence of the truth that He exists is clearly seen by all. You may wonder how that can be. Go outside, look around you, and then look up: the creation of the cosmos is His *manifestation*...self-disclosure...of who He is and that He is here. By its sheer evidence, we become cognizant of His invisible nature and attributes...along with His eternal power. This is Elohim's glory...He is seen.

For within the Godhead...

- all glory originates with God the Father...He being the source from whom all divine splendor and perfection manifest (Ephesians 1:17)

- all glory shines through God the Son...He being the express image of His Father (Hebrews 1:3)
- all glory is revealed and imparted by God the Spirit...He being the One who administrates the grace that culminates in glory (Ephesians 1:13-14)

As the God of glory, Elohim is glory personified. This means He is its perfect example; in fact, its embodiment: meaning to represent an abstraction as having personality and the qualities, thoughts, or movements of a living being. The God of glory is the living God. Whenever He manifests His glory, He is affirming that He does not simply exist but that He is actively present here in each and every space of His vast creation...for He is never limited by place or time. He is instead actively involved in each and every life and in all creation. (Acts 17:27-28)

To better grasp the fundamental idea in the word *glory*, contemplate this thought: much like the aurora borealis of the Alaskan sky at the top of the world, the glory of something is the exercise of the characteristics enhancing its appearance. It is a display of what actually makes up the distinctive excellence of the subject of which it is spoken. Think about that for a moment. Something that is glorious from within doesn't have to draw attention to itself from without. Instead, everything from within already adds up and speaks for itself – just like a good reputation. (Psalm 19:1-5)

We have a framework now in which to see more clearly how this word *glory* applies to the living God. In simplicity, the word comes to us from Hebrew and Greek words that have within them the thought of...

- weight,
- reputation,
- worth,
- heaviness,
- and pure worship.

Note: When manifested, the sheer weight of His glory...the heaviness of it experientially... acts like gravity: it brings with it a downward pull, pulling you down to a place of trembling and awe and adoration at the feet of His Divine Person. (Isaiah 2:10-11)

Elohim's *glory* is the sum total then of His immeasurable attributes and perfect nature...the honor, the renown, and the majesty of His covenant name: I AM. That name...LORD...and His glory are inseparable. Whenever in *manifestation*, you will see...

- His intrinsic worth and excellence and holiness and deity (Luke 5:8-9)
- or such a visible *effulgence* that it indicates the possession of these. (Matthew 17:2)

I AM is the God of glory. In the words of Bob Sorge, His glory manifested is "*the invasion of God's reality into the human sphere.*" Remember this: when you see the LORD's glory, you have seen Him; and when you see Him, you have seen His glory!

Note: The majestic holiness and the glory and the power of God are all very closely related to each other. In light of this, a person's encounter with Elohim's *manifested* glory is often an encounter first with His holiness.

Since true glory can never be separated from the living Elohim, it is also a word that is often used interchangeably

with heaven itself. For heaven is where He is enthroned in the very serene altitudes and elevations of His own *sublime* perfections...and His very own splendor and majesty. Before His throne and throughout all of heaven is the outshining of His Person...of His own *transcendent* uniqueness and holiness. Again, from the words of Bob Sorge, here is yet another facet of that word: "*Glory is the heavenly dimension where the magnitude of God's Personhood irradiates throughout the heavenlies.*" Here indeed is where everything says, "*Glory!*" (Psalm 29:9; Ezekiel 1:4&26-28; Revelation 4:5-6)

Selah

The Shekinah Glory

"...behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud."
Exodus 16:10

Wherever the LORD sets up His dwelling place...wherever He tabernacles...is where the Shekinah glory is seen. (Exodus 13:20-22; 14:19-20) The word *shekinah* is a Hebrew word that means *dwelling of Elohim*. Here there will be the visible *manifestation* of God's holy presence and glory. In the wilderness tabernacle was His glory - seen as a cloud by day and fire by night. Here was where the LORD dwelt among His people, and manifested His name to them, and spoke to Moses and Aaron. "*And the glory of the LORD stood there*". Here was the voice of God...the Word of God...His Son speaking in His activities of divine holiness. (Genesis 15:17; Exodus 3:2; Exodus 34:5-8, Ezekiel 3:23; Revelation 1:12-16)

In the Old Testament, the presence of the LORD's shekinah glory was actually an *adumbration*...a prefiguring...of the incarnate Christ who was coming into the earth. Keep in

mind as you read the scriptures that these manifestations...often in fiery manifestations...were His name and holy nature and perfections and the glory of them as displayed in Christ! (Joshua 5:13-15; 2 Chronicles 7:1-3)

In the New Testament, the Shekinah came...the Word became flesh. God the Son came down from heaven to tabernacle...pitch His tent...and dwell in the midst of His people. The Word being the radiance of the glory of God in human flesh....Jesus the Christ is the manifold wisdom and visible presence of God His Father on earth. And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, Christ came down in His Shekinah glory by His Spirit to fill his temple once again with glory. (John 1:14; Matthew 16:16-17; Acts 2:2-3)

Having been raised from the dead and ascended to heaven victorious over Satan, sin, and death, the Lord Jesus is coming again in the clouds of glory to reign over all the nations on earth in that glory; and at that time, the fullness of the whole earth will be His Shekinah glory. (Daniel 7:13-14; Matthew 26:62-64; Isaiah 6:1-3)

The Glory of the Son of God

*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we
beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten of the
Father full of grace and truth.*

John 1:14

We are ready now with this extraordinary view of glory to continue from where we left off in the last chapter. We seldom think of His incarnation as His glory, but just for a moment we are going to come more fully into that glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then we will be able to move into another aspect of His *transcendent* glory...His ascension glory before the throne of His Father. For in the face of

Jesus Christ there is always the light of the knowledge of God's glory!

A recap on Christ's incarnation glory...what to remember:

- When the Word became flesh, He did not stop exercising His Divine functions which were His before...for His deity was never abandoned, or reduced, or contracted in any way or at any time.
- His incarnation was not a diminishing of His deity, but rather an acquiring of manhood...a true manhood in which He lived in a full dependence upon the Holy Spirit as a man.
- In His earth walk, He continued in the same state of dependence and obedience to His heavenly Father, since His incarnation never changed His relationship with Him. Thus, they remained in unbroken fellowship.

God the Father's wisdom here: Christ's deity was the guarantee that He would achieve in the flesh the sinlessness which would be a prerequisite for Him to die as a lamb without spot or blemish.

The truth of the incarnation is pivotal here. Jesus Christ...Lord at His birth...is indeed God in the flesh! Can you see why?

"It was a state of temptation and moral conflict, because the incarnation was a true entry into the conditions of man's moral life. Though, being God, it was not in Him to yield to temptation, yet, being man, it was necessary for him to fight temptation in order to overcome it. What His

deity ensured was not that He would not be tempted to stray from the Father's will, nor that He would be exempt from the strain and distress that repeated insidious temptations create in the soul, but that, when tempted He would fight and win..." (New Bible Dictionary by Tyndale)

Selah

We can move now into His ascension glory:

"...a Lamb standing, as if slain..."
Revelation 5:6

As the apostle John began to refrain from weeping, he lifted his eyes to gaze upon the King of glory...the Lion of Judah...and saw a Lamb standing, as if slain: not a similitude or likeness of a lamb slain, but the reality - meaning a lamb newly or recently slain. You might say a fresh kill.

"Expecting to behold a kingly and ferocious lion, John turns to observe a "Lamb" ...which, while obviously alive, nevertheless exhibited the marks of sacrifice. He has been dead, but now is alive. Horns are symbolic of power and authority. Eyes signify insight, watchfulness, and comprehension. That there are seven of each speaks of the fullness of power and thorough watchfulness. Thus, this verse symbolically illustrates the omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence of the Lamb".
(The Believer's Bible)

This Lamb: the One thus standing in the middle of the throne of God and of the four living creatures and in the middle of the elders - there is yet another fresh and

confirming revelation of His glory for all to see...the never ending virtue of His own shed blood and sacrificial death on the Cross of Calvary.

He standing, signifying to all that ...

- The eternal redemption wrought by Jesus Christ was by price...not power...it being not only the blood of an innocent man, but God's as well! His sprinkled holy blood on the sacrificial altar of Calvary is yet speaking of better things before the mercy seat His Father's throne...being of full and sufficient value, His sprinkled blood calls for peace and pardon.
- This continued *efficacy* of His shed blood speaking is available here to all who believe on Him to take away...to put away and cleanse...to release...from sin.
- The Lord Jesus being risen from the dead...a fully glorified Man ascended into heaven...is standing near to His Father seated on the throne.
- This Man being their Mediator...is their Advocate...ready to give them assistance before His Father's throne of grace and do for them all the good they may have need of from Him by the Holy Spirit.

Here in Christ's ascension glory, we come more intimately into the knowledge that...

- there is one God,
- and one mediator also between God and man,

- the man Christ Jesus;
- who gave Himself as a ransom for all,
- the testimony given at the proper time. (1Timothy 2:5-6)

This Lamb standing: His worthiness at the throne of His Father is no longer from His eternal deity alone, but from that one great act of His in redemption as the sacrificial Lamb of God. Jesus Christ, now forever a fully glorified Man, is presently functioning at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven in the office of High Priest. Here He faithfully represents each believer at the mercy seat of His Father's throne of grace...

- to hear and judge the causes of His people,
- to resolve their doubts,
- and to remove their difficulties of unbelief.

How great is our God! (Hebrews 2:14-18; 4:14-16)

In His Holy Presence

*"...let me know Your ways that I may know You...
I pray You, show me Your glory..."*
Exodus 33:13-18

Here in eternity...in the holy of holies...is the reality of the announcement at Christ's birth in Bethlehem:

Glory to God in the highest!
To His people on earth peace!

The joy of the angels' message was the glory of God: His shalom peace, the peace that heals the estrangement between a sinful man and a holy God. It is for all the people of God: those who have put their faith in Jesus

Christ as God the Son incarnate and His sacrificial work of redemption on the Cross of Calvary and His subsequent resurrection from the dead for them.

Glory to God in the highest! Jesus...the Holy One of God...is the way into the manifested presence of God. Like the royal red carpet that is laid down before a king, His will having been laid down in the garden of Gethsemane...His human flesh then sacrificed...torn and deeply lacerated...His life blood spilled out on the Cross of Calvary. All in spiritual order that God's wrath towards sin might be fully satisfied, and that you and I might be forgiven of our sin and fully filled with the Spirit of glory. Only through Jesus Christ is there free access to meet with His Father who lives in His unapproachable light and holiness and glory!

Jesus Christ Himself is the way...a straight and narrow way into His Father's manifested presence...one which is...

- free from guilt,
- free from condemnation,
- and free from inferiority.

