

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 243

THE HOLY CITY (continued)

“And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, *having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal*” (Rev. 21:10-11).

The Queen of Sheba had heard of Solomon’s greatness and glory and wisdom. Others had tried to give her an idea of it. They had pictured it to her so vividly and strongly that she would not believe it. She determined to investigate for herself. She beholds the glory of the king. She listens to his words of wisdom. She explores the greatness of the kingdom. And she returns with the confession that in spite of all the glowing reports she had been given, the half had not been told her! The same will, no doubt, be true with respect to the things described in the passage we are about to discuss.

The city, John says, HAS THE GLORY OF GOD. His first impression was that its radiance was like a scintillating gem. Its light could only be compared to the most precious stone John knew. He called it (as the people of that day did) a crystal-clear jasper stone. This was different from the gem called jasper today. The name for it in English today would be a giant blue-white diamond, a most beautiful gem. There is a dual reality we must take note of concerning this “jasper stone.” It relates both to the Lamb upon the throne in heaven, and to the holy city that comes down from God out of heaven. “And HE that sat (upon the throne) was to look upon *like a jasper stone...*” (Rev. 4:3). “And HER (the holy city) light was like unto a stone most precious, even *like a jasper stone...*” (Rev. 21:11). The jasper stone signifies and reveals the nature and glory of the One who sits upon the throne. Then in our present text it signifies that those who comprise the city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, have now come to the glory of Him who sits upon the throne!

To look upon Him who sits on the throne is like looking at a dazzling jasper stone. To look upon the light that emanates from the city of God is like looking at a dazzling jasper stone. The light, the splendor, the majesty, the beauty, the glory of Him who sits on the throne is like a jasper stone. The light, the splendor, the majesty, the beauty, the glory of the city of God is like a jasper stone. It is the same light, for “her light” is identified by John when he says, “And the city had no

need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and *the Lamb is the light* thereof” (Rev. 21:23). Therefore — HIS LIGHT is HER LIGHT! When I look at Jesus I see a life, a nature, a truth, a ministry that is *clear as crystal*. When I look at God’s called and chosen elect I am beginning to see the same thing! The message is clear — the Lord Jesus Christ is the jasper stone! The truth and the life that He is, is as *clear as crystal*! He is described as a stone *most precious*. That is the glory of our Lord Jesus the Christ! But now John sees something else — he sees a whole city, a great city, a beautiful city, invested upon with all the scintillating brilliance of the jasper stone — the glory of God revealed in Jesus now is given to the saints of the Most High!

The twenty-seventh Psalm begins with this word, “The Lord is *my light*.” This phrase is found frequently in the Psalms, as for instance in Psalm 36:9, “For with Thee is the fountain of life; *in Thy light shall we see light*.” And again, “O send out *Thy light* and Thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto Thy holy hill, and to Thy tabernacles” (Ps. 43:3). The wonderful significance of this One who is the light of the city is beautifully expressed by the Psalmist, “Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, *in the light of Thy countenance*” (Ps. 89:15). Light is the very substance of God, it is the essence of His own person, being, and nature. It is embodied in Him. Light originates, emanates, and radiates from our heavenly Father! From the brightest star in the universe to the tail of the tiniest firefly — all light comes from God!

The glorious Son of God is the One in whom the unapproachable and incomprehensible light of God is made manifest! As we only know the sun by the light that shines from it, so is God’s Christ the *outshining*, the revelation of God’s glory! As the light that shines from the sun is one nature with it, so every son of God is of one nature with the Father! As the light that shines from the sun is one substance with it, so the sons of God are the very substance of God in the earth! Friends, Christ is the light, the light is within, it must break through, it must *arise* and *shine*, it must have pre-eminence in our hearts. The glory of God is the emanation or radiation of His nature, and as we are filled with His glory we radiate His nature to creation. This is the real purpose of our calling! The Christ within — not the doctrine of sonship, not the truth of reconciliation, not the word of the kingdom, not another man’s revelation, not another man’s faith, but your own INDWELLING LIGHT enables you to manifest as the One who *is the light of the city*! Other people can follow the wandering stars and the falling stars, vainly chasing after the illusive light within them, but, praise God, there is a people in whom the God of light is being formed and birthed, partakers of His divine nature, conformed to His image, a new life found within, even the *light of life*. As the light of God increases in the elect in this hour, we are being brought to the place where all our need is fully met by the INNER SUFFICIENCY of the indwelling Spirit, not from that which comes from without. Christ is not doing for us from heaven, or from anywhere outside of us, for He who is the light of the city dwells *in the city*!

