

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

## FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 31

### THE CHURCH IN EPHEBUS

“Unto the *angel* of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith He that holdeth the *seven stars* in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks” (Rev. 2:1). “The mystery of these *seven stars* which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The *seven stars* are the *angels* of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches” (Rev. 1:20).

John calls the seven stars and the seven candlesticks a *mystery*. A scriptural mystery, however, is not something which cannot be understood, but rather something which can be understood when it has been revealed. It is a hidden truth, veiled, concealed in some sign or symbol, until it is opened to the understanding by the quickening of the Holy Spirit and then understood by those to whom it is revealed. So then, it is *arevelation*! The seven stars and the seven candlesticks are no longer a mystery when the explanation is given that “the *seven stars* are the *angels* of the seven churches; and the *seven candlesticks* are the *seven churches*.” He holds the angels or messengers of the churches in His right hand while His position among the churches is *in the midst*.

Now I would draw your reverent attention to a most significant point. The King James Version of the Bible prefaces each message to the churches with these words: “*Unto the angel* of the church at Ephesus...or Smyrna...or Pergamos...or...write.” It sounds as though John is writing TO the messengers of the churches. But such is not the case! John is by no means communicating the message TO the messengers, rather BY or THROUGH the messengers. In an even deeper sense John is receiving the message FROM the messengers. The messengers are not the recipients of the message *from* John, but *in* and *with* John they are the active force by which the messages are received and delivered to the churches.

Let us UNDERSTAND! Charles Williams in *The Place of the Lion* made the following astute comment about *prepositions*. “It was good *of* you to look for Quentin...or good *in* you. How accurate one has to be with one’s prepositions! Perhaps it was a wrong preposition that set the whole world awry...” The preposition “unto” in the command of the Spirit to John is, in the Greek, in the *dative case*. Greek is different than English, and in the Greek language of the New Testament the dative case is used to signify not only “to” and “for,” but also “in,” “with,” and “by.” Let me give you a few examples of such usage where the very same preposition is used that is translated “**Unto** the angel of the church...write.”

“For if **through** the offense of one many be dead...” (Rom. 5:15). “For if **by** one man’s offense death reigned **by** one, much more they which receive abundance of grace...shall reign in life **by** one, Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:17). “Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia and was unknown **by** face unto the churches of Judea which were in Christ” (Gal. 1:22). “That He

might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water **by** the word” (Eph. 5:26). “Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things **by** the word of His power...” (Heb. 1:3). “Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree...**by** whose stripes ye were healed” (I Pet. 2:24). “For this they willingly are ignorant of, that **by** the word of God the heavens were of old...” (II Pet. 3:5).

The word “by” in each of the preceding passages of scripture is the identical form of the preposition used in chapters two and three of Revelation where it is translated “**Unto** the angel of the church...write.” But the meaning is that it is “in” or “by” or “through” the angel of the church that John should write, not “unto” the angel or messenger! The Emphatic Diaglott correctly renders this phrase: “**BY** the messenger of the congregation in Ephesus, write...” There is a world of difference between writing TO a messenger and writing BY or THROUGH a messenger! The true sense of the action is reflected in the following passage where the same preposition is used again, “Until the day in which He (Jesus) was taken up, after that He **THROUGH THE HOLY GHOST** had given commandment unto the apostles whom He had chosen” (Acts 1:2). What is really being said is just this: “**BY** the anointing, **BY** the spirit of revelation, **BY** the spirit of prophecy, **BY** the word of the Lord, **BY** the dispensation of God unto the church at Ephesus...write!”

There are seven star-angels and there are seven churches. Each message concludes with the thrilling and commanding call, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what **the Spirit** saith unto the churches!” And that is what is meant! John is not writing **to** a messenger, rather, it is **by** the messenger that he writes, and the messenger **IS THE HOLY SPIRIT**, for the churches that receive the message are admonished to *hear* what “the Spirit” is saying! Each message is given **from** Jesus, it is **through** or **by** the Spirit, and there is a dispensation of the Spirit designated for each church. The dispensation of the Spirit for each church is typified by a *star or messenger*, which is the symbol for the **ANOINTED WORD OF THE LORD** to that church! Thus it was **by** the seven angels, which are *the seven spirits of God*, that John wrote to the churches! Only when we understand that the *seven stars*, the *seven angels*, and the *seven spirits* are the very same thing does the *mystery* become **REVEALED!** These are deep and very sacred principles of God. And today, my beloved, unless *we, too*, are quickened by these same seven spirits or seven angels, or seven stars, which are the seven-fold word of God by the seven-fold spirit of God, we will understand absolutely nothing of what we read in the book of Revelation! Only as we become personally identified with the seven stars, the seven angels, and the seven spirits are mind and heart quickened to the truth as it is in Jesus.