The way is open not only to enter into His Father's presence, but to live there as well. For in Christ, Elohim is no longer shut up within the holy of holies; and you are no longer shut out! You are actually here in spirit with Him...Christ Himself being the secret place of the Most High...wherein you are His sanctuary and He yours: God being in you, and you being in Him! (Genesis 3:24; John 14:20)

The Work of God in Our Hearts: The holy Bible, being from the beginning to end the gospel of the glory of Christ,

gives to each one of us, as in a mirror, the proper perspective of who the Christ is first, and then of ourselves as well. The Father is always longing and waiting patiently to reveal more of His Son to the humble in soul and the pure in heart. For His glory is to be seen and reflected by His people, the church. (Isaiah 40:18-26; Ephesians 1:7-8; 2 Corinthians 5:17)

The moment you believed into the Lord Jesus Christ the veil of flesh on your heart was removed. You are free to gaze now upon Him as The Holiest of All and see Him in all of His glory. Here in heaven, where the LORD sits enthroned above the cherubim, you may stand in spirit...even while here on earth...in His actual presence to commune and fellowship with Him. (2 Corinthians 3:14-18)

The Father's desire here is to reveal in you your risen and ascended Lord and Savior...and in such a way and to such a degree that the consciousness of His Person within you becomes a living reality to you and others. For it has always been in the mind of Elohim that His glory is to be seen by His people and then reflected through them to a waiting world. (Galatians 1:15-16a; Ephesians 2:4-7; 2 Corinthians 4:6-7)

In light of this, what we all have need of in our lives is that ongoing work of the Holy Spirit that rends the veil of the self-life from top to bottom. For any un-crucified flesh patterns in us act much like the veil did in the Old Testament between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. Like any finely meshed screen door, they hinder and restrict our gaze within the Holy of Holies. With a gaze through our flesh, we find ourselves having only an outward appearance of the Son of God, but not the inward reality of His Person within our spirit.

To more readily understand the reality of what has just been said, pause and think for a moment on the words of A.W. Tozer from The Pursuit of God

“A man may say, ‘I feel that my son is coming nearer to me as he gets older,’ and yet that son has lived by his father’s side since he was born and has never been away from home more than a day or so in his entire life. What can the father mean? Obviously, he is speaking of experience. He means that the boy is coming to know him more intimately and with deeper understanding, that the barriers of thought and feeling between the two are disappearing, that the father and the son are becoming more closely united in mind and heart. So when we sing, ‘Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed, Lord,’ we are not thinking of the nearness of place, but the nearness of relationship. It is for increasing degrees of awareness that we pray, for a more perfect consciousness of the divine Presence. We need never shout across the spaces to an absent God. He is nearer than our own soul, closer than our most secret thoughts.”⁵

In light of this truth, what is Elohim doing in your life today? He...the God of glory...the eternal and living God...is moving you closer in relationship to this perfection. This is His upward call to you in Christ...your high calling in Him...so that you may not only receive, but reflect His glory to those around you. Your heavenly Father at this very moment is moving you along now in this nearness of relationship to Him as your Father. He is

⁵ Pursuit of God, by A.W. Tozer © 1982, 1993 by Christian Publishers, Inc. succeeded by WingSpread Publishers an imprint of Moody Press

jealously working on your behalf to develop you in your actual union with Him...in the actual and full experience of His Presence within you...and into the fullest and most intimate communion of your soul with His Son. Your Father's good pleasure is that you may live on earth in the same way that your forerunner, the Lord Jesus Christ, did: He lived continually in the holy presence of His Father!

This is what Moses earnestly desired in the deepest recesses of his soul. For he knew he couldn't go any further in his walk with the LORD and his God-ordained purpose on earth without a deeper and more intimate and fuller knowledge of Him...the One who does indeed dwell in fiery manifestations. So he prayed in the language of careful thought: "...show me Your glory."

In contrast, Isaiah and Ezekiel didn't know they needed such a revelation. Yet it was one God was pleased to grant them: a vision of Himself...His form, His essence, and His very nature...and the glory of it. And that is what each one saw in a unique way to prepare them more deeply for service to Him in faithfulness and holiness and operative power.

Listen now to Tozer's thoughtful prayer:

"O Lord, I have heard a good word inviting me to look away to Thee and be satisfied. My heart longs to respond, but sin has clouded my vision till I see Thee but dimly. Be pleased to cleanse me in Thine own precious blood, and make me inwardly pure, so I may with unveiled eyes gaze upon Thee all the days of my earthly pilgrimage. Then shall I be prepared to behold Thee in full splendor in the day when Thou shalt appear to be

glorified in Thy saints and admired in them that believe.”

What a day that will be! The way is open. Only one thing is needful. He is waiting for your response. A fresh work of God in your heart always begins with honesty...and a fresh revelation of Him in glory. Did you hear His internal call to you to come up higher in His Son, the glorified and exalted One, and to know Him more intimately in your soul? It is your Father’s good pleasure that you begin to climb the heights of truth here in Jesus’ ascension glory at this particular juncture in your walk with Him; and then to sound the depths of these tremendous spiritual realities by agreeing with Him to pray from a tenacious heart like Moses: *“I pray You, show me Your glory.”*

It’s that simple. If you are moved in spirit to pray that, He will do it!

*“...and they will see the glory of the LORD,
the majesty of our God.”*

Isaiah 35:2c

7

The Revelation of Christ in His Present Glory

*Sacrifice and offering You have not desired,
but a body You have prepared for Me.*
Hebrews 10:5b

Where the Holy Spirit has recently brought me in my walk with the Lord Jesus is to see that in the body of Christ many of us stop at His Cross and never go beyond beholding that glorious truth, never coming to the next step: the empty tomb and His resurrection life. Then there are those who come to that step and stop there, and never move on to beholding Jesus in His ascension glory...His enthronement and sovereign power...sitting at right hand of God His Father, beyond earthly clouds and human sight where...

- He now being a glorified Man is presently enthroned...elevated...in heaven's highest heights - He seated in a place of honor next to His Father having been invested with all sovereign authority and power,
- angels and authorities and powers having been put into subjection...under obedience...to Him - He now the head of all things to the church,
- Stephen, being full of the Holy Spirit, saw the Son of Man in an open vision - He having been received into heaven standing up at the right hand of God ready to welcome His first martyr home.

Surely, what the church needs in this present hour before the Lord's return to earth is a fresh revelation of the gospel of the glory of Christ...and the contents thereof!

This gospel's point of origin is God Himself. Thus, the true gospel can only be...

- the message of Christ Himself...that which was actually preached by the leaders of the early church after His ascension: the good tidings of His Person, the finished work of His atonement, and the comprehensiveness of His resurrection and ascension
- and the full impact of it...like the one Paul received: not from man, but through the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is helpful to understand what the word *gospel* actually means in the New Testament. It is indeed an all encompassing word.

"In classical literature the word designated the reward given for good tidings. It also indicated the message itself, originally the announcement of victory, but later applied to other messages bringing joy. That it is found more than 75 times in the New Testament indicates a distinctly Christian connotation. The gospel is the good news that God in Jesus Christ has fulfilled His promises to Israel, and that a way of salvation has been opened to all." (New Bible Dictionary)

With all this in mind, you may be wondering, "*Where then is the dilemma for the church?*" God knows and is fully aware of our unbelief! Christ's disciples themselves were

certainly no exception. They could not comprehend the resurrection in their own thinking...and even when they began to do so, they were still slow to believe in what had truly happened even though the Lord had spoken to them about it on more than one occasion. In fact, in the throes of sadness and discouragement after His death, they forgot His words to them that He would be raised on the third day...and they started to return to their old manner of living. (Luke 24:13-27)

*“For as yet they did not understand the Scripture,
that He must rise again from the dead.”*

John 20:9

If you truly understand the gospel of Christ and His Cross, you will also understand Elohim's eternal purpose. There are four records of the gospel in the Bible, and all of them go into details that specifically show us that Jesus Christ was actually put to death on the cross. The reality that is depicted and written in each gospel is that He truly died. This they all agree on; and this they all testify to. For in order for any one of us to see the vastness of the miracle of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, we must first be fully convinced that He experienced a true death on that cross.

However, in each one of these accounts that reality of Jesus' death changed three days later. On the third day reality was that this same Jesus who died on the cross rose from the dead; and that is eternal. He is alive indeed...alive forever with a glorified body, one that can never experience death again! For at His tomb, and on the stone that had been rolled away, sat an angel with an invitation: *“Come, see the place where He was laying.”* Matthew 28:6b

The stone had not been rolled away from the tomb by the angel so the Lord could get out. The tomb was empty: Jesus having already risen from the dead with a renewed body...one that is true, real, and material...one that is indeed glorified...a human body that fully exhibits Elohim's glory! The angel's invitation here at His empty tomb was so witnesses could actually enter in to scrutinize the evidence therein and begin to believe the reality of His resurrection.

The initial evidence of Christ's resurrection:

"...and he saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up by itself." (John 20:6b-7)

The linen wrappings: The grave-clothes...strips of linen anointed with aloes and myrrh that were wrapped tightly together around the exterior limbs of Jesus' body...still having the shape of that body, and

The face-cloth: The head-cloth, which had been bound about Jesus' head, face, and neck having been removed, was seen wrapped together in a place by itself - still having the contour of Jesus' head, neck and face - thus signaling an act of composure and careful thought in arising.

With the face-cloth having been lifted off and set aside in another place, those who entered the tomb were able to see beyond a shadow of doubt. It would have been much like looking into an empty cocoon. They could see clearly in the empty cavity of the linen wrappings that the body of Jesus was no longer there - not because someone had removed it, but because He had risen. He sat up out of the grave clothes, removed the napkin, and stood up - now a

new Man fully clothed in His Father's glory: just as He had said.

Here the realization of His bodily resurrection was finally beginning to sink in for them!

"...after three days, I will rise again."

Matthew 27:63b

The initial importance of the resurrection:

Jesus said to those Jews who were asking for a sign of His authority, *"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."* (John 2:19) The word *raise* in this scripture literally means *arise again up*. Like when one is roused from sleep, it means to awaken...whether from sitting or lying down. The thought in the word is that of the inherent power and action of a horse that rears itself up on its hind legs. Who can make such a claim as this to raise up their body out of death by their own power? Who has this kind of power? Only God does! Thus, Jesus' resurrection was to be the final proof of His hotly contested Sonship and Messiahship among the Jewish people...as well as the seal that His work of atonement had been fully accepted by His heavenly Father. (Luke 7:12-15; John 10:18)

Note: It is important to remember that only with respect to His human nature was Jesus raised from the dead. The word *rise* means to lift up...stand upright...an upright and active position.

Establishing the Eternal Sonship of Christ

As we are beginning to discover, the content of the gospel is not so much a message or a collection of teachings as it is a Person...the living One who became dead and is alive forever more. (1 Corinthians 15:12; Revelation 1:18) For the

true gospel is always centered in the Father's Son, who is Christ...and of what He has accomplished for His Father's glory by His resurrection and the Holy Spirit's subsequent endowment.

In simplicity, the word *Christ* means *anointed one*...the Messiah. God the Son is the Messiah, the Anointed One. Having been chosen from within the Godhead and anointed...set apart to God and installed in a sacred office... anointed from eternity to come, He is the Coming One.

Now we can go to two scriptures written by the hand of Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit where he will be bringing us up into the very highest conception of Christ as the only true subject matter of the gospel of God!

"... the gospel of God...concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh"

Romans 1:2b-3

The words here *His Son* is a title, as well as a Person! Paul is making it plain for us from the very onset that the Son never had a station lower than that of equality with His Father. These words in fact establish Him in first place as eternal and pre-existent. His incarnation would only be a historical beginning for Him. This beginning is a matter of record, He being of the seed of David. A record means that it actually happened, and helps us to understand that He simply entered into a new phase of His life! (Luke 1:30-35)

Thus, having established the Christ's...the Anointed One's...incarnation in these words, Paul then moves us right along to His resurrection in the next verse.