“Arise, shine; for *thy light is come*, and *the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee*. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall *arise upon thee*, and *His glory shall be seen upon thee*. And *the nations shall come to thy light*, and *kings to the brightness of thy rising*” (Isa. 60:1-3). These words are almost identical to what is said about the new Jerusalem in the vision of John! It is clear — there is a people UPON WHOM OUR GOD IS ARISING! He isn’t going to arise in the skies of the physical heavens, as the church world ignorantly expects, but *upon His people*. His glory will not be seen streaking across the physical heavens, but *upon His people*. Darkness does cover the earth, and gross darkness the people, but in spite of the abounding desolations of wickedness and trouble, we live in the most glorious hour of

all time for the people of God! The prophetic voice of the Lord is in the earth proclaiming with a great voice as of a trumpet that God is preparing His king-priests for the great task of bringing reconciliation, restoration, and transformation to the whole fallen world order. Nothing that man has done has so desolated the world that it is beyond hope! One glorious Son of God came into a world of pagan darkness, debauchery and sin, and ruthless power, and by the Spirit of His Life conquered all the gods of the pagans, transformed the lives of millions, and altered the course of world history. The divine seed that fell into this earth has sprung forth in the hearts of multitudes and is now ready to bring forth its harvest — *many sons* brought to His glory! For two thousand years the world has seen the flickering light of the seven golden candlesticks; now is the time for them to see THE GLORIOUS CITY OF GOD!

In the very midst of this darkness upon the land and gross darkness upon the people, God is arising upon His chosen ones. He is arising in my heart! How joyful we are that God, who is the Light, gets right down where the darkness is! He does not come from afar to chase the shadows away and dispel the night, for “God, who commanded the light to *shine out of darkness, hath **shined in our hearts***, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (II Cor. 4:6). First, God has met us right where we are. Some of us have been in some pretty dark places in our lives! But God commanded the light to shine out of our darkness, and the dawning of God’s day within us has blazoned our sky and made us a body of light to usher in a new day for all creation. The brightness of our rising brings the dawning of the new day! In fact, *we are the dawning!* As we shed His glory abroad, we are lights in humanity’s sky — so let no shadow of self keep your light from shining, but fill the earth with the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ!

We are appointed to shine as the sun! We have now come to mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, as a shining scene of great splendor and brightness and dazzling beauty. It is not our desire to merely see the light, or tell of it, or paint it, or even to walk in it — as fine as all that is. We must BECOME THE LIGHT! “YE ARE the light of the world.” “YE ARE light in the Lord.” How unworthy and unprepared for such a calling we feel sometimes! But, precious friend of mine, you may be poor, weak, unknown, unheralded, unlettered, despised and rejected of men, but if, through grace, there is a link connecting you to that One who *is* “the light of the city,” then you are, in very deed, a son of the day, even the day in which there is no night, and destined, in Father’s purpose and time, to shine in that celestial sphere, the region of glory, of which God’s Christ will be the central sun forevermore. It is not your own doing. It is the result of the counsel and operation of God Himself who has given you the light of life, joy and peace, triumph and glory, in Jesus Christ. And should you inquire as to what you can do to hasten the fullness of this divine reality I say, “Continue to expose yourself to the presence and power of HIM who is the light, soak up the light, until no darkness remains in any corner of your being.” That is the mystery.