You will notice that in the book of Revelation from chapter one all the way through chapter twenty-two there is angel after angel involved in the unfolding revelation of Jesus Christ. Do you know who these angels are? They are ministries, agents, messengers, spirits, anointings, voices, revelations, words, spiritual powers and manifestations of God by which He accomplishes His mighty works in His elect and in the whole earth! These are His spiritual ministers! “He maketh His angels *spirits*, and His ministers a *flame of fire*” (Heb. 1:7). The symbolic term “angel” is used in the Revelation to show that the ministry and action comes from heaven, it comes in the Spirit and by the Spirit, it comes by the word, authority, and power of God. That is the kind of ministry that at pivotal times in earth’s history has been loosed in the earth, and in this new day of the manifestation of the sons of God is loosed in the earth, and shall be over and over again until the

kingdom of God triumphs over all. There are no literal angels with wings flying around over the earth doing these things, for it is all **by the Spirit!**

The first error many make is believing that the “angels” of the churches are the *pastors!* It will come as a shock to some to learn that there was no such position of “the pastor” in the churches in the days of the first apostles! Even the apostles Paul and Peter never once wrote to any church addressing, or even referring to, “the pastor.” The term is completely foreign to the word of God and entered in later years as an invention of the man-made religious systems of Babylon. Though God truly speaks to His people through ministries — through apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, and others — He speaks to His elect **BY HIS SPIRIT.** If it is not by the Spirit, then God has not spoken! The “angel” or “messenger” of Jesus Christ *is the Holy Spirit!* How plain this is made by the apostle John in his Gospel, the very same John who wrote the book of Revelation! “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, *whom the Father will send in my name,* He shall teach you all things” (Jn. 14:26). “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the *Spirit of truth...* He shall *testify of me*” (Jn. 15:26). “When He, the *Spirit of truth,* is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and *He will show you things to come.* He shall *glorify me:* for He shall *receive of mine,* and shall *show it unto you*” (Jn. 16:13-14). Now notice the correspondency between these scriptures and the following: “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to *show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass;* and He sent and signified it *by His angel* (messenger) unto His servant John” (Rev. 1:1). “I Jesus have sent *mine angel* to *testify unto you* these things in the churches...and *the Spirit says...*” (Rev. 22:16-17). Oh, yes! The “angel” of Jesus Christ who is *sent* from Him, who *testifies* of Him, who *reveals* Him, who *shows His chosen ones things to come* is none other than **THE HOLY SPIRIT OF TRUTH!**

The angel of Jesus is the Spirit of truth! Angels throughout the Bible were sent to men to impart revelation, to deliver a message, to speak a word from God. In the Old Testament Daniel had an instructing angel. Zachariah had an instructing angel. Ezekiel had an instructing angel which told him about the events that were to come. It was an angel that notified the virgin Mary of the Son she was to bear, and angels announced His birth to the shepherds attending their flocks by night. But that old order has now passed away, for God has sent the Holy Spirit Himself to guide the elect into all truth! The only angel we need in this new day of the kingdom of God is the Spirit of truth, the very Spirit of Christ!

The ministry of the seven churches is the ministry of the Son of God who has the seven spirits of God. In the symbology of the book of Revelation one of the seven spirits is the messenger or revealer of each church. The seven spirits are identified by the prophet Isaiah. “And the Spirit of the *Lord* shall rest upon Him, the spirit of *wisdom* and *understanding,* the spirit of *counsel* and *might,* the spirit of *knowledge* and of *the fear of the Lord*” (Isa. 11:2). In the symbolism of the Revelation there is a spirit that goes with each church. The spirit, when “dispatched” to the church, is called an “angel,” the angel or messenger or revelation of the word of the Lord to that church. When you know which of the seven-spirit-star-angels is speaking in the exhortation to each church, the understanding is vastly enhanced. Each of the seven spirits, and thus each of the messages to the churches, represents a stage or aspect of our growth and development into the fullness of Christ.

