

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 162

THE 144,000 ON MOUNT ZION (continued)

And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand *these are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins*" (Rev. 14:1,4).

It is our purpose in writing these truths to set forth in awe and simplicity the things the Spirit is saying unto the Lord's elect in this significant hour. As we approach the subject presented in the scene described in the passage above, let us remember, these things God did *"signify by His angel unto His servant John"* (Rev. 1:1). Signify \hat{o} tell by signs, communicate by symbols. May God ever give us understanding by His Spirit to discern what the signs mean!

The word *defiled* in our text determines the meaning of the passage. It is the Greek word *moluno* meaning *to soil* or *defile*, thus denoting not a proper union with one's wife, but an illicit intercourse or fornication with others resulting in impurity or unchastity of life. This has no reference to literal, natural, fleshly things. It does not indicate that the 144,000 is exclusively made up of *males* and in no way refers to physical celibacy. Celibacy is not the subject or virtue in this description, but *purity*, freedom from contamination by an improper conduct. Nor does the fact that they are all *virgins* suggest that they are all women! Again, these are all symbols of *spiritual realities*! The inspired apostle spoke of this when he wrote, *"I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity (singleness) that is in Christ"* (II Cor. 11:2-3). With a pure heart these 144,000 worship God and follow the Lamb, thus *"they are virgins."*

We must keep in mind that fornication and adultery in scripture are the symbols of spiritual impurity. In that sense Esau is called a fornicator, not because he had relationships with women, but because he despised God's covenant and joined himself with his fleshly desire instead. In the same sense Israel in the Old Testament is very often pictured as an adulterous woman, even a harlot, whoring after other gods and departing from the worship and service of Yahweh, their covenant God. In like manner, then, these one hundred and forty-four thousand have not become defiled. All the church systems of man have been committing fornication in the spiritual sense. All have gone awhoring after the beast. All have been defiled by the spirit, ways, and methods of the world. But the 144,000 have remained faithful to their Lord. They have followed hard after the Lamb. They have kept themselves unto Him and unto Him alone. They have not been stained by the defilement of the carnal systems, doctrines, and practices of religion. They are *without blemish*!

Ray Prinzing commented on this thought with these words of wisdom, *"Singleness \hat{o} 'He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.'* If, in any way, we turn from that singleness, and yield our mind and spirit to the spirit of the world, we have defiled ourselves. Works is a filthiness unto grace. The flesh is filthiness unto the spirit. The spirit of the world is filthiness unto Christ. We dare not prostitute the anointing, by using it for the satisfaction of the flesh. When our inward desire for God has turned elsewhere for its satisfaction, we have defiled our spirit, lost our virginity, and only our Redeemer can

restore us to a virgin state again. It is truly a further '*revelation of Jesus Christ,*' that we see Him revealed in a company of virgins ô undefiled ones. Only He can bring forth such a company of PERSONIFIED PURITY to stand with Him!ö

These were redeemed from the earth-realm, from among (natural) men ô the firstfruits unto God and the Lamb. They have been snatched as brands from the fire. The prophet Isaiah, in describing the condition of the churches in the days of öthe great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornicationö (Rev. 17:1), says, "*In that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.*" The church is represented by a woman; and the relation of Christ to the true church, as the relation of the husband to his wife. The husband gives his name to his wife, and supplies her food and raiment; but apostate church systems, while claiming the name of Christ, eat their own bread, that is, they formulate their own carnal, man-made doctrines and static creeds, spurning the living word and revelation of God by the Spirit. They also wear their own apparel, that is, they clothe themselves in their own works of righteousness, of rules, regulations, laws, commandments of men, traditions of the elders, good works, etc., spurning the true robe of righteousness which is the inwrought nature of Christ by the Spirit. To conceal their reproach they loudly claim the name of Christ, profess that He is their Lord, call themselves öChristians,ö yet go their merry way ödoing their own thing,ö ignoring the *living Christ* altogether! It is in contrast to these that we have the vision of the 144,000 övirginsö standing on mount Zion!