Yet, should you be a total stranger to the hallowed action and influence of divine light, if your eyes have not been opened to behold any beauty in the face of the Son of God, and no attraction to that place in Him in the city of our God, then, though you possessed all the wealth of the nations, though you had the power of a king, though you had all the learning of an Einstein, though you were enriched with all the treasures of human philosophy, though you had drunk in with avidity all the streams of human science, though your name were adorned with all the learned titles which the schools and universities of this world could bestow, though you were piously devoted to the grandest creeds, the most honored traditions, the most lavish rituals, the most beautiful

ceremonies, and service of the revered religious systems of earth, yet you are A SON OF THE NIGHT, A CHILD OF DARKNESS; and are just as dark, just as void, just as formless and empty, just as cold and dead as was the desolate earth and the dark abyss, from which you came, before that memorable day in which God first commanded, "Let there be light," and there was light. "For ye *were sometimes darkness*, but *now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light*" (Eph. 5:8).

We must first see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ shining in our hearts and then it will be radiating forth to enlighten the earth. Isaiah said of the wilderness places, the desolation of the earth, "And they shall see the glory of the Lord." Oh, yes! ALL shall see the glory of the Lord as it was upon the countenance of Moses, as it radiated forth from the whole being of Jesus Christ upon the holy mount, as it shone in the face of Stephen. And the glory of the latter house shall be greater than the former! There must be a sense that the glory of the Lord is filling His temple. The glory of the Lord so filling the temple that the priests will not be able to minister. All that is of ourselves, all that is common and ordinary, all that is done by rote, and even all that pertains to the passing "in part" church order must be hushed and fall down in prostration before the very presence of the glory of God, in this new Kingdom Day. As the Lord finishes His work in His called and separated elect in this significant hour, there will be that expression and that shining forth of the brightness of the glory of the Lord and the excellency of our God. The beautiful expression of His life, the marvelous operation of His spirit, the authority and glory of His power — WILL BE SEEN UPON THE CITY OF THE LIVING GOD, THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM!

We were all born into a world of darkness and death. Christ is appearing within us as Light to begin to dispel the darkness and give us hope. His light within us is making it possible for us to trust our Father to lead us in the new paths of this new Kingdom Day and bring to us a *complete transformation*. The darkness of this world shall become light all around us, for Christ, the source of all light, is shining brighter and brighter within us to dispel the darkness of the carnal human realm. His light within us is manifested as a greater revelation of the truth, by increasing His faith within us, by raising up His nature of peace, joy, love, confidence, peace, and victory in all the happenings of our lives. Do not discount this time of His preparation within us! We now see things in the world more positively, for we know our Father *is in control*. We have learned this experientially, by His great faithfulness in our own experiences, testings, and circumstances. We now see all men in a different light by the true spirit of unconditional love, mercy, grace, reconciliation, and restoration. This is all the LIGHT OF CHRIST! And Christ is the LIGHT OF OUR CITY! The more positive outlook we now have is not due to a new teaching, a new mindset, a new form of meditation, psychology, biofeedback, hypnotism, mind control, or mental imaging. Those are all *soulish* things! The kingdom of God, the nature of God, and the glory of Christ do not come by *soul power*! But it is the direct result of a greater degree of the Light of Christ within us, in the Spirit and by the Spirit. IT IS THE LORD!

God wants sons and daughters today who are not caught up in world events and prophecies of gloom and doom, not worried about the desperate needs everywhere, but who are occupied with the Father's words and the Father's works. God is raising up a people in these days who do not have to explain anything, defend anything, build anything, promote anything, protect anything. God is merciful to us in saying to us, that the reason we can declare this, the reason this commission is coming, is because the burden is not of ourselves, but the Father is sending us. He is saying to us, "I am setting you to be lights. I am ordaining you to be saviours. I am forming you to be the habitation, the tabernacle of God. I am anointing you to be kings to reign and priests to minister my

salvation. I am sending you forth to be bread to be broken and fed to the hungry multitudes. I am pouring you out as a flowing, surging, bounteous river of life.” Let us not sell creation short in these days. Let us not deny the Lord who has purchased us to be a people with a purpose for the ages. While we seek no glory of our own, there is, nevertheless, great wealth and heavenly glory for all who fulfill all the will of God. You never lose with God!