Can we not see by this that even the angels in the book of Revelation are wonderful *symbols*, representing the living word of God communicated by the spirit of revelation! An angel came and showed these things unto John — that is, a powerful word of the Lord came to John out of the heavenly realm of the Spirit, speaking mysteries to his heart and passing before his spiritual eyes visions of wonders to come. The proof of this is found in John’s own statement as to how the revelation was received. “He sent and signified it unto His servant John: who bare record of the **word of God**, and of the **testimony of Jesus Christ**, and of all that he saw” (Rev. 1:1-2). The voice of the angel was merely a figure for THE LIVING WORD OF GOD BY THE SPIRIT!

The seven angels of the seven churches are the seven-fold spirit of God. So the angel was not saying to John, “Write to the pastor, and tell the pastor to tell the church that I have this *for* them, and that *against* them.” That wasn’t the message at all! Rather, it is “**By** the angel of the church...write!” That is, by the dispensation of the Spirit, by the anointing, by the word of the Lord to the church...write!” An angel is *a messenger*. Therefore, what we are talking about is a **word!** God says, “I am sending a word. It’s a word of my Spirit. It’s out of the seven-fold spirit of my own nature, mind, power, and glory. John — by the angel, by the Spirit, by the operation of God in you write this word and send it to the churches. Don’t write something to the pastor, but in the Spirit and by the Spirit send forth the word!” The entire book was written *in the Spirit*. John was *in* the Spirit when he received it, and he wrote it *by* the Spirit. That is the word that is alive today! It’s not the word that you hear from my lips, or read from my pen; it’s not the word that falls upon your natural ear or your physical eye. It’s the word that comes by the anointing, by the spirit of revelation, by the illumination of the mighty God — that is the word that enlightens your mind, penetrates your heart, transforms your life, and brings forth within you **the revelation of Jesus Christ!** The seven angels are the seven spirits, which are the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne (Rev. 4:5). The seven angels are the seven stars in Christ’s right hand. The seven lamps are also the seven angels with the seven trumpets standing before God (Rev. 8:2) sounding forth the word of the Lord! Therefore He says, “**By** the angel...write!”

We meet these seven angels, and other mighty angels besides, throughout the book of Revelation. When God desires to reveal something, or to accomplish a work within His elect, or in the earth, He sends forth a symbolic angel — a word, a move of His Spirit, a manifestation of His power — out of the heavens of His Spirit. Oh, yes! The new word of the kingdom, the word of God’s new order of kings and priests for the new age, must come “down” from God out of heaven into our earth. It is the message of an angel, or a heavenly messenger, even a spiritual anointing and a divine, creative word from the Lord that will transform us into the glorious image and likeness of Christ (Rev. 10:1-7). It is also by a message or the word of an angel or a spiritual anointing and a divine, authoritative word from the Lord that great Babylon, the three-fold systems of man’s creation, shall *fall* to rise no more (Rev. 14:8). The anointed word of our Father, sent from the heavens of His Spirit to the earth, declares it to be so and also begins the process that makes it so!

## THE CHURCH IN EPHESUS

“By the angel of the church in *Ephesus* write...” (Rev. 2:1).

Ephesus is the first mentioned church of the seven. Ephesus was a city of about two hundred thousand people. It was a great city and had a huge outdoor theater which could seat about twenty thousand people. It was a place of resorts, and the Roman emperors came there. It was a city constructed of white marble, a beautiful place, and Paul commented on that. The city was considered as the greatest city of Roman Asia. It was also a seaport with a very good harbor. A Roman writer called it “Lumen Asiae” or “The Light of Asia.” What was the source of its greatness? It was the Gateway of Asia. Ships plying the waters of the Mediterranean sea could enter this fine harbor. Ephesus was the end of the road from far off exotic places of the east. Travelers and goods bound for Rome passed through this city. When Christians were shipped to Rome to be flung to the lions, Ephesus was the port of embarkation. Ignatius called it the Highway of the Martyrs. Its position made Ephesus the wealthiest and the greatest city in all Asia.