*"who was declared to be the Son of God with power
by the resurrection from the dead,"*

Romans 1:4a

The word *declared* actually comes into its fuller meaning in the thought of appointed. (Acts 10:42; Acts 17:30-31)

Appointed means...

- to select or designate,
- to fill an office or position,
- to fix or set by authority or mutual agreement.

Note: In law *appointed* means to direct the disposition of property to a person...or persons...in exercise of a power granted for this purpose by a preceding deed. Selah.

Remembering that His Son's...

- incarnation,
- death and burial,
- resurrection,
- and ascension

...was all done according to the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God.

In Elohim's mind, the incarnation and the resurrection ran parallel to each other...much like railroad tracks do...and all for an ordained purpose of power that we will be coming to shortly. Consider now these parallel tracks and the wonderful contrasts between them in His Son:

- there is both the prophetic and the historical
- there is both the humiliation and the exaltation
- and there is both the commitment and the achievement.

In the scripture we are contemplating, Jesus Christ is not being said to be the Son of God since that truth was established for us in verse 3. Rather, the emphasis here falls on these words: *with power*. What Paul wrote for us by inspiration of the Holy Spirit is one continuous thought. Jesus the Christ has been appointed the Son of God *with power*. Here these words are pointing to yet another historical beginning for the Son.

What does all that mean?

- First, through His resurrection, we see the power Jesus actually possessed and exercised as the God-Man. For when the angel was announcing His new status and glory with these words, "*He is risen*" - the power of that resurrection Jesus did! (John 10:17-18; John 20:26-28)
- Then going beyond the veil of the flesh, we look...and see Him having actually entered into a new phase of His Lordship and glory through His resurrection! (Acts 2:36; Hebrews 4:14; 1 Peter 3:21-22)

Have you seen here the beautiful tapestry in this eternal Sonship of Christ? He...

**the eternal Son of God → the eternal Son of God incarnate →
the eternal Son of God incarnate with power**

Here are three key words in order to grasp the mystery before us always the Christ...always the Messiah.

1) *Instated*: to put into office

2) *Invested*: to endow with rank, authority, or power

3) *Investiture*: the formal ceremony of conferring upon one the authority and symbols of a high office

Ponder now this thought from John Murray's The Epistle to the Romans that will shed even more light on the eternal gospel and what is being said to us from Romans 1:4.

“...it is not only proper but altogether reasonable to regard it as another phase of the historical process which provides the subject matter of the gospel. The apostle is dealing with some particular event in the history of the Son of God incarnate by which He was instated in a position of sovereignty and invested with power, an event which in respect of investiture with power surpassed everything that could previously be ascribed to Him in His incarnate state...he is referring to the new phase of His messianic lordship.”

Jesus, the Anointed One

The holy anointing oil was olive oil compounded with spices. It was poured upon the head of the high priest in such a large quantity that it would flow down from there upon his beard and from there down even upon the edges of his robes. This anointing in Psalm 133 was looking forward to the promised anointing that would be upon Christ as High Priest without measure and with all the fragrance and sweet graces of the Holy Spirit Himself.

Note: In what follows, *new* means fresh as to form or quality...being of a different nature from what is contrasted with the old. It does not mean new in reference to time.

*"...and having received from the Father the
promised Holy Spirit..."*

Acts 2:33

This, the triumphant crown of all redemptive history!

From Christ's incarnation

- to His death on the Cross,
- to His burial in the tomb,
- to His glorification and resurrection from the dead,
- and to His ascension and entrance again into glory

where He received His exaltation...elevation...to the right hand of God His Father - and there received from Him His promise, the Holy Spirit. This wisdom had been in the eternal mind of the Godhead from all eternity. For these stages...like stepping stones leading up to the front door of a house...were the necessary places of preparation for God the Son to receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit as the Son of Man. In this way, the Spirit of truth could then be poured down on the day of Pentecost upon those who had had faith in Him as the Christ...and, in this way, fully usher into the earth at this present time the age of the Holy Spirit and the church. (Isaiah 44:2-4; Joel 2:28-29; John 7:39; Acts 2:1-4; John 16:8-11)

*"And they all continued in amazement and great
perplexity, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?'"*

Acts 2:12

Like the stunned audience who heard and saw the evidence of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on God's people on the day of Pentecost, you too may be asking that same question. Listen carefully to the words of Andrew Murray in The Spirit of Christ:

“God made man in His own image, and for His likeness, with the distinct object that he should become like Himself. Man was to be a temple for God to dwell in; he was to become the home in which God would rest. The closest and most intimate union, the indwelling of love: this was what the Holy One longed for, and looked forward to. What was feebly set forth in type in the temple of Israel became a Divine reality in Jesus of Nazareth: God had found a man in whom He could rest, whose whole being was opened to the rule of His will and the fellowship of His love. In Him there was a human nature, possessed by the Divine Spirit; and such God would have all men to be. And such all would be, who accepted of this Jesus and His Spirit as their life...His resurrection was the entrance of human nature, free from all weakness of the flesh, into the life of Deity, the Divine Spirit-life. His ascension was admittance as Man into the very glory of God; the participation by human nature of perfect fellowship with God in glory in the unity of the Spirit...Something, the chief thing, was still wanting. How could the Father dwell in men even as He had dwelt in Christ...?

Before this, however, could take place with any human individual, the Spirit had first as the Power of the Most High, that is, as He had hitherto existed only in the transcendence of the Divine nature, to form and secure for Himself in human nature a centre, whence He might communicate Himself. In this central nature, the Spirit had to be brought into a free organic union with man's psychical and physical nature as existing in the flesh, and that nature had even so

to be formed into the organ of the Spirit. In one word, a man, anointed and permeated with the Holy Spirit, the Anointed, had to be formed.”⁶

*“The Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit
of the Lord is there is liberty”*

2 Corinthians 3:17 KJV

This is the evidence of the subsequent pouring forth of the Spirit having come upon Him as the Son of Man and of that formation having actually taken place. The Spirit of God permeated...flowed...throughout His total humanity! The Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus Christ are now forever in this new state of total oneness...and of the most intimate fellowship.

Thus, having been closely united and conjoined...you might say, as Siamese twins are...yet without any confusion of their distinct Persons: Jesus – first having been fully tested and proven absolutely pure and blameless in every aspect of His humanity - is perfectly and fully united and identified with the Holy Spirit. In the same manner, the Holy Spirit is perfectly and fully united and identified with Him! In Their total and complete oneness here, the Holy Spirit is free to move in the earth now in a *new* way ministering and revealing and manifesting the very life and Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Father’s Son! (Hebrews 2:9-10; Hebrews 5:7-10; Acts 3:11-16)

This *new* endowment...or new clothing...of the Son of Man with the Holy Spirit tells us two things:

⁶ The Spirit of Christ: Thoughts on the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the Believer and the Church by Rev. Andrew Murray, A.D.F.Randolph & Co., New York, 1888(?)

- This anointing of Jesus by His Father was correspondent (equal in weight, character, quantity, origin, structure, and function) with the Lordship He would now be continuing to exercise in His three-fold function as Prophet, Priest, and King. Jesus the Christ, having entered into a *new* phase of His sovereignty here, is the Head of all things to the church, His mystical body. (Acts 2:32-36; Ephesians 1:20-23; Philippians 2:9-11)
- This same Holy Spirit who came upon and clothed Jesus Christ in *new* power at His exaltation, would then flow down upon the church to take possession of her. In this way, the Holy Spirit could execute for them all the blessings that had been purchased by the Lord's redemptive work on the cross and secured for them by His resurrection. (Acts 2:1-4; 2 Corinthians 1:19-22; Ephesians 1:3)

Do you see now how secure you and I are in Christ, and why we can have confidence in Him as Lord? Elohim is our victory. Jesus Christ won the battle and is ever present in His resurrection life and glory!

This is how much He has loved you...for now nothing can separate you from Him or Him from you. With more light, we can join in now with the words of the song that says, "*Praise the One who paid my debt, and raised His life up from the dead!*" Here is another song which is in perfect harmony with it: "*Jesus, I can never forget what You have done for me!*"

Celebrate this Jesus! He is risen indeed: His glory now has indeed filled the highest place in heaven...and you. You are His dwelling place!

May this sacred truth continue to resonate within each one of the hearts who have believed in Him; and may they live in such a way that others see the Lord Jesus Christ in them!

***“Why do you seek the living One among the dead?
He is not here, but He has risen.”***

Luke 24:5b-6a

Selah

Closing thought: Throughout the entire Bible is the Divine record of the gospel of God both in its simplicity and power and in its entirety and fullness. From the gospel's opening words in the book of Genesis - *“In the beginning”* - to Jesus' closing words in the book of Revelation - *“Yes, I am coming quickly”* - you will see a series of titles by which He, the eternal Son of God, is clearly delineated...to draw or trace the outline of...to sketch out...to depict in words.

- *Jesus:* fixes His historical identity for you and expresses His Saviorhood
- *Christ:* points you to His deity and official work as the Anointed One
- *Lord:* is an indicator to you of His Lordship in which He is presently exercising all authority both in heaven and earth

For by His resurrection, God the Father made His incarnate Son both Lord and Christ: not for the first time, but rather in this *new* phase of His messianic Lordship wherein Jesus has received from His Father the promised Holy Spirit!

“He said to them, ‘Who do you say that I am?’”

Matthew 16:15

“If the narrative of John had ended with Chapter 19, it would not have been exceptional; all human biographies end with death. The picture of Jesus would have been that of a man of exceptional character, who made extraordinary claims, and whose sincerity could not be reasonably doubted. Nevertheless, the main narrative would have been closed with a sense of frustration. His claims would have been negated, His aspirations would have been unrealized, and His teaching would have been too lofty to be true. The major difference between the life and teachings of Jesus and those of any other great religious leader lies in the fact that Jesus rose from the dead and the others did not, however persistent their influence may be.” (The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, volume 9, book of John)

Whether in embracing and exalting Him...or in opposing and rejecting Him...the truth remains for all to see: no one else can make – or has made - the claim Jesus Christ made on earth and fulfill it: *“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”* The fact that there is an historical Jesus is absolutely true. There are no hidden agendas in that fact. Think about it for a moment: no one has ever talked about a man some 2000 years after His birth like Him! The truth remains for all of us to see: Jesus of Nazareth - always the Son, always the Christ.

Whatever intellectual or religious circles you may find yourself in, this Jesus in the holy Bible is still being talked about today. Why is that? It is God’s wisdom in moving you right along to face this question head on: *“Who is*

Jesus?" Whether you have never believed in this Jesus, or having believed are still growing in that knowledge of Him, the answer remains the same: there is now a heavenly Man who reigns forever enthroned and anointed in heaven having conquered sin, death, and Satan for you! To Him now be the glory in the church and on earth!

"...Holy, Holy, Holy, is Jehovah of Hosts, the fullness of all the earth is His glory."