“Clear as crystal” signifies that which has within it no impurities. It is uncontaminated by any mixture. There is nothing hidden, nothing concealed, nothing of self, sin, carnality, or the world that hasn’t been dealt with by His cross. There is no deceit, no false pretense, no mask, no outward façade covering a hidden agenda or false motive. It means that our life is an open book, we *are* what we *appear* to be — what you see is what you get! And what you get is all the love, grace, holiness, peace, purity, nature, and glory of the Christ within! It means that His life is being reproduced in us so that we all become as *clear as crystal!*

The prophet Jeremiah described the process of purifying wine. “Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel...therefore his taste remained in him, and the scent is not changed” (Jer. 48:11). In the olden days, in the process of making wine, they would pour the wine from vessel to vessel. Each time as the impurities would settle to the bottom, they poured the wine off, repeating the process again and again, until the wine was pure, clear, and sparkling — all the impurities removed. This not only improved the looks of the wine but it refined the flavor, for the taste of the impurities did not contaminate it. This speaks to us of our spiritual lives progressing from experience to experience, from dealing to dealing, from purging to purging, from stripping to stripping, and from glory to glory, emptied from vessel to vessel until our lives are cleansed from all carnality and error, pure, clear, and sparkling, *clear as crystal!* Some who read these lines have had your lives turned upside down and you don’t understand why the Lord has allowed this. Ah, my beloved, God *hasn’t allowed it* — He Himself has *done this!* When one is poured from vessel to vessel he has no control over the process. A strong and mighty hand lifts that vessel and pours the contents into another vessel, that is, into a new and different circumstance. IT IS THE LORD! And he pours us from vessel to vessel, again and again, in each experience removing from us something that no other experience could have removed, of the corruption of our human consciousness, our old religious traditions and delusions, the self-will of the soul, and the motions of the flesh.

The light stood for the emanation of the glory of God. What is the glory of God? Ezekiel in his visions did not see the Lord. He saw “*the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord*” (Eze. 1:28). Ezekiel caught just a glimmer of a glimmer of divine radiance, but that was enough to cause him to collapse, falling upon his face. The Lord is awesome! He is “God, the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who alone hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no (natural) man can approach unto; whom no (natural) man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting” (I Tim. 6:15-16). God gave hints of His glory to the prophets, but His ultimate revelation to us came in His Son, Jesus the Christ.

I have often wondered what it really would have been like to be there when Moses had finished the tabernacle in the wilderness, and the record states: “The *glory of the Lord* filled the tabernacle, and Moses was not able to enter the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.” The same thing happened when Solomon had finished the temple upon mount Moriah, and had prayed the dedicatory prayer. “Now when

Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering, and the sacrifices; and the *glory of the Lord* filled the house. And the priests could not enter into the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord filled the Lord's house." Sometimes in a gathering of the Lord's people, or during seasons of private prayer and worship, the very atmosphere seems charged with the Divine presence. The place where we are seems impregnated with the power of God. We often refer to this as the glory of God. What did the Israelites experience when the glory of Yahweh filled the tabernacle and the temple? Was it just a tremendous consciousness of His presence, as we sometimes experience? Or was it an experience of a different sort? What all did they see? What did they hear? What did they feel? I have often tried to visualize just what it would have been like to be there!