The city of Ephesus was a beautiful city but was probably best known in the ancient world for its sexual perversion. This is what many thousands of people came to the city for! The world-famous temple of the goddess Diana was located in the city and every form of immorality was centered in the temple worship, for “sacred sex” was one of the prominent features of the cult of Diana. It was one of those cities where, like Las Vegas today, if you wanted a “good time” and you were unconverted and didn’t care what kind of good time you had, that was the place to go. Ephesus was a city one went to to sin — everything was legal. The temple of Diana was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Inside the temple was an altar built to Diana in front of three velvet curtains. Behind the curtains was the image of Diana. The image was so ancient that no one could remember where it originated, which fostered the belief that it literally fell from heaven. If you see a picture of the image of Diana you would wonder why they worshipped such a hideous likeness! Diana was not a beautiful woman, she was a repulsive, dark, squatty figure, covered with dozens of breasts on the front, each representing a different aspect of her character. Among other things she was the goddess of fertility and sex. Around her worship were some of the most bawdy and vulgar orgies of the ancient world. About her, day and night, unceasing music was played and everything that appealed to the senses. Her temple worship made use of some ten thousand girls and women who were called “holy women” because, as history shows, they “united” male worshippers with their goddess. In some instances there were male prostitutes and sodomites for the women and effeminate. It was an ugly affair all the way round, and the worship of Diana literally smelled of hell. **In the midst of such a city we find one of the assemblies of Christ set as a light in a dark place!**

The first church to whom Christ spoke was Ephesus and the reason the order begins there is because Ephesus is the “mother church” for all the other churches in that part of Asia. The seven churches literally began out of the church at Ephesus. The letters that were sent to these churches probably started at Ephesus, as was the custom in those days, they circulated letters from church to church. The first letter was addressed to Ephesus and the remainder were undoubtedly directed to the churches in the order that the letters would be circulated, for they were seven letters within one letter — the whole of the Revelation being but one book.

The following remarkable words reveal how Ephesus became the beginning point of all the seven churches. Paul had come to Ephesus “and he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of

God. But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. And this continued for the space of two years; *so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks*” (Acts 19:8-10). The seven churches were all in the area around Ephesus, but they formed a circle. They were not a great distance from each other, some were only ten miles from one another, others were thirty or forty-five miles from another. By the time the book of Revelation was written Paul was dead, and John had become sort of a spiritual overseer to the seven churches before he was banished to the isle of Patmos. Amidst the afflictions of Patmos his heart was still in those churches.

In the letters to the seven churches the Holy Spirit deals first of all with THE EPHESIAN CONDITION. “By the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars...nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love...but this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate” (Rev. 2:1-6). The EPHESIAN CONDITION is one that the Lord partially compliments. Here is a body of believers who toil and persevere for the sake of Christ; they can’t endure wickedness; they have discernment and are not carried away by false ministries; they endure many things for the gospel’s sake; and most of all the Lord could say of them, “You hate the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.”

Ephesus was the church closest to Patmos. The city was located in a very desirable location, and the name means “desired” or “desirable.” This has a spiritual meaning to the Lord’s elect. We must learn that in the Lord’s eyes *we are desirable!* Those called to sonship are losing their former religious sense of unworthiness, their sin-consciousness, spirit of condemnation, inferiority complexes, and are being delivered from all depressions, for we are truly a *new creation* in Christ! Ah, yes, my brother, my sister, the Father of glory chose *you* — picked *you* out for Himself as His special own, predestined for a purpose — before the foundation of the world, and before the times of the ages. “According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto placement as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will” (Eph. 1:3-5). And of His Zion company, those who ascend into the heavenly heights of authority and dominion with Christ upon His throne, the Lord says, “For the Lord hath *chosen Zion*; He hath *desired it* for His habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have *desired it*” (Ps. 132:13-14).

It is a beautiful truth that the Lord thinks of each one of His elect as *desirable*. He desires us! To understand this you must read the Song of Solomon and wait before the Lord until He reveals the deep spiritual meaning of that book in your heart. As a bridegroom desires his bride, so the Lord desires us! He does not look upon our outer man of flesh with its imperfections and corruptions, but upon the inner new creation man of the spirit. In our spirit we are truly holy and without blame! On the personal and individual level, when we come to the place in our experience of becoming a bridegroom, possessing within ourselves the spiritually masculine characteristics of the *sons of God*, then we desire *our bride*. Our bride is within ourselves — our soul. That is how

the soul is saved! Within me my spirit desires my soul as its bride and woos her to become one life in the union of love. When spirit and soul are united in marriage within ourselves, they then clean up their house (the body) so that sin is forever put away and the house can be glorified with incorruption and immortality. All this the Lord *desires* for His elect and is fulfilling it within us by His Spirit!