Again, I quote the timely words of Ray Prinzing, öJohn speaks of the -great whoreøwho is also öthe mother of harlots,ø one having many daughters who, like their whoring mother, are also harlots in their own right ô and it is a fact we find their whore-houses everywhere. We shall not amplify this at length ô they who have ears to hear what the holy Spirit is saying to His called out ones, are coming out of Babylon, and leaving these harlot women behind. They will no longer give their strength unto these women, nor pour their resources into her coffers. They refuse to be defiled by her whoredoms, and will not play her games. It has taken some tremendous purgings to become free from the taintings of the spirit of religious institutions. We find that for many, upon first being called out, literally go through a period of -withdrawal painsøspiritually speaking. They feel great pains for fellowship, yearning to be with people, to get -another highøfrom a service, etc., and it takes much time ALONE WITH GOD to be cleansed until their spirit is pure, and wholly joined to His. Methinks there is yet much purging needed to free us from -religious-ism' in one form or another. We will not condemn nor point a finger, rather we cry out with the Psalmist, RENEW A RIGHT SPIRIT WITHIN ME!

öThere are those who make their withdrawal only in the natural ô they leave a religious system, -come out from among them,øand feel they are free, and know not that their spirit is yet deeply defiled ô and soon they have surrounded themselves with a little religious realm, which in due time has grown up to be another harlot in its own right, and they love her, defend her, fight for her, and do their best to say she is a true woman, but the spirit is the same as the old sectarianism they came out of, and they birthed another of its kind. But, there are those, praise God, who are *being* (process) redeemed from the earth, redeemed from among men, not defiled with women, for THEY ARE VIRGINS. They have a pure -virgin spirit,ø undefiled, a spirit that is free from the spirit of the world, free from all foreign spirits, free from all familiar spirits, free from all religious spirits. Praise God!ö ô end quote.

Sects, denominations, and cults have all come into existence through the love of something else rather than the Lord. Some are followers of a man ô some eloquent, charismatic leader who can captivate people in their emotions. Some even *name* their öchurchö *after the man* ô Lutheran, Mennonite, Wesleyan Methodist, etc. Some are given over to specific doctrines and unless one believes exactly as they do they will have nothing to do with that person regardless of how much their heart is toward the Lord. Various of these go on to *name* their denominations *after their pet doctrine* — Seventh Day Adventist, Baptist, Universalist, Christian Science, etc. Different forms of church government have divided believers into separate groups, each believing they have the best or most scriptural form of government. Some of these even *name* their organizations *after their form of church government* — Congregational, Presbyterian, etc. I have no hesitation whatever in telling you that all of this is gross carnality and utter defilement!

“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you, as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ; are ye not carnal? Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?” (I Cor:1:12-13; 3:4-5). It matters not whether you call yourself a Roman Catholic, a Unitarian, a Methodist, a Baptist, the Move, the Church of God, the Church of Christ, the Order, the Word Church, Pentecostal, Charismatic, or any other, they *all* belong in the same category and are inspired and controlled by the same religious sectarian spirit. It matters not whether the leader or leaders are called popes, moderators, superintendents, presidents, pastors, senior pastors, presbyters, bishops, apostles, or prophets; if it is the same divisive spirit, the same love for something other than the Lord Himself, then those who make up the firstfruits company *cannot* and *will not* be defiled with *these women!* These systems, one and all, are called harlots because the love which should only be for the *living Christ* has been transferred to a man, a doctrine, a system, or something else. Some churches call themselves a “Bible Church,” but even the Bible, the Word, can be loved, esteemed, and exalted into an idol — a place in our affections above our true Beloved. Many years ago George Wylie related how he was talking with a precious brother who had been an elder in one of the local churches and who had left a group known as “the Move”; George asked him why he had left and he answered, “Because the Move was being preached and exalted above the Mover!”

Throughout the long history of the church age the established church systems of man have a record of rejecting every true visitation and outpouring of the Spirit of God! And, in our present generation, they have not gotten any better, but continue to get worse! The religious systems of this world, because of their spiritual carnality, fornication, and defilement, are anti-Christ in nature, and will reject any future outpouring of the Spirit of the Lord that Father sends into the earth — until the hour arrives for God to judge them unto correction, and break them unto repentance. And that will surely happen, as we hope to show as we progress through the book of Revelation! Our God is sufficient for His purpose! But, as of now, the natural mind of man that governs the carnal, man-made systems, is directly opposed to the sovereign Lordship of Christ, opposed to any fresh outpouring of the Spirit that disrupts their static forms, opposed to any deeper revelation that brings into question their established creeds, and opposed to any new truth that is given by the Spirit as we move higher into God. Their numerous false doctrines prevent them from accepting and receiving Christ as He appears in a greater and more glorious unveiling of Himself. No wonder the cry of the Spirit to all His apprehended ones continues to be, “*Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues*” ((Rev. 18:4).