The literal meaning of the Hebrew word for glory is *weight* or *substance*. In the eyes of men this literal meaning frequently lent itself to the idea that the person possessing glory was laden (heavy) with the substances of this world. Jacob's flock was his "glory" (Gen. 31:1). The Assyrians' power was their "glory" (Isa. 8:7). Joseph's high position in the kingdom of Egypt was his "glory" (Gen. 45:13). The Israelites thought that they were living to the glory of God by acquiring weight of material wealth, power, and position. Today, a number of "prosperity preachers" have the very same idea! They think God is glorified in the heaping up of the weight and substance of worldly possessions and earthly blessings upon His people. Yes, God has promised to supply all our need, but Jesus also made it plain that "a man's life consisteth *not* in the abundance of the *things* which he possesseth" (Lk. 12:15). And again, "Lay *not* up for yourselves *treasures on earth*, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves *treasures in heaven (the realm of the spirit)*..." (Mat. 6:19-20). The prophet Jeremiah warned God's people that they should not consider such human values their glory. Rather, they were to glory in the fact that they knew the Lord, whose glory was His kindness, justice, and righteousness! (Jer. 9:23-24).

When "glory" was applied to God, it was meant to bring out the weightiness of God's nature, character, attributes, and power. His love, His wisdom, His knowledge, His righteousness, His justice, His truth — all these *weighty spiritual substances* are the "glory" of God! His glory is the emanation of what He is. All Bible dictionaries agree that "glory" is "the exhibition and display of the excellence of the subject to which it is ascribed." Thus, in respect to God, it is the *visible manifestation* of His attributes. The glory of God is not a bright light shining out of His person like we see in pictures; rather, it is THE VISIBLE MANIFESTATION OF WHAT HE IS. The glory of God is God *revealed*, God *put on display*, the *emanation of His essence*, all that is true in God brought into demonstration on the visible plane so men can perceive what God is like. That is what men saw when they beheld the glory of God! God is love, God is light, God is truth, God is life, God is peace, God is power, God is righteousness. When God brings what He is into expression so we can either see or perceive it, we then "*behold HIS GLORY.*" It was with this same sense of glory that Jesus spoke about how He would bring glory to the Father. Jesus would not acquire worldly wealth, fame, power, or position. On the contrary, His life would be "heavy" with the glorious heavenly qualities of love, mercy, goodness, purity, truth, compassion, wisdom, and spiritual power. And that is the call and aim of *every son of God!* ***These are the city that HAS THE GLORY OF GOD!***

To me it is a wonderful thing to hear John say that the new Jerusalem "has the glory of God." It speaks to us and of us. Now Christ shares His glory with His bride, the Lamb's wife, and He also

has given His glory to His “many brethren” — the sons of God. For has not the Lord “called *us* to His kingdom and *glory*” (Col. 2:12)? Paul says that we have been called “to the obtaining of the *glory* of our Lord Jesus Christ” (II Thes. 2:4). Again, “For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in *bringing many sons unto glory*, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Heb. 2:10). “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the *glory that shall be revealed in us*” (Rom. 8:18). “When He shall come to be *glorified in His saints*, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day” (II Thes. 1:10). “And the *glory which Thou gavest me I have given them...that the world may know that Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved me*” (Jn. 17:22-23). Can any doubt remain in any mind that the saints ***are indeed*** the holy city, New Jerusalem, ***“which HAS the glory of God”!***

As we have pointed out, God’s great glory is His wonderful nature and character, the substance of His Being. Some people foolishly talk about dying and “going to glory” as if glory were a place, an astral location on a planet called heaven. But one doesn’t “go” to glory — the Bible says nothing about such a crude notion. Glory is *given!* Glory is *obtained!* Glory is *attained!* Glory is *revealed!* Glory is revealed *in us!* Glory is not a place you go to, glory is something you become! When the glory of the Lord is fully revealed in His people “all flesh shall see it together.” That is the scriptural testimony about glory! If you don’t apprehend and experience God’s glory here on earth, forget about “going” somewhere to find it! As the bride makes herself ready for her Bridegroom, and as the sons of God ascend into the spiritual dominion of His throne, the glory of God emanates through us and out from us — and as the holy city of God WE HAVE THE GLORY OF GOD! It is indeed wonderful!