To each of the churches, before ever He praises or corrects them, before ever He requires anything of them, He gives a revelation of Himself. Notice the revelation of Himself He gives to the church at Ephesus. “These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks” (Rev. 2:1). In the book of Revelation everything is presented as a “message” sent in writing to the churches, but that is only the symbol. The reality is that CHRIST REVEALS HIMSELF in that capacity to that people, whoever, whenever, or wherever they are in the history of the church. The revelation He gives to each OF HIMSELF is what it is going to take for that church, or the people in that state or condition of their spiritual lives, to overcome. Each church represents people in a particular *spiritual dimension* of their growth and development in Christ, and it takes that unique aspect of the revelation of Jesus Christ unto them and within them for that people in their particular condition, state, and circumstance to come to the fullness of Himself. The people in THE EPHESIAN CONDITION need to know by the Spirit that Christ holds the administration of their lives in His all-powerful hand, and that the Lord of glory truly walks in the midst of them!

## I KNOW...YOUR WORKS!

“I know thy *works*, and thy *labour*...” (Rev. 2:2).

It was mid-March when the young man gave his mother a little package. He told her that inside were seeds for an unusual flower that would spring up and blossom within two weeks. So she put the seeds into a pot of moist soil, placed the pot in a sunny window, and waited for the miracle. But the pot of dirt just sat there. When April 1 rolled around, the son stopped in to ask how the flowers were doing. His mom got a pained look on her face and said there was still nothing but dirt. Her son started laughing and said, “April Fools!” The “seeds” he had given her were actually the hard little tips of turkey beaks he had picked up at a local farm. When you plant something, great things won’t happen unless there’s **life** inside the thing you plant! The Lord says, “I know your works.” He neither condemns nor praises the works, He says simply, “I know.” Oh, yes, He knows! There are works of life and there are works of death. The Lord is actively purging each member of His elect in this hour from all the *dead works* of man’s carnal religious efforts. He is bringing forth life in the inward parts that we may bring forth the fruits of righteousness in the earth!

The burden of the Spirit is to conform the Lord’s people into the image and likeness of Christ. Oftentimes He will lead us in wilderness ways of isolation, testing, and proving, for His ultimate desire is to lead us close to the heart of God, and therefore His dealings are designed to bring us to an humble and contrite heart. Some have the notion that because we are at the “end-time” we’ve got to come up with ingenious plans to *get the job* done. Many today are promoting their own grandiose schemes to convert the world to Christ! And He who is Lord of the church is crowded out of His temple, and replaced with the zeal and wisdom of the flesh! Many seek to use

the Holy Spirit to do *their bidding* and bless *their efforts*, rather than waiting upon the Lord to manifest His life in them. It is the mighty working of the Spirit of Life within God's sons that shall bring forth the revelation of Jesus Christ in this Day! The firstborn Son did only those things He saw the Father doing. For thirty years He saw *nothing* as He stayed in Nazareth growing in the knowledge of the Father and learning His ways. Then one day, when He was ready for it, the Father showed Him a work and He stepped forth to Cana of Galilee and turned water into wine. From that day forward the mighty works of God were wrought through His Son! They were *God's works*, for He had waited upon the Father to manifest His life from within. So shall it be in this Day! To those who go about doing their own works, and to those who wait upon the Father to do *His works*, the Lord says, "*I know thy works!*" We may fool men, but the Lord *knows!*

## I KNOW...YOUR PATIENCE!

"I know...thy *patience*" (Rev. 2:2).

Patience is mentioned twice in verse two and verse three. In a church of that stature, as the mother church of all the churches in Asia, with all the false teachers coming through, all the weirdoes, nuts, and flakes coming from all the other places around, false teachers of the Judaizers and Knostics and myriad others, they *needed patience* to try each one of these by the discernment of the Spirit and see what these doctrines were, and what the hearts of these individuals were.

The Lord's called and chosen elect also need patience concerning the work of God in us! If you've taken a trip with young children, you'll recognize the question, "Are we almost there yet?" It's an annoying question for parents, especially when it comes about twenty minutes into a day-long drive. But the Lord's children are not innocent of such questioning either! "O God, aren't we there yet? Haven't we been through enough? Are the sons about to be manifested? Do we have to endure this night much longer? Isn't it time for our change? Is the work about finished? Will I make it in to the high calling before I go by way of the grave? Are we almost there?"

The three most common words heard among believers in time of crisis are: "Lord, *do something!*" It is completely contrary to our nature as human beings to stand still and do nothing when we face perplexing trials. In fact, waiting patiently for God to act is probably the most difficult thing about the walk of sonship! Even those with deep dealings of the Lord in their lives sometimes panic when the Lord doesn't move according to their timetable. We often give God deadlines and time limits. We cry, "Lord, when are you going to do something about this? If you don't act now, it will be too late!" But I do not hesitate to tell you, my beloved, God is *never* too late! Mary and Martha found that out when their brother, Lazarus, died and was buried! He always acts — and not according to our schedule, but His.