Isaiah 6:3 (YLT)

8

At the Sound of His Great Name

*The LORD has established His throne in the heavens;
and His sovereignty rules over all.*

Psalm 103:19

The King in His resurrection life and ascension glory - high and lifted up...having first been proven pure in every aspect of His humanity is now completely filled throughout with the train of Divine perfections. He, a new Man glorified and exalted, is presently seated in heaven far above every other name. His name is JESUS...Jehovah saves!

As you continue in reading this chapter, my prayer is that the Holy Spirit will lift you up in spirit far above the earthly into the very fullness of Christ Himself...where He can be seen enthroned in His Father's glory. May the eyes of your heart be illuminated with a fresh revelation of the God-Man from God's Word...the Lord Jesus Christ...and the centrality of His ascension life in glory.

As we begin to enter now into a fresh revelation of Christ in His present glory, listen to these words written by John H. Armstrong, the general editor of The Glory of Christ:

"From Genesis to Revelation the Bible is centered on Jesus, yet it is often talked about as if its purpose is to be a guide for church growth, a happy marriage, or healthy self-esteem. Looking to God's Word for principles and insights regarding practical issues is appropriate, but even more, we must seek within its pages fresh revelations of God's

unique Son, Jesus Christ. For if we gather only moralistic examples and lessons from the Bible, how can we reveal to the world the wonder of our Savior?"

*"...He was received up into heaven and sat down
at the right hand of God."*

Mark 16:19b

The truth here of Jesus' bodily ascension into heaven (it really did happen) is seen in His present glory. To get a fresh revelation of that glory, we must first go to the opening words of the book of Hebrews first, and there gaze upon Jesus Christ in His *essential* glory as...

- God the Son -
- the heir of all things,
- the Creator of all things,
- the brightness of the Father's glory,
- the exact impression of Deity,
- and the upholder of all creation.

Getting a proper perspective:

Verse one of chapter one in the book of Hebrews immediately sets everything into proper order and perspective. In the New American Standard translation, the verse actually begins with the word: "*God.*" He is where everything starts and ends! Then we are instructed that it was at the end of the last days of speaking through the prophets that...at that time...God the Father spoke fully and directly in His Son to all of mankind about the kingdom of God and redemption. (Mark 1:14-15)

For whenever Jesus opened His mouth and spoke, it was God Himself speaking. Like a bell ringing with a distinct and clear sound, Jesus Himself resonated Deity through

and through...not only in His words, but in both His nature and character and in His actions as well. To Philip Jesus said: *"Have you been with me so long and have not come to know Me? He who has seen Me has seen the Father."* (John 14:8-10) Being the second Person of the Trinity, Jesus expressed in Himself all that the Father is: His thoughts, His heart, His ways, His perfections, and His glory.

For in Christ alone the revelation would be coming into all its fullness for all to see: the Lamb of God standing...both complete and final: a perfect Man with the keys of death and Hades now hanging from His golden girdle. This One...who became dead, and behold, is alive forever more...is coming into the earth again in His Father's glory to return everything into its proper place for all eternity. (Numbers 14:21; Revelation 19:11-16; 21:1)

First, three highlights of His *essential* glory:

- **Christ: the heir of all things:** An heir is someone who inherits by decree and gets something by apportionment...*"this is yours."* In time, he becomes the possessor of that very thing. Being a son and being an heir are interconnected: they fit together. A son is an heir naturally by birth *and* by right. In the eternal counsels of the Godhead, God the Father - with the Holy Spirit bearing witness - appointed His only begotten Son the possessor and highest sovereign of all things, He being the firstborn...the first in line...and so the heir of all things. (Psalm 89:24-29)
- **Christ: the Creator of all things:** Not only is His Son the Source of all creation and of the ages, but the One who implements and actively manages it as well. For all created things are the work of His

hands: whether visible or invisible to the naked eye or whether being large or small in the eyes of man, all originally came out of nothing...all never by chance...and all by Him alone. In simplicity, this means that nothing exists or functions independently from the Son, their Creator. Each one is a creature of His. (Nehemiah 9:6) For all things having been created by the Son, were created first in the eternal mind of the Father with a goal: all being a wise adaptation of part to part and of the whole to its perfectly synchronized purpose.

Consider the extraordinary extent of what was just said from Wuest's commentary on the book of Hebrews:

"The idea in the word *aionas* (age) is not merely that of the vastness and magnificence of the physical universe, but the thought of the times and ages through which the purpose and plan of God are gradually unfolding."

Not only have all things been created by the Son, they were created for Him by His Father and for His pleasure. That's logical, isn't it? The Son, being the heir of all things, created all things that He might take delight in them...with His own perfections being displayed in them. (Colossians 1:15-17)

- **Christ: the upholder of all creation:** The Heir of all things being the Creator of all things is also the Upholder of all things. For all having been created by the Son and for Him, they were also created in Him...He the center. He is the very sphere in which...having created them...orders them in proper function and relationship to one another at all times. The reality then is that nothing exists or

functions without Him or independently of Him. As their Upholder, the Son oversees, holds together, and manages all things in His creation...not only the great vastness and constant movement of the entire physical universe, but everything in them and all the times and ages to come as well. (Psalm 104)

Now consider this quote in regards to the Son as creation's Upholder:

"It was and is His responsibility to see to it that they in the plan of God are brought to a final ultimate and proper conclusion. Sin interposed itself in the smooth working perfect universe. In carrying on all things to the desired end, the Son had to confront and deal with sin which had thrown the world into disorder and out of God's order." (Word Studies in the Greek New Testament Vol. II by Kenneth Wuest)

With the stage having been set, we now want to move on to the dividing point of all history and begin to look more fully into His *acquired* glory.

He, Our Great High Priest

"...when He had made purification for sins..."

Hebrews 1:3

When Christ appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, He was acting as our great High Priest in office *and* function. Through His sacrificial death here, He offered Himself, His human body beaten and His flesh pierced through on the Cross of Calvary. Here His own life blood was shed and spilled, being offered up to God His

Father in order that sin - in all its impurities - be permanently put away from Him, not only original sin, but our personal sins as well!

Jesus' suffering of death on the Cross - the dividing line of all history - removed away all of sin's defilement and guilt and punishment for us, thereby dismissing man's debt that was owed to Elohim. A clean cut was made: a decisive action that carried out to the full its intended and eternal purpose, having permanently removed sin from before the eyes of the Father as far as the east is from the west - and from this point onward, a new beginning. (Ephesians 2:13-16)

Ushering in the Messianic Age

On the left side:

The last day of the
first period
The old covenant
Christ's incarnation
His earthly ministry



On the right side:

The first day of the second period
The new covenant
Christ's resurrection & ascension
His present heavenly ministry

How precious indeed is the shed blood of Jesus Christ here...it's sacrificial blood! It's His spilled blood that makes it possible for each one of us to be freely and completely forgiven by God the Father...and put back into right relationship with Him once and for all. For the Father is waiting to forgive those who believe on His Son...whether Jew or Gentile...based solely on the merit of the shed blood of His Son and His priestly work of atonement...a making at one...on the Cross of Calvary. To be forgiven so that each one may enter into the fullness of Elohim

Himself...and all that He has had in mind for them from eternity and the beginning of time. (Revelation 5:9-10; 21:1-8)

Our Great Priest - the heart of the matter here:

- He sat down,
- having inherited a more excellent name!

“...from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God.”

Luke 22:69

When He spoke these words, Jesus had eternity in mind knowing fully why He had come into the earth and where He was going. He spoke in faith directly to those around Him who would not believe and knew Him only as a man. He spoke here not only of His soon vindication as the Son of God, but also of His soon exaltation to the very throne of His Father as the Son of Man. (John 18:33-37; Matthew 19:28-30)

The majesty and exaltation in these words becomes more clear to us when we understand that in a country where the usual posture of being seated was either squatting or reclining, a chair being used by anyone was regarded at all times as a symbol of highest honor and greatest dignity. In the scriptures, the throne is the seat of power: an elevated seat that is occupied by a person in authority - whether a high priest, a judge, a military chief, or a king.

Note: To sit...or seat oneself...is a sign of supremacy or government; specifically, it is spoken of judges who sit to dispense justice and of kings, sitting as judges or on a throne.

A thought now from Arthur Pink's commentary, An Exposition on Hebrews, on the Lord's soon exaltation as Christ:

"But Christ, after He had affected His sacrifice unto God, entered into heaven itself, not to stand in humble reverence before the throne, but to sit at God's right hand; and that not for a season, but forevermore."

Jesus' exalted position in heaven is that He is presently seated. This enthronement having come to Him through:

- His voluntary and supreme humiliation of self-sacrifice,
- His complete identification with the redeemed as their brother,
- and His triumph over sin in the flesh.

Upon His entrance into heaven, Jesus was seated at the right hand of the Majesty on High as our Mediator on the throne of His glory. Seated because His work of atonement is finished, He is resting in that completed work. Triumphant, He need never to arise and offer another sacrifice for our sins. (Hebrews 10:11-18)

More light now...to enthrone means to:

- *set* on a throne,
- *invest* with sovereign power or with the authority of high office,
- and *raise* to a lofty position.

You may be wondering, "Why the right hand?" The right hand is:

- the symbol of power and strength,
- and a place of active service.

On the throne of God's Kingdom - here the highest of heights - is a perfect Man. Jesus the Christ as He is today...who lived and loved, and suffered and died, and behold - having conquered sin and the realm of death on the Cross - is alive and living today unto the ages of the ages...and forever more. This Man crowned with the victor's crown is seated at **the right hand** of His Father having inherited a more excellent name...with all of His essential *and* acquired glory now filling heaven itself!

Our Savior's majesty: For out of Christ's human life, death, and resurrection came a type of sovereignty that applies only to Him. Jesus is now our brother...meaning "from the same womb" (Matthew 28:10; John 20:17; Hebrews 2:12-13) In the eternal counsels of Elohim, His Messianic Lordship had always been a matter of function as the Son of Man...and not of inherent power and majesty as the Son of God. Therein we see the beautiful tapestry of Elohim's wisdom: something was to be acquired by Christ which He did not have possession of before His incarnation...and could not have possessed without it. (Zechariah 6:12-13)

"For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the Name which is above every name"

Philippians 2: 9

In the Greek, these two words together *highly exalted* mean to exalt to the highest rank and power - to raise to supreme majesty, to elevate above all others!

What is in a name? In western culture a name is often little more than a label or a distinguishing mark of some sort. In the world of biblical times, however, the name was seen as a summation of all that the person is; and so their whole character and purpose was seen as being implied in the name.

After His bodily ascension into heaven, at that very point in time when Jesus seated Himself at the right hand of the Majesty on high, all He had laid aside in His incarnation was restored to Him...and much more. For in His enthronement He inherited a more excellent name, a kingdom, and what had been promised to Him before the foundations of the earth. (Psalm 2:6-8; Hebrews 2:13)

Elohim's testimony in heaven:

"That which was bestowed was not 'a name', but 'the Name.' The definite article appears in the Greek text and refers to a particular name. The title, The Name, is a very common Hebrew title, denoting office, rank, dignity...The conferring of this title 'The Name', was upon the Lord Jesus as the Son of Man. A Man, the Man Christ Jesus, who as very God, had voluntarily laid aside His expression of the glory of Deity during His incarnation, now has placed upon His shoulders all the majesty, dignity, and glory of Deity itself." (Kenneth Wuest's Word Studies in the Greek New Testament Vol. II)

One would want to ask then, "*What is in the Name of Jesus?*" In His Name is a more excellent Name...one that is the insignia of majesty...the holy and royal Name of Deity...Lord! (John 20:28)

In the Name of Jesus – in the sphere of that Name – is...