Those who follow the Lamb must not be “*defiled with women.*” They must not be defiled with the error and shame of the fleshly ways and religious spirit that defiles the harlot woman called Babylon and her many daughters. Those who follow the Lamb have been called and separated and chosen by the Son of God to be a pure and holy virgin unto Him. Behold, I show you a mystery and a divine paradox beyond the wisdom of man. In the world one starts out as a virgin and may become a harlot; but in the church one begins as a harlot and eventually becomes a virgin! All the elect of the Lord must be comprised *only* of those who have been called out of both the world and the church system. They must follow only and always the Lamb! They must cleave unto Him, and to Him alone! They must not be defiled by man, and they must be cleansed from all other religious or spiritual relationships, to give themselves wholly and unreservedly to HIM! Then they shall be pure and holy, qualified to receive His fullness, and prepared for that greatest of all events, known in scripture, as “the manifestation of the sons of God.”

There is also an individual and personal application of this truth, for we know that our individual *soul life* is also presented in scripture as a “woman.” On the individual and personal level, they, in their spiritual walk, no longer lie down with, and have a relationship with, their soul — their religious soul nature and self-will. Rather, their soul is called upon to follow always and only the spirit whithersoever HE LEADS! Madame Guyon wrote of this personal experience within ourselves: “There is a virginity of the soul in keeping the grace of God. A soul that is perfectly free from earthly things is a virgin soul. The Adam in them is completely destroyed. These follow the Lamb wherever He goes. They cannot part from Him because of the unity that their nothingness has accomplished. These are redeemed from among men, that is, withdrawn from all human corruption in their nature — self-love and carnality. They are also the first fruits unto God, specially sacrificed to Him.”

The following beautiful word from the pen of Paul Mueller is a blessed inspiration to all who seek HIS FULLNESS in this great day of the Lord. He writes, "The last verse of chapter four of the Song of Solomon closes with this sentence: *'Let my beloved come into his garden and eat its choicest fruits.'* Chapter five begins by saying, *'I HAVE come into my garden, my sister, my (promised) bride; I have gathered my myrrh with my balsam and spice, from your sweet words I have gathered the richest perfumes and spices. I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk. Eat, O friends, feast on, O revelers of the palace; you can never make my lover disloyal to me! Drink, yes, drink abundantly of love, O precious one, for now I know you are mine, irrevocably mine!'*" (Song of Solomon 4:16; 5:1, Amplified).

When our Beloved came into the garden, which we are, He came to partake of the fruits that His bride, sister, or spouse provided. Our worship of Him in spirit and in truth are those *'sweet words'* from which He has gathered *'the richest perfumes and spices,'* which He also calls *'my honeycomb with my honey.'* When we fully understand this great truth, we will then realize how important our worship of the Lord is, in spirit and in truth, to the whole plan and purpose of our Father! And then our Beloved invites the friends of the Bridegroom, including *'the revelers of the palace,'* to join Him in eating and drinking. When He invites them to eat and drink, the bridegroom, according to the natural example, also realizes that some of the revelers may attempt to flirt with His betrothed. So he makes this bold assertion to them: *'You can never make my lover disloyal to me!'* Those who are betrothed to the Lord will never give in to the seducers or to the counterfeit lovers of Babylon, but will remain true to Him forever!

As the chosen, elect of the Lord, we should never, ever think of going back to the harlotry of the corrupt church system, for we are betrothed to the Lord in an everlasting covenant that binds us to Him and to Him alone forever and ever! And then, as if to assure and affirm the eternal relationship He has with His spouse, which we are, our Beloved says to His spouse or to His typical bride, *'Drink, yes, drink abundantly of love, O precious one, for now I know you are mine, irrevocably mine!'* How can we fail Him when our Beloved says such beautiful things about us? The entire spiritual celebration involving the Bridegroom (which is Christ) and His spouse (or, the body of Christ, which we are), is just like a wedding celebration in the natural. This union, or this wedding, brings together two separate entities: Christ the Body and Christ the Head, making one complete Christ! And that is great cause for celebration, for the two then become ONE SPIRIT, joined together by the Spirit of Life in Christ! We then function as ONE BODY, OR ONE CORPORATE MAN, BY THE SPIRIT! end quote.