The Lord is calling a people unto Himself in this new day of the kingdom who will trust Him in every crisis. Indeed, He often leads us into situations that are frightening, critical, difficult, in order to teach us His ways. He tests us to reveal in our hearts whether we are able to stand still and see the salvation of God! Every called out one should pray that the Lord will open his eyes and show him the eternal truth of these words of scripture: "The steps of a good man are *ordered*



by the Lord: and He delighteth in his way” (Ps. 37:23). The Hebrew word for “ordered” here means “prearranged, step by step, fixed, ordained by God.” This means it is God, not the devil, not some freak accident, but the Lord Himself who leads us into difficult places. We may cry out, “Lord, why are you allowing my crisis to continue?” But the truth is, not only does He allow our trial, He *arranges* it! And that is hard on the carnal mind!

I firmly believe every step I take is ordained by our heavenly Father. And if that is indeed true, then I know that God will never lead me to the brink of a difficult situation only to abandon me. He wouldn’t say, “Okay, Preston, I’ve directed you up to this point. Now you’re on your own!” No! Our wonderful Father is absolutely faithful to every one of His sons, in every situation and circumstance. Whenever God requires anything of man, there is always a reason for it. The reason so many people fail to attain to great heights in the Spirit is because they are unable to see God’s *purpose*, and therefore they fail in the faith that lays hold upon the great heights that are in Him. His word to you today, precious one, is just this: “Will you be the one who won’t panic — who won’t charge God with forsaking, abandoning, and failing you? Will you stand still in your crisis and testing, leaning upon the faithfulness of your Father, trusting Him to reveal His power in you?” That is the stuff sons of God are made of!

A dear brother shared the following. “In this fast-paced age, to tell someone to wait brings some difficult problems. A child sees all his presents for his birthday and yet must wait until the date arrives. Oh, the excitement that he feels, for he contemplates the pleasures hidden just under those pretty wrappings for him. In like manner, we know some joys of the kingdom. They are like the outer wrappings of the child’s gifts. We anticipate the full glory of the kingdom of God, but also know that *we must wait*. The first picture the word ‘wait’ sets before our eyes is as the child and his presents. Time holds him back from receiving what is his. He sits and with anxiety waits for the hour when he will be free to possess them. His waiting is an exercise in *patience*. Our waiting upon the Lord has this element, yet is much greater! When we wait upon the Lord, we twist together with the One for whom we wait. The boy aims his sight on receiving what is his by the promise of a birthday. Time passes, and with each moment of thought upon his gifts, he is uniting to his ownership of them. He sees the big wrapped box in the corner and thinks, ‘This is *mine*. I wonder what it is?’ Whatever it is, he unites to his possession of it. So also do we wait upon God!

“In the spring of 1979 I attended the graduating ceremony of the Bible school I attended before God sent me back to Missouri. Now, they had a guest speaker at their meeting. He was recognized as one who hears from God and shares what’s on God’s mind for the moment. As he came to the podium, before him sat the young graduates. Without an introduction or even an hello, he began to speak in a mild voice the word God wanted these to hear. His voice became louder and more intense with each sentence. Finally, his concluding statements were at the top of his vocal range, yet without breaking the richness of his voice. He went through several Old Testament characters attaching the word *wait* to each one. He said, ‘Abraham, God has called you to birth the son of promise, but you must *wait*. *Wait* you must! Isaac, you must *wait* for the time for Rebecca to come. You must *wait*! Jacob, *wait* and *wait* and *wait* you will for Rachel your love. And *wait* you will to have your name changed to Israel. You will *wait*! Joseph, you must *wait* for the day of deliverance. Yes, Joseph, you must *wait*! *Wait*, yes *wait* David you shall to be king. David, you will *wait*. *Wait*! *Wait*! You must *wait*!’” — end quote.

To all who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship to God, who yearn to see the fullness of God revealed in His elect; to all who long to see creation set free from the bondage of corruption; to all who hope in Christ for the perfection, completion, and fulfillment of **all** He has promised those who follow on to know Him in this Day; to one and all I say, “*wait!*” “Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him” (Ps. 37:7). “But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it” (Rom. 8:25). “Be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises” (Heb. 6:12). “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise” (Heb. 10:35-36). Patience is often lacking when God does not seem to accomplish His work in our lives, or in others, or in the earth as quickly as we think He should. But every son must understand this great truth — God seems to use *delay* as a choice process in the development of character and faith! *Wait!* Be *patient*, saith the Lord! Every promise of God *will be fulfilled* in His appointed time, when every necessary preparation has been completed in each son. God will finish His work and show forth His glory in us. He *will* do it! He *is doing* it! The work of God in us today is setting the stage for God’s great tomorrow. Not one thing shall fail of **all** that He hath spoken!