- the Son of God
- the Anointed One
- the Son of Man
- the Heir of all things
- the Creator of all things
- the Upholder of all things
- the Savior
- the Redeemer
- the Lamb of God
- the Holy One
- the Living One
- the Exalted One
- the Judge
- the King of the nations
- the Alpha and Omega
- the Amen

...and all the sovereignty and the honor and the power
and the glory of Elohim Himself!

***“...and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ
is Lord to the glory of God the Father.”***

Philippians 2:11

Jesus Christ in His human nature, the Son of Man, has that name...Lord. This Name is the one that is the highest above all other names in heaven: honored of all, and preferred above all. Here on the throne of glory, in first place, we see Elohim's highest and final blessing to all mankind: a risen and glorified Man enthroned at the right hand of God the Father, with the Holy Spirit bearing witness. This Man Jesus Christ is God's only begotten Son in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily. This Man is the holiest and highest of all, crowned now

with all honor and all glory and all power. This Man is the King of Glory, the revelation of Elohim's very majesty. This Man is presently reigning and ruling in heaven out over all created things and all the governments and the destinies of men on earth: part to part, and the whole of it! (1 Chronicles 29:11; Isaiah 33:17-22; Revelation 21:23)

The coming consummation: At Jesus' return when He sets up His Father's kingdom here on earth, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess the Name which belongs to Him alone...Lord. There will be a universal acknowledgement at the sound of this great Name from all...

- angels,
- saints,
- satanic hosts,
- and lost souls.

All will submit and subject themselves to Him: not in a universal salvation, but in a universal acknowledgement of His sovereignty in heaven, on earth, and under the earth! All will indeed own up with an open confession that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of His Father. (Isaiah 45:23-25; Philippians 2:9-11)

The marvel this grand scheme and divine order of things is that in the middle of it are the redeemed! For all of this was thought of and done with His glory and children in mind: that with the Lord Jesus we too might share in His glory as co-heirs. (Romans 8:16-17; Hebrews 2:11-13)

Ah, now the words of a love song should bubble up within the hearts of those who have believed in His Name. A song that is often sung in times of worship can have a much

wider expression and deeper meaning for us as we sing:
"How wonderful and how marvelous is my Savior's love for us!"

A close encounter of another kind...

Now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and soul. Deuteronomy 10:12

You and I must never stop looking upwards and away from the things of the earth to see the Lord Jesus enthroned and seated in all of His glory. Indeed, there is much more of His transcendent glory that you and I have not seen! It is the revelation of the glories of His glory that will more deeply strengthen you in spirit to run your race of faith while here on earth. In fact, we are to hunger to see the Lord in His glory: for it is the very image into which the Holy Spirit is seeking to transform us!

Here the Holy Spirit awakens desire and hope within us that is both holy and heavenly. As was said at the end of chapter 6...a simple prayer from a sincere and earnest heart is all that is needed: *"Father, show me Your glory."* As the Holy Spirit then begins to magnify and manifest the sublime glory of your enthroned Lord and Savior in you, you will see in that light your true need. For the light of His glory always has a very humbling affect upon the soul: and therein is the secret of remaining in humility that the light of His glory may indeed shine through you!

Here there will be for a fresh circumcision of the fleshly parts of your heart to restrain and subdue its stubbornness and waywardness...of which self is the center and selfishness the essence. All that interferes in any way with His right of authority as Lord must be cut off no matter

how painful the process. Here Jesus' Name becomes central and supreme...the Lord is indeed in first place in you!

Here a new obedience begins to spring forth from both a fitting sense of and response to His glory...His majesty and greatness. The Lord is indeed too great and too holy and too glorious within for any one of us to trifle with or to presume upon Him - as in the familiarity or flippancy of ordinary conversation. A holy fear of Him...a holy trembling before Him...will guide your thoughts and words and actions into His very commands. (Psalm 99)

When you hear God's voice speaking to you in spirit from His glory within, you discover that faith works by love...*"no greater love has this than a man lay down his life for his friends"*...and so in faith you present yourself to Him heart and soul into His service. As you adore Him here in His excellencies, your duty to serve Him becomes your joy! You enter more deeply into His resurrection life and fellowship and His ascension glory...HE, being your very great reward!

9

The Call From Above

*Heaven is My throne and earth is the footstool of My feet;
what kind of house will you build for Me? says the Lord,
or what place is there for My repose?*

Acts 7:49

Introduction Thought: All the pieces coming together now from the previous chapters; the eternal Elohim with an eternal glory who has an eternal mind, an eternal plan, an eternal election, and an eternal redemption. In this chapter, we will be seeing that within that there is also an eternal grace within an eternal call!

Now we can begin a panoramic view on the call of God on our lives...a call that began in the eternal counsels of the Godhead according to a divine plan...one that would continue to come down through the ages (both in the Old and New Testament) to the elect of God. This call from His throne comes through the preaching of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ...calling those who hear into His kingdom and His eternal glory. (Galatians 1:6; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; 1 Peter 5:10)

In His manifold wisdom, Elohim's call would come to each of the elect based solely upon the grace of Christ. It would behoove us then to stop here for a moment and ask our heavenly Father for a fresh revelation of that beautiful and wondrous act of His called *grace*.

First, A Revelation of Grace: The whole movement of a Christian's life - from its very inception all the way

through to its final consummation in glory - is dependent solely upon God's grace. For grace is the divine operational agency of God...from His initial call to the final glory of the redeemed.

The vastness of God's grace is best seen when we consider first our own innate human existence separate or apart from Christ...a state which at that time is actually one of

- independence from God,
- alienation from God,
- and spiritual death.

"For we, also, once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." Titus 3:3

In this darkened state of sin, God's grace and truth came to us in His incarnate Son Jesus Christ. For both calling and salvation from God have never arisen - not even for a moment - from any righteous actions on our part...meaning works that you or I perform out of our own human effort or merit. In God's eyes, the truth is that since we are born sinners, we have never done any kind of works of true righteousness in that state, for at that point in time we were both innately and completely incapable of doing those works that alone bring Him glory. (Psalm 90:8; Isaiah 64:6; Romans 3:23)

The general concept of grace comes to us from the thought of a favor that is extended to someone which is both unearned and unmerited. Spelled out, this means that any recipient of grace never has to work for it...and neither do they deserve it. If they do, it's not grace, for grace gives freely.

From the throne of God His grace comes down from a superior to an inferior, yes...this is absolutely true. Yet through His incarnate Son Jesus Christ, grace is given to those who are dearly loved by Him. Grace extends itself freely...because its only motive comes from within the fullness and the free-heartedness of the giver. Thus, true grace in action has no expectation of a return....and it is the key element in anyone's relationship to God. For that relationship has been eternally and wisely designed by Him to function through grace alone... never by our own works.

The embodiment of God's grace is His Son Jesus Christ; and its finest expression is seen in His suffering and death on the Cross of Calvary for sinners. It was grace alone that empowered Jesus to freely lay down His life for us sacrificially...to pay the penalty for our sins by tasting death for each one of us personally. Here His body hung, already bruised and broken with beatings, shedding His own life-blood for our sins; and only here through His Son's grace and sacrificial giving, has God His Father poured out His love, mercy, and forgiveness...and only here is salvation freely presented as a gift to any sinner who will believe. (Hebrews 2:9)

Now we can see more clearly that any believer's subsequent acceptance by God can never ever be explained by anything in themselves...but always and only by the grace of Christ and the will of God His Father. This is grace! (Titus 3:4-7; 2 Timothy 1:9-10)

A responsive heart to grace in this light is grateful and humble at the same time and says, *"Father, I do not deserve Your love, Your mercy, or Your grace; but You did it for me anyhow."*

The Elect of God Are Called

Moving along now into the call of God that comes through grace...this call from above...is a distinctive calling to each one. Much like a phone when it rings, it is...

- set apart,
- well defined,
- and easily perceived.

"...the calling with which you have been called."

Ephesians 4:1

The Greek word *called* means to call aloud...and so when speaking of a person it means *whose name was called* or *one called alongside of*. Called ones are called by name according to His divine plan and purpose...to be a functioning part of the proper working of the whole. (Ephesians 4:16) When God calls you, He calls your name...that you may hear, and come, and do that which is incumbent upon you. It is like children standing in line at school who, when they hear their name called, step forward...they step out from where they are into that to which they have been called.

God's calling calls you. His Voice speaking to you has within it the power to bring you to where He is calling you. In other words, His call is an effectual one: it is fully adequate and sufficient within itself to produce a final and complete outcome!

The call of God is one that calls the elect out from the dead into a life that is holy and pleasing to Him...it is His sovereign act in saving them by grace. For no one chosen of God can come to Christ on their own...they must hear the call that God calls them by. Like a name on a roll call, His personal call will come into each one's hearing at an

appointed time through the gospel of His Son Jesus Christ. This is all a part of His eternal plan that is before Him.

The call of God...like a diamond that reflects light...is multi-faceted. A holy God is the One who calls each one...and in this way He separates them out from the rest of fallen mankind. His call to them is not so they may come and be occupied with service...but rather that in His high and holy calling He may occupy them with Himself and accomplish through them the attaining of His own glory...that they might receive the promise of an eternal inheritance and that His beloved Son Jesus Christ have first place in everything!

For more light on this call of God, we need to pause briefly now to get a proper understanding of what salvation truly means.

Now, The Good News of Salvation: Salvation is always pictured in the Bible as deliverance from sin and all of its consequences. In the Old Testament salvation literally means to bring into a spacious environment. It would be much like being brought into a large open room...one in which a person can breathe and move around in. In the New Testament there comes a widening of the lens...for here salvation is primarily seen as a saving from acute danger.

The good news is that God Himself is the author of salvation. To be the author of salvation means there is no other savior but Him...for there is no one who can deliver from sin and all its consequences but Him. Simply put, salvation is God Himself meeting with any sinner at their point of original need through the grace of His Son Jesus Christ.

Salvation began in eternity...here God the Father strategically planned it...and from here it was executed. Within the mind of the Godhead, this eternal plan of salvation would be His supreme and complete work of bringing fallen man out from his state of sin to a state of glory. Here in the Father's wisdom, the good news of salvation is that grace would come through Christ alone. (1 Corinthians 1:20-25)

Called out of Darkness into His Marvelous Light

How can a dead person be raised to life? This is the question that the eternal counsels of the Godhead addressed and answered for mankind long before the foundation of the world...and before Adam and Eve ever fell from their place of intimacy and fellowship with Him in creation.

*"For this son of mine was dead and has
come to life again..."*

Luke 15:24

In this parable of the prodigal son, Jesus answers those Pharisees and scribes who were grumbling about His association with sinners. What the father heard in his son's confession was that he had indeed died...for his youngest son was thoroughly done with his old lifestyle. He no longer wanted to sin.

From this parable, we go to the Cross of Christ where we can see its true significance and power. Through His own Son's death on the Cross for sinners, God the Father made a similar provision for anyone who believes into His Son Jesus Christ. For on the Cross Jesus Christ not only paid the penalty for their sin, but He died a death to sin for

them in His flesh as well. In this way, His death brings about a perfect salvation for those who are called with His holy calling to them:

"Come out from among them and be separate, says the LORD. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD God Almighty."