FOLLOWING THE LAMB

And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand *these are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth*" (Rev. 14:1,4).

A relationship with Christ requires that WE FOLLOW HIM WHITHERSOEVER HE GOETH. The Greek word for follow is *akoloutheo* meaning to be in the same way with, i.e. to accompany as a disciple. He has given us *'an example, that ye should follow in His steps'* (I Pet. 2:21). This is not just an historical way of life, trying to be imitators of Him as He lived two thousand years ago we are not called to consider, What would Jesus do? and then be imitators, but PARTAKERS of Christ. It is BEING IN HIS WAY TODAY, as the Spirit leads us onward step by step. Eliezer said it so well, *'I being in the way, the Lord led me...'* (Gen. 24:27). We're going the same direction HE is going, following Him!

Following the Lamb whithersoever He goeth does not mean that we dash across the country, escaping all of our responsibilities. MUCH OF THIS FOLLOWING IS INWARD! We continue with the normal duties which He has given us to do, but with an attitude of constant surrender to His will, that HE be first and foremost in us at all times. We do not take our religious stance and insist that God do things in our way, in our timetable, according as to how we feel His word should be fulfilled. It is true, there are times when He will test us as to our commitment to Him, and there is a literal forsaking yielding up our all. *'Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed Thee. And He said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more...'* (Lk. 18:28-30). But most of the time this is INWARD upon the altar of our heart everything remains *offered up*, so that whatever possessions we

have, they do not possess us. Paul wrote, *'As having nothing, yet possessing all things'* (II Cor. 6:10). And when INWARDLY all is surrendered, it matters little if He requires an outward expression of this, or not. Relinquishment is an attitude of the heart, and when all is **loosed within**, there will be no exterior grasping.

ōThe secret of staying in the will of God is to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth! Even if it does not make sense to us in the light of what we have always known as revealed truth.ø It must have seemed most incomprehensible to Abraham, at least at first, that God would ask him to sacrifice that for which he had waited so long, and in whom his confidence rested. Especially since this was clearly that which had been given by God in such a miraculous manner, as the fulfillment of so long-standing a promise. Yet God's purpose continued to unfold, and Abraham must follow.

ōTo follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth requires great flexibility. It is possible that when we adhere rigidly to a promise, as we understand that promise, without taking a step in any direction, we could suddenly find ourselves outside the will of God. And not only outside the will of God, BUT INSIDE THE RIGID WALLS OF LEGALISM, and in danger of crucifying our Lord afresh. We might claim it and stand on it, and insist that God honor His word *on the level we understand it*, when He has a far greater meaning for that promise, if we are willing to LET GO OUR OWN SELF-CLAIMING-WORKS, and just let the Spirit lead us where He wills. Hence we often find a prayer in our hearts, 'Lord, I do not understand what all this Word means, but, whatever You mean by it, that is what I desire.ø Why limit Him to our understanding? Why not yield ourselves to Him ô and follow whithersoever He goeth? There are such heights and depths to be experienced in Him!

ō*'These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.'* What processing this one sentence covers, for it requires that we be LOOSED from all the binding restrictions of religion, to be free to follow as He leads. Our English word religion comes from the Latin *religio*, meaning: taboo, or restraint. It bespeaks a system of faith and worship with all of its do, and don't, exercised by the will of man to gain favor with God. The Greek word is *threskia*, meaning: outward ceremonial observances ô which were done primarily for an appeasement. Religion can be, and may well be, the greatest enemy of the Spirit, for it was religious belief that crucified Jesus. It was religious belief that hindered the entry of men into the kingdom of God. As Paul wrote, *'O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you'* (Gal. 3:1). Having begun in the Spirit, they were ready to revert back to the works of the flesh, to obey days, months, times ô back in bondage to form and ceremony, rather than the free flow of His life through them by the Spirit. Turning back to legalism is in effect crucifying Christ afresh, for it is a turning from the life of the Spirit, to man's own works and self-effort. ô Ray Prinzing.

To follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth means to trust in, lean upon, give allegiance to, be guided by, accept as authority, imitate, emulate, pursue, run after ô **NO ONE BUT THE LAMB!** I was blessed reading the testimony of a brother who in his conversation with the Lord said, 'God, I just don't feel that I am what I ought to be.ö God said, 'What would you like to be like?ö I said, 'I don't know.ö My Bible was lying on the floor by me and I pulled it over to me and hugged it. I said, 'Lord, look at these great men of God. If I could just be like them.ö The Lord asked, 'Who do you want to be like?ö I replied, 'I would like to be like Moses.ö 'Why do you want to be like Moses?ö God asked. I said, 'Lord, I need to be more humble. Moses walked before you in humility, the meekest of all men. If I could just be like Moses!ö God said to me, 'Let me ask you a question: If you saw my finger of fire write on tablets of stone, and my glory was revealed to you, and you heard my audible voice, would you disobey me?ö I said, 'God, I have seen your glory. I have heard your voice. I have never seen your finger of fire, but I would not knowingly disobey you, especially after that.ö The Lord responded, 'Moses did! Moses so disobeyed me I could not let him go into the promised land.ö

I said, 'All right, God, forget about Moses. Let me be like Abraham.ö God said, 'Abraham? Why do you want to be like him?ö I said, 'Lord, Abraham was the father of faith. He had such tremendous faith and trust in you. I do not have anywhere near the faith I should have.ö God asked, 'Son, do you love your wife?ö I responded, 'Lord, what do faith in God and loving my wife have to do with this ô of course, I love her.ö He said, 'What would you do if three men knocked on your door in the middle of the

night and said, "We hear your wife is very beautiful and we want to take her. Give her to us." What would you do? I said, "God, you know exactly what I would do. I would kill them!" At this point the brother said to those listening to this testimony, "I hope you don't feel any less about me, but that is true. You may think that is a terrible confession but I am telling you the truth. I would kill them, or they would have to kill me first and walk over my dead body before they would get to my wife. That is how much I love her." He then continued, stating that God said to him, "That is true. I know you. But Abraham went through a strange land and became afraid. This great man of faith pawned his wife off as his sister in order to protect his own life. I had to intervene and stop that man from sleeping with Abraham's wife!" Then God asked me, "Now who do you want to be like?"

I told Him, "God, please have patience with me. One more. Let me be like David." God said, "David? Have you ever read the Psalms? What kind of heart David must have had to write as he did! The scripture testifies of him that he was a man after God's own heart! How he sought God and walked with God! I said, "Lord, I don't seek you enough. I don't cry out enough to you. I don't long for you, yearn after you enough. I want to be like David." Again the Lord said to me, "Son, did you ever kill anybody?" I said, "No." He said, "Did you ever take another man's wife?" I said, "No, I never have taken another man's wife." God said to me, "David did!" By this time I was weeping. I said, "Lord, I understand what you are trying to tell me!"

Ah, the message is clear — the 144,000 do not follow, trust in, lean upon, give allegiance to, be guided by, accept as authority, imitate, emulate, pursue, or run after *any man!* These are *redeemed from among men*. They follow the Lamb whithersoever HE goeth! As He is The Lamb, so are they also *lambs*. They are conformed to the image of the Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren! They are like Him, entirely like Him, exactly like Him! They emulate no saint, no preacher, no bishop, no apostle, no prophet — for they follow the Lamb. They listen for no voice but His, they step only where He steps, and stand with Him upon *His* holy mountain. They continually and constantly "look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:2).

One translation renders the passage, "*Let us run...looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.*" **Pioneer** — this is a word in the vocabulary of travelers. Those who have grown up in the United States and Canada are familiar with this kind of traveler. Unlike explorers, who set out to discover what territory is beyond the horizon; unlike surveyors, who plot out the ground; pioneers travel to places where they can settle for the rest of their lives. The pioneers of the American West, for example, traveled in Conestoga wagons pulled by teams of oxen. At night they would draw their wagons into circles to protect themselves from Indian attack. The author of the book of Hebrews calls Jesus "*the pioneer.*" Jesus came not to explore, or to partition, or to sight-see. Nor was He a pilgrim, making a journey to visit a place someone else had made sacred. Oh, no! He was Himself the pioneer, claiming a calling, a purpose, a position, an attainment, a destiny, the very highest place in God for Himself and for all who would *follow Him*. It was not easy! Jesus the pioneer struggled against great odds to secure a stronghold for all the sons of God. His opponents were the religious leaders of the day and the corruption in society. Like a sturdy pioneer, Christ prevailed; He persevered through a world of sin, through the arrogance and hostility of the entrenched religious system of the day, through the temptations of the adversary, through the subtilty of His own human mind, through His own natural will, and through obedience unto death, even the death of the cross — THE PIONEER! Pioneers prepare the way for those who follow. In this case, the promised land is **mount Zion**. No wonder we read, "*Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer...*" In the words of the old hymn, "My Lord knows the way through the wilderness, and all I have to do is *follow...*" It is indeed wonderful!