## THOSE WHO SAY THEY ARE APOSTLES

“Thou hast tried them which *say they are apostles, and are not*, and has found them liars” (Rev. 2:2).

The setting for the passage above is a time when Paul is now dead, Peter is gone, and John has only a few more years to live — he is the last of the twelve apostles — and already false apostles are rising up in the midst of the Lord’s people. It seems that false apostles always *tell you* they are apostles. In fact, we usually have only *their word* for it that they are apostles! I’ve noticed through many years that true apostles rarely open their mouths to tell it. Notice the wording — “those who **say** they are apostles.” We find something happening in their day that is characteristic of the church in every generation and age, especially in this climatic hour of the transition of the ages. In John’s day there was a massive rising up of people who declared themselves to be apostles, and were not. Does that not sound a little familiar today?

There has never been an hour when so many self-appointed apostles were coming out of the woodwork as this hour in which we stand. I have no hesitation in telling you that the vast majority of them **are not apostles** at all, for they do not the works of an apostle. This is the day of false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ; and no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light; therefore it is no great wonder if his ministers also be transformed as ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works (II Cor. 11:13-15). Any preacher who can come up with a unique twist of doctrine, an apparent gift of some kind, and a liberal dose of charisma can gain a following and start a little movement around himself, imagining that he is an apostle.

As the elect of God you have a divine obligation to investigate, scrutinize, and seek the Lord about everything that I teach or that anyone else teaches! You have an obligation in the Spirit and by the Spirit to observe my life and the life of every minister of God. I have no right to expect you to blindly follow my words or ministry in any fashion or form. But I do earnestly pray that

you will make sure of all things, search the scriptures, and be led by the Spirit of truth within you! The word of the Lord is sure to all who humbly and sincerely follow on to know the Lord, for He says, "If any man will do His will, *he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself*" (Jn. 7:7). You will know *within yourself*, by the anointing abiding in you. If you do not know the truth within yourself, then you do not yet know the truth! If you know the truth you can share it with me and I will say, "Amen!" When I share what the Father is saying with you there is a witness in your Spirit even if your conscious mind was not aware of the truth, you know that in the depths of your spirit you already knew that! "But the anointing which you have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that *any man teach you*: but as the same anointing *teacheth you all things*, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it *hath taught you*, ye shall abide in Him" (I Jn. 2:27). You can *trust* the anointing within you, my friend! It is the oracle of God within the spirit of every anointed son! Never, *never*, violate the voice of God in your own spirit. God's true sons are not ruled over by men claiming position and power over other men's lives. The Father Himself loveth us and showeth Himself unto us! How precious that we can encourage and confirm one another in the glorious word of God for this new Day! But there are no "sonship popes" in this kingdom realm!

Paul spoke of a higher realm than the religious works and orders we have known in the church realm of our day when he said, "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the *savour of His knowledge* by us in every place. For we are unto God a *sweet savour of Christ*, in them that are saved, and in them that perish. To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life" (II Cor. 2:14-16). Paul said that it is our purpose to "make manifest the SAVOUR (fragrance) of the knowledge of Christ in every place." Only a person who is completely possessed by Christ and walking in the Spirit of God can even know how to do that, for all of us have in the past been so dependent upon our doctrines, our forms, our ways and methods, so that we have made manifest the KNOWLEDGE, rather than the FRAGRANCE of the knowledge! What a difference there is, and what an impossibility to walk in it apart from the complete destruction of the soulical man! That is what the elect are called to in this new kingdom day, to be the *fragrance* of the knowledge of Christ. Truly we are being so changed, so transformed into the spirit of the Son, so exuding His love, goodness, mercy, grace, wisdom, glory, and power until the *scent* of His sweet and beautiful nature emanates and flows forth out of our lives. The very fragrance of Christ thus *becomes a teaching* — men learn of Christ by seeing Him as He really is in those who are truly His body; at last they come to understand His heart, behold His beauty, appreciate His ways, and are completely captivated by His spirit through the *fragrance of the knowledge of Christ* emitted from our lives.