2 Corinthians 6:17-18

The call of God to the elect is far reaching...having heard the truth of the gospel, a sinner comes by faith to Jesus Christ to receive the forgiveness of their sins. At that very moment in time, the Holy Spirit moves in regeneration power...creating them anew in the image of Christ...by placing them in Him. There they are brought into a living union with Jesus Christ in order that the power of their sin nature over them may be broken and His divine nature imparted to them. The ramifications of this salvation are profound.

Having been placed in Christ and united with Him in spirit, they now share with Him in His death, burial, and resurrection. Not in a process of...but in a definite once for all act at each one of these junctures...effectively separating one out from sin...and raising them up into spiritual life for all eternity.

Here the one who is dead, dies no more. Having been joined with Christ in His...

- death: It is through Christ's own death that the believing sinner is put to death...their old self having died with Him experientially on the Cross. Through this death, they are permanently separated from their old sin nature...much like a

circumcision in which the excess of flesh is cut off. They are dead now to sin - their body no longer has to be under the control of that old sinful nature;

- burial: The burial of Jesus was both the reality and the proof of His own death. So too for the believing sinner: the old self is entombed - meaning buried into His death. It can in no way get out! The burial here stresses for them the completeness of their identification with Christ in His death...the purpose of which is the newness of life that then follows through His resurrection;
- resurrection: Jesus' resurrection was the seal of His triumph over sin, death, and Satan on the Cross. In light of that complete victory, the believing sinner in his identification with Christ, is raised up a new man into the newness of His life. He is alive to God now having had His own divine nature imparted to him. That divine nature within him is his source of spiritual life...as well as the source of grace from which he may continue to draw upon to behave himself. He is more than a conqueror for eternal life is in his present possession!

Having been called, you know now that in your union with Jesus Christ you were permanently united with Him in the likeness of His death as well as permanently united with Him in the likeness of His resurrection. The present result of this union is that you are no longer to be rendering a slave's habitual obedience to that old sin nature, but rather to God Himself!

By grace, you were saved and you are in a saved state at this present time. That's the operative power of grace!

In this way, each new believer having been called by the grace of Christ into salvation is no longer a sinner by nature. Now they are children of God by nature to love and obey Him wholeheartedly. Alive to Him, they stand before God their Father in this permanent relationship of freedom from their sin nature. They are a holy and set apart person for Him. They have entered into eternal life! This is the liberty of His children. They are free now to know and love and serve Him intimately with a future view to their full and final glorification with the Lord Jesus Christ at His second coming. This holy call of God on their life is an eternal one!

(John 17:3; 1 Timothy 6:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:14)

Note: To more fully understand what the Holy Spirit wants to communicate to us in the call of God, we must understand what the word *with* means. In this English word, there are actually two different Greek words. As a conjunction, both of them have within them the concept of a joining together. One expresses the reality of actual union...meaning 2 become one by an act of joining...now one substance they are bound up together...intertwined...in union with each other. It means *together with*. (1 Corinthians 6:17) The other has the thought of *to be in company with*...to be in the midst of...a joining in which one is traveling along together with another. (Luke 24:15) As we will soon see, for the called of Jesus Christ both apply.

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

The call from above is a call to participate in the grace of a new position for each one in their relationship to God as their Father. By their faith in His Son and in their subsequent union with Him through the regeneration of the Holy Spirit, a permanent and definite change of position has taken place for the called of Christ. There has been an about face...no longer under law...they are under grace!

"...there they shall be called sons of the living God."

Romans 9:26

Sonship in this scripture has to do with the position of one who stands. It is speaking specifically of that status and dignity of the specific relationship that the Holy Spirit brings each believing sinner into the moment they believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. (Galatians 3:26)

Like a rite of passage, what circumcision is for a young boy who comes of full age in some tribal communities, each new believer immediately passes into a new relationship with God as their Father. Having come into the position of a son through their union with His Son the Lord Jesus Christ, each called one stands in the perfect law of liberty...each no longer under law, but under grace. This is the ever present reality of eternal life!

Note: To say that one is a child of God stresses spiritual birth; whereas to say that one is a son of God stresses evidence of the dignity of their relationship to God as their Father and of their likeness to His Son's character.

Through the regeneration of the Holy Spirit and spiritual union, every new believer is spiritually alive...having entered into an actual relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ as their exalted Redeemer and the Risen One who ascended bodily to the throne of God the Father in heaven. He can intimately commune with each one of them now in spirit...and they with Him...in conscious reciprocal love. In a personal relationship with every believer, the Lord Jesus comes to fully satisfy their longings with Himself; and they - learning to draw more increasingly from His fullness - are receiving His resurrection life within them. Here they are in want of no good thing...here in the rapture of this holy love and joy! Herein is also, the

relationship of companionship. He Himself in their midst is their very companion....the One who is accompanying them on life's journey here on earth - not just by His possession of them through the Cross, but by resemblance and process as well!

(Romans 8:28-30; 1 Corinthians 6:17; 2 Peter 1:1-8)

*"...you were called into the fellowship of His Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord."*

1 Corinthians 1:9

The call from above is a call to the grace of participation in the body of Christ. The Greek word for *fellowship* (koinonia) actually means having a common bond...that of common union and in this way sharing unity. Christian fellowship always carries with it a deep sense of being in spiritual unity...in communion with the Lord, God's only unique Son, and other sons. Into this joint-participation are God's sons called!

Did you see there that this fellowship is a joint-participation with God's Son that involves other sons? Genuine fellowship is where the sons of God share together in the intimate bond of their union in Christ. All sons...all equal...are gathered together in and around God's Son, the Holy One actively present in their midst. It is a close association of the most intimate kind...and a participation by contribution. Each son unique...each gifted differently...coming and working together as well. This is the hallmark of true fellowship in the Lord. It is truly living out the love of God that was demonstrated for us on the Cross of Christ...and the unity we have by grace as a result of it.

This is a much bigger picture than what it may first appear to be. The *you* in 1 Corinthians 1:9 is in the plural. It's not

only about each son and their own personal communion with the Lord Jesus...for in this joint-participation with His Son, all the sons of God are united with each other in Him...all are eye level...all being of the same substance. This is the mystical body of Christ!
(John 3:6; 1 Corinthians 6: 15a; 12:12-14)

To unite means:

- to bring together so as to form a whole;
- to cause to adhere, to bond;
- to combine people in an interest, attitude, and action.

Think of it like a fishing net of interlocking pieces that is made up of one material. By virtue of their spiritual birth every son is a member of the spiritual body of Christ. Having been united to Christ and to other sons by the Holy Spirit...all of the same fabric. Forever united with Him in one body...function to function...in spiritual formation with Him as Head. A dwelling place of God in the Spirit now, distinctions that formerly divided them no longer exist. It is grace in operation. (Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 3:14-16)

What is needful now:

"Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ...because it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I AM holy.'" 1 Peter 1:13-16

The call from above is a call to holiness. Holiness is not only absolute moral perfection, it is entire freedom from moral evil as well. It is one of the essential attributes of the Godhead. Holiness is who God is intrinsically.

Holiness can also signify a state of separation to Him. It is into this state of purity which God the Father effectually calls the elect through the gospel of His Son. This is the state that every son of God actually begins their Christian journey on earth. In this state of holiness, there is the thought of the moral conduct that naturally befits God's sons. They, having been separated in Christ from the world and its ungodly ways, have been set apart for holy service and worship to God their Father with...

- lives of dedication to Him
- and lives regulated by His will.

For every son there is not only their Father's calling which summons them to a holy life...but to a holy life they are expected to live! Obedience is what makes the wheels go round. (Ezekiel 1:19-21) The Holy Spirit within them can now move more freely...unhindered, ungrieved, and unquenched. For without holiness, no one can see God!

The call from above is a call to worship. Worship is a way of life for the sons of God, not just a Sunday service...or even a quiet devotional time. In the body of Christ true worship is where all sons look to Him, and then place Him above all else!

In the Bible, the central concept in worship is that of service. In a sense, the two words are interchangeable with each other. In the Old Testament, *worshipful service* began with a word that means to bow self down. This means to fall down flat in order to honor and reverence God alone. In the New Testament, this same language of *self-sacrificial service* is also used.

"And He died for all that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again."
(2 Corinthians 5:15)

"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain." (John 12:24)

"But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return..." (Luke 6:35)

"For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus sake that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh."
(2 Corinthians 4:11)

Having been called together in this way His sons are ...

***"...to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God
through Jesus Christ."***
1 Peter 2: 5

Is it the Work of Man or of God?

This is the issue that the Lord Jesus addressed when answering the Pharisees who persecuted Him and were seeking opportunity to kill Him for His healing of a man on the Sabbath. And this is the same issue He is confronting in the church today! (John 5:15-17)

The call from above is a call to the intimacy of service where each member of His body on earth is a functioning part of another...like the gears within a wheel. Much like a soldier reporting for duty, every son is to present himself to God as being alive from the dead and their bodily members as instruments for service in His righteousness and kingdom work here on earth. Each son has been called

from above to lay down their own life in active service to the King of glory for a harvest of souls in the earth...their mortal body a temple now of the Holy Spirit in which Jesus Himself desires to manifest His presence, power, and glory. This is how the work gets done!

Like any tightly compacted body, these sons...having come together without any confidence in themselves, but with a full dependence upon the Holy Spirit...are looking to their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as the Head of His church. Having the mind of Christ within them, they are found co-laboring together with Him part to part in His body that He might be fully seen and known by others in all of His power and glory.

First place is now being in a place of service. Sons are themselves to be living sacrifices, not in words only but in deeds by having given to God their Father all they are: broken of their own desires...of all their dreams and all their plans. In this position of absolute surrender and humbleness of mind, others will see the Lord Jesus and His righteous acts...and then glorify God His Father! (Romans 12:1; John 12:26)

Now to the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

Called according to this purpose into the unity of joint-participation, the sons of God are to be an extension of His anointing and grace in the earth. In order to take part by contribution in this joint-venture with the Holy Spirit, each one has been graced with various gifts of Himself. With John at his side, Peter said to the man who had been lame from his mother's womb, "*...but such as I have give I thee; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.*" For here there was a work of God...not of man! (Acts 3:1-10)

Through a company of His sons thus connected and working together gifting to gifting and in perfect unity and interdependence...here a place of humbleness of mind and holy obedience to God and nonconformity to the world...there is indeed a new kind of leadership in their midst: the Lord Jesus Christ Himself the Great Shepherd of the sheep is leading them! Great grace is upon them for there is a genuine love for Him that manifests itself in an abiding concern for the needs of others. One Voice speaks through them with the Holy Spirit Himself manifesting the His enthroned presence in their midst...ministering through them His very grace and power and glory...growing sons up and calling the lost to Himself.