The mystery of God in Christ is exceeding great and the longer we walk with God, the deeper the mystery becomes, yet the depth of the mystery is not that which beclouds the understanding, but that which shines with scintillating brightness revealing the glory of God. Sometimes I am brought into seasons of deep meditation and contemplation concerning the majesty of the Lamb and those who stand with Him upon mount Zion. There has been a mystery in the fact that all the sons share the fullness of His glory, reflect His image to which they are fully conformed, and sit with Him upon His throne, which is also His Father's throne. The question presents itself — how can we know *equality* with Christ while at the same time acknowledging HIS PREEMINENCE in all things? As I have waited before the Lord I have come to

see that the idea of equality with Jesus has two levels of application ô *rank* and *function*. As to rank, He is the firstborn among many brethren, the pioneer of our faith, the Head of the body, and the King of the kings. As to function as sons of God, we are His ômany brethrenö who ôshare His gloryö and ôreveal His fullnessö under the yoke with Him.

Let me give you an illustration. I have been called to serve on juries a few times during my lifetime. When a jury is formed the first matter of business is to appoint a ôforeman.ö No one else can fulfill the *rank* of foreman ô he guides, leads, moderates the proceedings, and makes requests of the judge if necessary. However, as to *function*, each of the twelve jurors is equal. The foreman is no more a juror than any of the others. He bears the same responsibility of looking at the evidence, forming a conclusion, and casting a vote. Being foreman gives him absolutely no advantage or superior power as a juror. His vote carries no more weight than any other. Each vote is equal. In like manner, as to rank, our Elder Brother has a superior rank, for He is the Leader, the Pioneer, the Firstborn, the Captain of our salvation, and the Lord of all the lords! He leads ô we follow. But as to function, our sonship to the Father is one of equality ô we all stand upon the same height of the mount Zion ô He takes no advantage over us ô for *as He is* in this world, *so are we!* He is not more of a Son than we are, He sits no higher on the throne, He has no greater degree of life, wisdom, knowledge, victory, holiness, glory, and power ô for HE HAS FREELY GIVEN UNTO US ALL THINGS! Oh, the mystery of it!

There is another truth hidden in this blessed experience of following the Lamb *whithersoever* He goeth. John the Baptist announced Jesus that day at the Jordan river with these telling words, ôBehold the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world!ö As the Lamb of God Jesusøfirst stop on His journey to mount Zion was at another mount called Calvary. The flesh is wont to romanticize this idea of ôfollowing the Lamb,ö while missing the great truth that in scripture the purpose of a lamb was, first and foremost, to become a sacrifice. As one has pointed out, ôWe hear Him call us, ãCome and follow me,ø and we think He wants us to join Him in a walk by the sea of Galilee. Or perhaps He would sit with us under the shade of an olive tree, and tell us more about the power and wonder of His kingdom. We are sure that He wants us to help Him gather up the fragments after He feeds the multitudes bread and fish. It sounds like an excellent example of prosperity. Or perhaps it is time for Him to give *us* power to heal the sick, cast out devils, and raise the dead! All of these things have their time and place, and we rejoice in all that He does. A revival time in the camp is most welcomed ô but this, this call from mount Calvary, ãCome, follow me, yield your life to me as a whole burnt offeringøô are you sure you heard right?

ô*For the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore, Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach*' (Heb. 13:10-14). It is to be noted that when Jesus *went forth without the gate*, it was not a celebration time ô there were no musical bands playing ô no singing and dancing in the street. Without the camp He suffered, without the camp He was crucified. He left us an example, a footpath, consecrating for us a new and living way, and He leads us outside the camp, drawing us onward to where HE IS. *'For even hereunto were ye called: for Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow in His steps'* (I Pet. 2:21). It is a way that includes ãthe fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His deathø(Phil. 3:10).ö

There are ways in which we can trace the footprints of the Lambø glory upon mount Zion. Every step that He took was also ordained for us, that we should follow in His steps. His whole life was marked by unswerving commitment to the purpose of His Father. It was not broken into fragments by many side issues of self-interest, or distracted by lesser pursuits. There was no cross-current of personal ambition. He never allowed the whims of friend or foe to interfere with His devotion to the Fatherø plan and will. The whole nature of Jesus was united in one single aim ô to prosecute the purposes of God. To that one grand point He related all His words and works, His hopes and aims. He never narrowed His vision to the outer world. He looked at it in relation to the Father and the establishment of the kingdom in the earth.