Jesus Christ the firstborn Son of God is the *brightness of God’s glory*, the express image of His person (Heb. 1:3). That’s why in Old Testament times when the glory manifested, God covered it with a cloud. He had to protect mankind from it to keep it from obliterating them. In Jesus, however, the light of God was bent, broken, so that men beheld the light as a rainbow rather than a blinding sun. John saw the same thing in vision when he beheld the glory of God’s throne in the heavens — there was obviously a cloud, for he says, “And there was a *rainbow* round about the throne” (Rev. 4:3). The bow is in the cloud, the Lord told Noah. Under the Old Testament economy God covered His glory with a cloud, and then revealed it in the bow in the cloud. When Jesus came the rainbow appeared in the cloud! He was not only the shining forth of God’s glory, but also the rainbow of promise — the promise of redemption, blessing, and life for all men!

While living here on earth our Lord was extremely kind. He picked up little children and blessed them. He healed all who were suffering with pain. While relatives were weeping over dead loved ones, He raised four of them to life again. The Saviour of *all men* said to the woman caught in adultery, “Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more” (Jn. 8:11). His *kindness* made an evangelist out of the wicked woman at the well (Jn. 4:29). Because Jesus really loved the weak, helpless creatures whom He had created, He wept over them, prayed for them and taught them continually. Except those religious Pharisees, Jesus never spoke *one cross word* to the unconverted masses. He was very tender and kind in all His dealings with men, even the most wicked among them. He sat at meat with the rich and ungodly and never upbraided them for their sins, shortcomings, and moral failures. His approach to them was very gentle, delicate, and considerate. Surely then, we are safer in His hands than anywhere else! The things He has in store for every one of us are far greater than we could plan for ourselves! He is indeed GLORIOUS!

When John saw the holy city descending down from God, God was giving him a vision of the bride of Christ as she would be in her perfection. We see that twice here, the new Jerusalem, the holy city, is called the Lamb's wife, or the bride of Christ. In other places we find the true church presented as the bride of Christ. There are not two brides of Christ revealed in scripture, nor three nor four. The scripture does not make Christ a bigamist. So therefore when we see that scripture calls the church the bride of Christ, and also the holy city the bride of Christ, we see that the two are one, and that the church is the holy city, and that the holy city that John saw is simply the bride-church having *come to perfection*, the glorious perfection that God planned and purposed for her. If we follow John in the magnificent view that was given him of the holy city, and study the various parts of the city as John saw them in the vision, and if we let the Spirit of God show us the spiritual realities of which these parts or portions of the holy city are symbols, then it shall be revealed to our hearts how true it is that the holy city is the bride in her perfection.

When God reveals this new Jerusalem people in all His fullness the world will know this wonderful fact, that "the glory which Thou gavest me, I have *given them*." The glory of God is the LIGHT of this great city! Not only is it the light of the city, but also of the whole world, for "the *nations* of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it" (Rev. 21:24). "YE are the light of *the world*," Jesus said. The light of Christ is the *true light* which "lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (Jn. 1:9). "His *life* is the light of men" (Jn. 1:4). The light of God is pure light, total white light, for "in Him there is no darkness at all" (I Jn. 1:5). The light which God is, is the light of the city! And yet, we are not talking about any kind of natural light, an aura or brilliance or emanation that can be seen by the natural eye. That kind of light may be beautiful and impressive, but it ministers nothing *spiritual* to any one. All through scripture we find that light has been the symbol for truth, understanding, and reality. When the Bible says of the holy city that "her light is like a jasper stone, clear as crystal," it simply reveals the true church as having come to all light, perfect light, all truth, purest truth, absolute understanding, with the divine nature, wisdom, and power, and walking and living and expressing and manifesting that truth and reality — the formation of the mind and image of Christ within! THIS IS THE HOLY CITY OF GOD!

To be continued...

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