This is ministry on a higher level than it has been known in the old-order church realms. The thing God is after in this hour is an ESSENCE-MINISTRY, the outflow of Christ from a people that has broken through **all** form into the very **spirit** of the word and are, therefore, equipped to *breathe the breath of life* into the souls of men. The ministry of the manifest sons of God will not be like any of the church order ministries we have known! This ministry will have nothing to do with organized meetings, buildings, pulpits, sermons, choirs, programs, baptisms, communions, worship services, pastors, apostles, organizations, promotions, or any thing we have known in the past. Jesus had *none* of those things, and He was a manifest son of God! Jesus simply *was the essence of the Father* in the earth — at all times, in all places, and in all power! He was the *fragrance of the knowledge of God*!

Men weren't saved, healed, delivered, quickened, and transformed because of the eloquence of His sermons, the anointing of the choir, or the beauty of the worship. It was the very love, compassion, and goodness of God that exuded out through the pores of His life, permeated the atmosphere, and touched and transformed all that came under its power. And it worked everywhere all the time — not in a “meeting” organized in a “building.” The fragrance flowed out of His life in the streets, in the homes, in the business establishments, in the fields, on the mountains, by the seashore, in the synagogues and the temple, even at feasts, weddings, funerals, and in the cemetery!

Those who move by the essence-life of the Father have no set form in which they move. No one can point to their work and say, “Lo, here is Christ, or there is Christ.” The meeting doesn't begin at seven and end at ten. You cannot set your watch by what is going on, as is the case in most church services! They have no need to sing for an hour and preach for two hours in order to bring men to the point of faith, or for their gift to work. There is no such order or program! All those methods belong to the old and passing religious order of the church age. Those who shall move in the higher order of manifest sonship and the kingdom will be like Jesus; today they may use the method of anointing eyes with clay, tomorrow they may spit on them to perform the same miracle of opening the blinded eyes, and the next day they may do nothing more than send a word. *A fragrance* — nothing anyone can get his hand on and say, “I know how you operate in this realm, I know how it is done,” or, “I know what you believe!” Just an essence...just a savour...nothing concrete...like the wind!

This is that which Jesus was talking about when He said, “As the wind blows and you don't know where it came from or where it goes, so is everyone that is **born of the SPIRIT!**” No one can categorize those who are *born of the Spirit*, for they believe all things spoken by the anointing and believe nothing spoken apart from it. They do only what they see their Father do, and speak only what they hear the Father speak. That's why there are no regular meetings in the kingdom realm, no rented halls, no advertising, no organized crusades, no worship leaders, no special songs, no program, no sermonizing, no staged altar calls at the end of the sermon, or any other religious form.

The Jews had their prescribed forms of religion, their laws, synagogues, temple, sacrifices, priesthood, and all the rest. But Jesus came and demonstrated the kingdom of God, what it is, and how it works. And what He demonstrated has little to do with anything we see done in churches today! He **CRACKED THE FORM OF THE FORMER AGE** and brought forth the essence of it, and established the essence. Jesus cracked the form of the sacrificial lamb and brought forth the essence of it within Himself! He became the lamb, not the lamb from which flowed the animal life of the brazen altar, but the Lamb of God from whose hands, feet, and side flowed the incorruptible life of God in the Spirit! It flowed down Calvary's hill, it flowed through Jerusalem, it flowed through the land of Israel, it flowed to Antioch, to Ephesus, to Corinth, to Rome, to all the ends of the earth.

When the essence was brought forth, the form fell. God saw to that! He sent Titus in to take care of that with his armies in A.D. 70, and they not only felled the form of the law and the old covenant, but the whole city of Jerusalem, the temple, the priesthood, the rituals and ceremonies, and the whole nation of Israel! Lambs are no longer sacrificed! But the quickening Spirit of Christ

has been sent into our hearts as we eat His flesh and drink His blood in the Spirit! Christ cracked the form of the law and brought forth the essence of it within Himself, by fulfilling all righteousness in His sinless life. Christ cracked the form of the temple by bringing forth the essence of it within Himself, His own body becoming the habitation of His Father by the Spirit. Oh, yes! Jesus cracked *every form* of the former age and brought forth the essence of it within Himself! It is that essence...that fragrance of the Father's life that changed everything wherever He went!

Those pressing on into the purposes of God for this day are not concerned about the titles men take to themselves, all of which pertain to a passing order, those who *say* they are apostles, or something else. Our deepest prayer to God is that we may just become the *fragrance of the knowledge of Christ IN EVERY PLACE!* That, my beloved, is the higher order of the kingdom of God on the earth!