This path led Him into the valley of misunderstanding, dispute, controversy, hostility, and danger. And finally Calvary laid its track before His feet! The judgment hall, the spittle of His enemies, cruel mocking, the crown of thorns, His beard plucked, His back torn, the weight of the cross, the pain of the

nails, the agony of thirst, blood, and death, the darkness of the tomb ô the pathway to mount Zion wound its treacherous way through all this! And for everyone who would attain to the unsurpassed glory of Zion's holy hill, there is nothing that the *Lamb* will not share with us. Even Calvary lays its trail before our feet! Those who ôfollow the Lambö shrink from no part of the Lamb's life, whether on earth or in heaven. There is a fellowship of His sufferings for those who will dare that great enlistment. The law of sacrifice lays its claim upon us: *'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit.'* *'I am crucified with Christ,'* said one who dared the uttermost renunciation, and entered into sacrificial partnership with the **Lamb** of God. Oh, yes! It is His purpose to transfigure our lives, confer upon us His glory, and lead us all the way to His throne. But with this in mind we reverently trace His footprints from Nazareth to Jerusalem, from Jerusalem to mount Calvary, from Calvary to the tomb, from the tomb to the resurrection, from resurrection to ascension to the dizzying heights of the holy mount and the pinnacle of glory, majesty, and redeeming power. Saviours come up upon mount Zion ô via another mount ô Calvary. That is the mystery.

The King there in His beauty,
Without a veil is seen;
It were a well-spent journey,
Though seven deaths lay between:
The Lamb, with His fair army,
Doth on Mount Zion stand,
And glory, glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's band.

When Jesus was here on earth He never asked very many to follow Him. Though there were thousands who believed on Him and who followed Him around as He went from place to place, even walking all the way around the sea of Galilee to meet Him on the other side when He had crossed the sea by boat. They followed Him to hear Him teach, to see the miracles He did, and to eat of the loaves and the fishes; but this is not what He meant when He said, ôFollow me,ö to Peter and his brother Andrew, and to John, James, and a few others. This following Him was something different. They followed Him on their own account. He had never bidden them to follow Him! To those men that Jesus had called to follow Him, He said, *"Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit upon the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel"* (Mat. 19:28). Those who sit with Him upon His throne are those who have been **called** to follow Him. Just following is not enough! If one has not received the **call** to sonship he will never complete the journey. The multitudes followed Jesus around the lake, but when He ceased to multiply bread and fish and commenced to speak the deep mysteries of the kingdom of God, the multitude began to filter away and followed Him no more.

I heard His call, ôCome follow,ö that was all.
The world grew dim, my soul went after Him,
I rose and followed; that was all.
Who would not follow, if they heard Him *call*?

The sad truth is that some can even receive the call, and still fail or refuse to follow the Lamb. To follow the Lamb *all the way* is not an easy proposition! Of the three would-be followers Jesus encountered on His way to Jerusalem to be crucified, only one of them said, ôI will follow you *wherever* you go.ö But Jesus saw through His presumptive words, replying, ôFoxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay His head.ö Jesus wasn't telling this man that if he followed Him he would have to spend his nights sleeping on the hard, cold ground. That would have indeed been enough to discourage some from following! But the words of Jesus carry a deeper meaning and message than a mere physical discomfort. Jesus was pointing to HIS HEADSHIP and the fact that He had yet to find a people so abandoned unto Him, so committed to follow Him, so consecrated to follow none other but Him, so ready to forsake everything else, so determined to go to Calvary and onward and onward down the pathway of the Lamb, that HE COULD CONFER HIS HEADSHIP UPON THEM. Ah, this is what constitutes Christ the Head and Christ the body ô a body that is so attached to the Head that it goes

whithersoever the Head directs with no hesitation whatsoever! It is upon such a people that the Son of man *lays* or *places* HIS HEAD!

To another Jesus said, "Follow me." But his response was, "Lord, let me *first* go and bury my father." He was told, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." This man wanted to first bury all of the old order, in order to then walk in the new. But that cannot be done! When we begin to *follow on* to know the Lord we soon discover that the old order will take care of itself. The way into the new is not to bury the old, but to follow the Lamb. The new will unfold before us, and the old will fall away of its own accord. Isn't it wonderful!