In this way, the sons of God truly rejoice in grace and their call from above...while giving praise to their eternal Father with their very lives. They are working together now in the service of their God in order to make a difference in the earth for eternity, the whole of their lives being devoted to Jesus as Lord. For it is no longer about them and their various visions and plans. Here in the true fellowship of joint participation, sons are working together, walking worthy now of their calling giving praise to their holy Father expressing their deepest love and gratitude to Him for His grace and His glory! (Psalm 133)

“And they sang the song of Moses, the bondservant of the Lord, and the song of the Lamb, saying,

*‘Great and marvelous are Your works,
O Lord God, the Almighty;
Righteous and true are Your ways,
King of the nations!*

*Who will not fear You, O Lord,
And glorify Your name?*

*For You alone are holy;
For all the nations will come
And worship before You,
For Your righteous acts have been revealed.'"*
Revelation 15:3-4

Have you heard the call from above?

Apart from our lives actually demonstrating this call from above, our lives and ministries will remain mostly fruitless in God's eyes. More than that, the next generation and a waiting world will only see the outward form of dead religion...of what we can do...rather than the inward reality and power of the risen and heavenly Man named Jesus, glorified and enthroned at the right hand of His Father in glory.

It has always been in the mind of Elohim to have the expression of who He is come through man into the earth. What the Lord Jesus began in His earthly life He desires to continue to do through His body here on earth until He returns for His bride...when the sons of God will indeed rejoice and possess the kingdom of their God. (John 14:12-14; Daniel 7:21-22)

Consider now these words of W. C. Moore from Herald of His Coming, vol. 71 No.2 (842):

"God is calling today for a group of people who will stand in the gap that the Spirit of the Lord may move through them and 'an exceedingly great army' of Christians may be put on the field for these last days...Let us in these days believe

God to send a mighty flood tide of resurrection power flooding into the church that from valleys of very dry bones, spiritually speaking, shall come forth armies of Christian soldiers...winning sheaves to lay at the nail-pierced feet of Jesus, the blessed Son of God."

Selah

10

The Race We Are Running

*But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn
that shines brighter and brighter until the full day.*

Proverbs 4:18

As we begin this closing chapter, what we want to remember: the word *gospel* is a word that actually came from a Greek word that pointed out and specified the reward given. In this way over time, it came to mean the *good news* itself. The good news, however, is more than words...it is a promise made by Elohim...a promise involving a kingdom that He set out to build and establish. That promise provides not only for salvation and on-going sanctification in the present for those who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, but also its consummation and fulfillment in the future by His incarnation, sacrificial death, resurrection, and ascension. (Matthew 25:34)

Now we can begin. As truly marvelous as it is to be called of God and to have been saved by grace through faith in that gospel of the glory of Christ...there is an eternal calling to the body of Christ - not just at a moment in time but for all eternity.

In that calling, there is a race still to be run...one which will be a contest of faith and endurance for each true Christian while they are here on earth. In light of this...and in order for you to run that race...like any runner, you must have a proper perspective.

A perspective is...

- a view or vista,
- the appearance of objects in depth,
- and/or the relationship of aspects of a subject to each other and to the whole.

A runner's proper perspective must first be of their trainer, then of themselves, the course, the finish line, and the prize. There must also be a proper attitude coupled with that perspective. That attitude is a state of mind that actually unites the runner with that very perspective! In this way, each runner can run the race with the confident expectation of crossing the finish line and winning the prize is set before them.

"... the race that is set before us..."

Hebrews 12:1

Proper Perspective:

God the Father is their Father. This is a revelation that every child of God needs; and what an amazing one it is! Ponder this for a moment: the One who alone created the heavens and the earth and all the ages as well, begat His children Himself...bringing them forth with the word of truth the moment they believed on His Son...with a future in mind. At that very moment - having imparted His own life and nature to each one - they are completely capable now with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to live their lives in a manner pleasing to Him through the obedience of faith. In fact, that desire for holy living is the deepest longing within each of them, just as it is in the affections of a natural child towards its own parents to please them. Such a loving heavenly Father He is! (Ephesians 1:3-11)

Reflect now on these words from Knowing God by J. I. Packer.

“Similarly, the thought of our Maker becoming our perfect parent – faithful in love and care, generous and thoughtful, interested in all that we do, respecting our individuality, skilful in training us, wise in guidance, always available, helping us to find ourselves in maturity, integrity, and uprightness – is a thought which can have meaning for everybody, whether we come to it by saying, ‘I had a wonderful father, and I see that God is like that, only more so’, or by saying, ‘My father disappointed me here, and here, and here, but God, praise His Name, will be very different,’ or even by saying, ‘I have never known what it is to have a father on earth, but thank God I now have one in heaven.’”

As their loving heavenly Father, He is also the Father of holiness. Holiness is the intimate knowledge that Jesus Himself had of His very own Father: an intimacy for Him that was intuitive and full. (John 17:11) The more we enter into this same knowledge of our heavenly Father the more we can be very grateful that in His holy nature He is rightly opposed to sin.

Consequently, it is impossible for Him to overlook or tolerate sin in any one of His children's behavior or fail to correctly discipline them for it. That does make sense, doesn't it? For as a heavenly Father who loves His children, He is jealously concerned about each one and their eternal welfare. As a wise loving Father who is holy and thus has the very best in mind for each one, He knows perfectly well when to bless them or bring them correction, when to give or withhold something, and when to act with

loving judgment or compassionate mercy. As a holy Father then He deals with each one with a loving discipline that involves correction...a training in fact that is intended by Him to develop them into the fullness of spiritual maturity. For He loves each child and is concerned for them that they should enter into the fullness of the stature of Christ and one day be perfect even as his Son is! (Proverbs 3:11-12; Hebrews 12:8-10)

They are citizens of heaven. Christ Himself is the sphere in which they actually live now and are running the race as well. Each child of the Father has received the same high calling in His Son - a high calling that lifts them heavenward even while here on earth - having separated them out from the rest of mankind while marking them as a citizen of the kingdom of His Son. As heavenly citizens, they are no longer under the dominion of Satan...having been already delivered out of this present evil age and transferred into the Son's kingdom through the new birth. With such a proper perspective of their citizenship - actually in spirit being presently and forever in heaven - they can clearly see now that they no longer belong to the world and that they are indeed pilgrims...travelers...and are in fact temporary residents while passing through the earth on their way to their native homeland above. Their pilgrimage is to a glory yet to be revealed and is, in fact, so great in its weight that any tribulations they may now be experiencing are in no way worthy of comparison! (1 Peter 2:9-10; 2Corinthians 4:16-18)

“The Christian is not a man of the world that just adds something on to his life or tries to make himself a little bit different. The first thing about him, according to this doctrine, is that he is separated and essentially different. He is a colonist in a strange land, he belongs to a

particular order, and to a different society. Indeed, he is a man who is under an entirely different jurisdiction." (The Life of Joy by D. Martin Lloyd-Jones)

Seated in heavenly realms in Christ Jesus. In their union with Jesus Christ...having been raised up out of death into newness of life when they believed on Him...they were lifted up in spirit and seated in the very same heavenlies in which He is presently seated at His Father's right hand. From this privileged position of partnership, God the Father grants to each of His children a share in the present works of His kingdom power (authority) on earth. For their new life in Christ is not only intended to be a participation in His resurrection life while here on earth, but also a share in His present reign in the heavenlies, both in the present...and in the future.

Seated here in their position in Christ they rest in the finished work of His Cross. Enthroned here with Him their eyes are naturally fixed upon Him and His glory. It is from this position that each child of God is called to run the race...to live by faith. This race of faith is one they actually embarked upon through the new birth; and much like a ship setting sail on its maiden voyage, each child of God is fully equipped and ready to do so. For every true Christian begins their spiritual life resting from their own works. From this secure position of having been seated they learn to exercise the necessary discipline in continuing to abide in their Lord, the Glorified One. For creation watches to see what manner of person they truly are!

"...the race is not to the swift..."

Ecclesiastes 9:11

Proper Attitude:

The path in front of them is narrow. The eternal path in front of them is God's righteousness. It is the path of life in which the children of God are to live and conduct themselves as citizens of heaven here on earth from their seated position in the heavenlies. This eternal path is one in which they will be faced with making choices over their lifetime while here on earth. These are choices between life and death: choices in which they may submit themselves to God's righteousness and walk that out by faith, or yield themselves instead to their unrenewed thinking and their own fleshly appetites and impulses and thereby follow the lies of Satan and the course of this world. The eternal path is both straight and narrow, and it will become so ever more increasingly for each of His children as they develop into maturity. It is a way in which there is absolutely no self-individualism: no one wins at another's expense...or to another's loss. It will indeed be a contest of endurance. In fact, as we will soon discover, it will be a contest in teamwork.

Like seeing through a new pair of glasses, each child of God is to look beyond themselves to Jesus through the holy Scriptures. Here they will see the whole picture: suddenly things planned long ago in eternity are a present reality to them. Then they discover that these things though being eternal are not out of their reach - for their Father's good pleasure is that they enter by faith into the reality of the good news of the gospel even while they are still here on earth!

Each step of obedience by a child of God is of utmost importance, and is taken by faith alone in their heavenly Father and the truth He has already spoken to them in the

Bible. Since each of His children is more than a conqueror by nature, each step of obedience for them will be new ground gained in Christ. A new dimension in the life of Christ will open up for them with vistas in eternity that their spiritual eyes had not yet seen!

As they seek the face of Christ in their walk with Him and grow in Truth, what lies ahead of them in their race are other such divine appointments with their heavenly Father. For at each one of these new junctures of transformation, He will do a new thing for them through personal and rigorous training in righteousness and holiness. There is much wisdom here in this disciplining by their holy Father. Without it they would be unable to know Him more intimately and respond and be moved along into their very next step of obedience and growth in Christ. (1 John 3:2-3)

For the life of every child of God is:

- a life of sanctification - Their new life in Christ is to exhibit step by step the cutting away of their old former manner of life. Each one of these steps in living out the new life of Christ within them is by the power of the Holy Spirit energizing them to make right choices. This on-going sanctification is the course of life for each child of God. In fact, it is the one most suited for them by nature. Here the Holy Spirit is actually cultivating the soil of their heart with an eye to the same spirit and disposition which Christ Himself revealed while here on earth. Through difficult and trying circumstances, He is pressing each child of His ever more deeply...and ever more increasingly...into the Word of God for the renewing of their carnal thinking in a particular area: until their soul blossoms forth in Christ

through holy obedience to God their Father and nonconformity to the world. Thus He will be wisely transforming them over time into the very image of Christ Himself experientially, manifesting in themselves the mind of Christ...while devoting themselves more wholeheartedly now to the Father's will and a self-sacrificial love for others. For the true imitation of Christ does not come in trying to do what He would do in any given situation...or even did; but in seeking to lay down their own lives by faith through the power of the Holy Spirit who is energizing them to do so, that Jesus might manifest through them...their lives now displaying the risen Christ within them!

- and a life of glory that will never end - In view of their special relationship to God their Father, this is the direction towards which each of His children is pointed and headed. This is their high calling and destiny in Christ! As they continue to grow in the faith while here on earth, they will enter ever more increasingly into the deepest joys of their salvation. He is risen indeed! As the elect of God they have been predestined in the eternal counsels of the Godhead to be glorified with the Lord Jesus...He with them, and they with Him. This is the genius of the eternal plan of Elohim. In the rapture of the saints prior to Jesus' actual second coming, each true child of God will put on immortality: their corruptible bodies will be changed - perfectly conformed into the likeness of the physical body of the Son's glory by the working of His mighty power. Their physical body then will be a heavenly one...like His...that is perfectly suited for the new heaven and the new earth: this is the consummation of redemption and

the full and complete provision which His atonement made for them on the Cross of Christ.