The third would-be follower said, "I will follow you, Lord; but let me *first* say farewell to those at my home." Jesus replied by telling him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." Peter also promised to follow Jesus, not only to prison, but also to death, but failed to keep his word. Only those who take an irrevocable stand for the Lamb can follow Him wherever He goes, for they alone follow Him out of unselfish love, without reservations, and without looking back. Only they are fully committed to do His will no matter *where* it leads. Only they are willing to give up their rights to themselves and lay down their lives for Jesus. Only they are ready to follow the Lamb not only beside still waters and through green pastures, but also through troubled waters and the valley of the shadow of death. Wherever He goes, they follow! And these have no request to return to tell the old order of the flesh and Babylon "Goodbye," for it holds nothing for them anymore. Oh, my Father! What a word is this!

Charles Allen related the fascinating story of the migration of the Pacific Golden Plover. "Those birds are hatched in the northlands of Alaska and Siberia. Before the young ones are old enough to fly great distances, the old birds desert them and fly far away to the Hawaiian Islands. The young birds are left behind to grow strong enough to follow their parents. One day these birds rise into the sky and set their course out over the Pacific. They have never made that journey before and they must cross two thousand miles of ocean, with no marks to guide them. During this trip they have not even one opportunity to stop for rest or food and frequently they encounter high winds and storms. Yet unerringly they fly straight to those tiny specks in the Pacific, the Hawaiian Islands."

How do you explain the flight of these birds? Surely God has provided them with something akin to our radio beams, *something they can follow without getting lost*. And it is *within them!* Has God not made the same provision for His sons? Jesus, our Forerunner, has gone before. He has ascended to the heavenly mount Zion. He reigns upon the throne in the heavens of the Spirit. And now, blessed be His name, within all who have received the call to sonship God has provided our very own INTERNAL GUIDANCE SYSTEM! This internal guidance system is discovered as we grow in the Lord — the secret, innate knowledge of our origin and destiny, that inward, irresistible compulsion of divine purpose, the deep mysterious urging of the inner spirit of life by the mind of Christ raised up within us — something we can follow without getting lost! As our lives are brought into harmony with our Father's will, by the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God, even though we cannot see the way ahead, we possess an instinctive sense of the right direction, and with understanding, courage, and confidence we move steadily forward without any fear of getting lost or missing the goal, knowing that through the storms, desert places, dark valleys, and rough and rocky roads, we shall arrive at last to stand with the Lamb upon the mount Zion. Aren't you glad!

Consider with me an actor preparing for his role in an upcoming drama. He pours over his lines. Striding back and forth in his room, he commits to memory the lines he has been assigned for the play. It is a major part; he will be the dominant actor. The action will swirl around him. He needs to get the lines memorized, know the director's instructions about where to move in each scene, and get a "feel" for how each scene is to be played. He spends hours and hours to get this drama to fit the director's expectation. When the curtain is raised on the drama, he will be judged on how closely he stays with the script. The play will become unintelligible if he doesn't follow the script!

Jesus had walked out every step of His ordained pathway and was now approaching the cross, resurrection, and ascension — the "end game" of His journey to mount Zion. On the night of His last

supper with His disciples He said to them, “*The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of Him*” (Mk. 14:21). It was written of Him! One can reverently say that His life was scripted for Him. All the major events were foretold in *scripture*. Yes, it was written in the scriptures, but it was also written *within Him in the scroll of His life*. The Father dwelt within Him, spoke within Him, worked within Him. The revelation of who He was and what He came to do was not merely learned out of the scriptures ô it was learned from the voice of the Father within, out of the very mind of the Father written in His forehead! At every step Jesus shows that He knew this script by heart! This script, this inward knowledge, this inner revelation, this voice from out of His innermost Being ô this was Jesusø INTERNAL GUIDANCE SYSTEM! This is what He followed, how He journeyed from heaven to earth and all the way up to mount Zion. And now, my beloved, WE FOLLOW THE LAMB. By hearing the voice of the spirit within, by receiving the *call* within ourselves to follow the Lamb, and by stepping forth day by day to walk out the revelation of the spirit we find the ðscriptö for *our lives* is easier to know and understand! It is leading us to mount Zion!

To be continuedí

J. PRESTON EBY