Note: The word *glorify* means to render glorious - to make full of glory. In Romans 8:29 glorified is used as a prophetic perfect. It is speaking of a future event as if it were already done - because it is certain that God will do it!

“Looking to Jesus...”

Hebrews 12:2

While running the race on this path of righteousness, every child of the Father is going to experience tension between the ideal of holiness and glory into which they have been called in Christ and their actual behavior here on earth. For the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God will stir up within each one the deep searching of their hearts. Their heavenly Father is perfecting them, actively engaging each one in love...watching over them with great mercy and grace and patience. The outcome of His loving involvement - whether in a kind favor or in a loving rebuke - will largely depend on their response to Him...either through their obedience of faith, or their lack of it.

Through fiery trials of various sorts, they are actually being trained in spirit by the Holy Spirit in the holy discipline of properly waiting upon the Lord for the fulfillment of the glorious gospel and the Father's promises to them. They are being trained in the highest yearnings of the path before them to gain Christ. They are learning in each step of obedience to practically appropriate Him in themselves. In this way, He becomes the dominating power in and over their whole person and any circumstances around them. They are no longer attempting or even desiring to have their own

righteousness or their own way. It is in knowing Him and His way...entering into an intimate knowledge of Him that perfectly unites them with Him! In this kind of active “waiting” there will be...

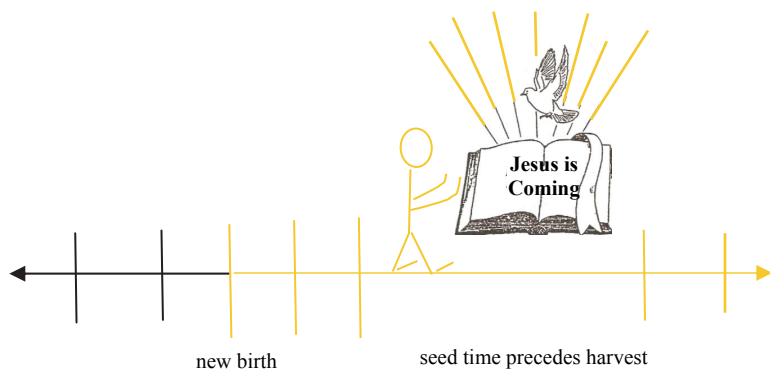
- a *looking away* from everything else - a looking away from distractions,
- a *laying aside* of every encumbrance - the sin that so easily entangles them,
- and a *withdrawal* of their affections from the inferior objects here on earth

...as they look more intently by fixing their gaze on one object only: having eyes only for Jesus! Just like Abraham who looked away from what the world had to offer him toward a Messianic future, God’s children are to be found looking with an earnest and patient expectation for the fulfillment of the gospel of the glory of Christ: His return for His people and the establishment of His millennia reign here on earth first...and beyond. Here there will be the completion of the tabernacle made without hands and God’s glory filling it forever and ever throughout all the ages to come!

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I, John, saw the whole city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former

things have passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful." Revelation 21:1-5

While reaching forth - not through their own human energy or effort, the strength of self-determination - but with a singleness of mind and purpose within their own hearts to know more intimately the King of glory. Forgetting whatever lies behind them: not elated by victory...neither cast down by failure. They must actively press on now in spirit just as an athlete who exerts every energy in his body to run the race in front of him. Like that athlete, they must focus their attention and concentrate on what lies ahead of them. They must persevere in faith: not giving up, and not turning aside...never stopping when coming to a plateau or to a stalemate. Indeed, before them are other spiritual heights to climb! As the Holy Spirit continues to develop them in Christ He urges them on in their own personal sanctification to that final stage of sanctification when the Lord Jesus returns to the earth for His bride. With each step of faith they are laboring to know the glory before them: the holy and sovereign Christ within them, as He is today seated at the right hand of His Father who will be returning in glory...laboring to be found in HIM! (2 Peter 1:8-11; 1 John 2:6,28; 3:3)



"But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn that shines brighter and brighter until the full day." Proverbs 4:18

"We need to unthink the thinking of the world by being confronted with the Word of God. Indeed, we need to be confronted in such a way that we rethink even what we think we know about the coming of the Lord, so that we might learn to seek Christ's glory in His coming." (The Glory of Christ with John H. Armstrong...general editor)

"Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ."

Titus 2:13

The finish line: At the beginning of His second coming, the trumpet will sound to call the Lord's children together in the air; and in a split second, His glorious appearing! Here the beginning of the grand finale of all the scriptures when the Son of Man descends bodily from heaven in power and great glory...and catches away all His spiritual seed and offspring to meet Him in the air. First, the dead in Christ will be raised up out of their graves; and within that same moment those who are still here on earth will be caught up together with them. All immediately and perfectly conformed now into Jesus' image with resurrection bodies: glorified bodies like His that are immortal and perfectly suited for the new heavens and the new earth...image bearers in spirit, soul, and body who indeed reflect His glory! (Mark 4:26-29; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

The Lord Jesus will come in the next phase of His second coming, after the great tribulation, when He openly ushers in the fullness of His kingdom power and glory for all eternity...His millennial reign and beyond. That is reality: an eternal reality in which He alone is pre-eminent...in first

place. Then there will be no escaping His vindication which will be obvious to all...both those who have believed and those who have not. The Lord Jesus Christ will reign as the Son of Man - the Living One, the King of glory - together with those who were beheaded because of their testimony of Him and of the word of God for a thousand years on earth. Afterwards, when Satan is thrown into the lake of fire forever, His reign will continue into the ages beyond...He having been fully glorified in His people and they in Him at the rapture...

"Then comes the end when He hands over the kingdom to God the Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power...When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all." 1 Corinthians 15:24, 28

...all of which was in the mind of Elohim in eternity!

Can you see now how Christ's return is indeed a part...although admittedly a neglected one...of the full gospel and the race we are running as Christians? For the complete history of salvation has been spelled out for us in the Bible...you might say from the A to the Z of it! God's Word traces its beginning in the book of Genesis with *"Let there be light"* and continues it all the way through to its actual consummation in the book of Revelation: *"And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride for her husband."* Perhaps we can more readily understand now why the Lord Jesus said to His apostles, *"I will come again..."* (Genesis 1:3; Revelation 21:2; John 14:3)

"That is the consummation. It is not about us - it is about God and the Lamb of God. More particularly, it is about the Father glorifying

Himself in the Son and the Son glorifying the Father in the purchased possession of the church, which is presented back to the Father spotless and without fault, that God may be all in all." (The Glory of Christ with John H. Armstrong, general editor)

Attitude...a proper mindset...can only come from the Bible...God's Word. Knowing of His coming and the ramifications of it for His disciples, the Lord said to them: *"Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour."* (Matthew 25:13)

The early church knew no other attitude. Paul not only preached the full gospel, he lived it. He fully lived with an expectation and a faith stance that Jesus' return would be in his lifetime. The fact that He did not, in no way proved Paul wrong...rather it proved that he was living in obedience to what the Lord had instructed His followers to do: to live their lives on earth in the knowledge that He would come again certainly and suddenly.

What we already know:

- the Lord Jesus Christ is coming;
- and that day is approaching us quickly!

Nothing is more sure than Christ's return, and nothing is more sobering. His coming will be sudden and final. Like a thief in the night, it can happen at any time. This is why it will be very perilous to either the ignorant or the lukewarm Christian. Like one swept out to sea, there will be no time for repentance...and they will indeed suffer loss. On the other hand, the suddenness of His coming will in no way be a surprise to prepared Christians. For like the

five wise virgins who had oil in their flasks along with their lamps and went in with the bridegroom to the wedding feast, those who are remaining faithful to the Lord Jesus and are coming to know Him more deeply will be ready to welcome Him at His return. For them there will be the voice of joy and gladness: the voice of the bridegroom and the bride!

As Paul neared the end of his earthly life, he penned these words under inspiration of the Holy Spirit: *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing."* (2 Timothy 4:7-8)

A Proper Response:

In light of these words, and having heard the divine message of the gospel, my first question is, *"Have you believed on the Lord Jesus Christ?"* If not, this could very well be the reason for you reading The Voice of the Call of God. Having heard the full gospel of God, will you not by faith alone confess your need for the forgiveness of your sins through Jesus' perfect work of atonement on the Cross? Pray now from your heart to the Lord Jesus and He will gladly accept your prayer and receive you as one of His very own children! If you have already believed on Him, then my question would be, *"Have you honestly loved His appearing?"* If not, then a genuine repentance and honest confession of that sin is needed in your walk with Him at this juncture. It is not going to matter much about what you or I thought about His coming on that Day. What will matter is whether we repented of our sins, gave honest heed to the call of God that is on our lives, and brought forth fruit that remains.

Crossing the finish line: As the day of the Lord approaches and as you are running the race of faith...gaining Christ and knowing Him...keep walking in obedience to God's Word and His call on your life. Keep looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ! Take heart and remember - keep in your heart as a memorial - what the Lord is saying to you today:

"Beloved, now you are God's child and it has not appeared as yet what you will be. You know that when He appears, you will be like Him, because you will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. Be dressed in readiness and keep your lamps lit. Be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open the door to him when he comes and knocks. Not that you have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but press on so that you may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, do not regard yourself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing do, forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Now little child abide in Him so when He appears, you may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming. To this end also always pray, that our God will count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your work is not in vain. And, behold, the Lord Jesus Christ is coming soon; and His reward is with Him to give every man according as his work will be." 1 John 3:2-3; Luke 12:35-36; Philippians 3:12-14; 1 John 2:28; 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12; 1 Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 22:12

A Closing Thought: Either at your departure or at the Lord Jesus' appearing, He Himself will be waiting to embrace you fully. From His own lips, may you...and I...hear these words: *"Well done good and faithful servant: you answered My Father's call on your life. You finished the race, you kept the faith!"*

AMEN

Bibliography

Listed below are the primary literary resources which I drew upon and who have gone before me. I am especially grateful to their authors for the depth of their walks with the Lord Jesus Christ!

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Marjorie's salvation came in the early evening hour of December 22, 1984. After hearing the gospel for 11 months in a Southern Baptist church, she finally humbled herself before God and through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ confessed her need for His forgiveness. Immediately, she knew she was different and forever changed. She then acted on the truth of what had happened to her and was water baptized on February 3, 1985.

Hungry to know the Lord Jesus more deeply, she then enrolled in a three-year course of Biblical studies in September of 1987 at Faith Bible College in San Jose. She graduated in June 1990 and she then began to evangelize children in neighborhoods through Bible teaching according to Acts 26:16-18. Her calling having been confirmed by church leadership, she stepped out then in faith through Matthew 10:10 into full time ministry in October of 1993.

A gifted teacher in God's Word, Marjorie's continued passion is to see Christ glorified in His people and to see them brought into a much deeper and more intimate fellowship with Him through the illumination of truth. Presently, she is an active member of Abundant Life Christian Fellowship in Mountain View, California.

The Voice of the Call of God brings before your gaze an unveiling of the grandeur of the Son's eternal Deity and His present glory. Here you will hear God's upward call to His Church in life and service until He comes again in power and great glory to be glorified in His people, and admired by all those who believe in Him.

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