

Companions In Tribulation

Chapter 1

“I am Alpha and Omega...who is, and who was, and who is to come, THE ALMIGHTY,” speaks the divine voice at the opening of the book of Revelation. A little later we read, “When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last...” (Rev. 1:17). At the closing of the book the same voice declares, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.. I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify these things unto you in the churches” (Rev. 22:13,16).

Centuries earlier the Lord spoke through the prophet Isaiah, saying, “Thus saith Yahweh, the King of Israel, and his redeemer Yahweh of hosts; I am the first; and I am the last; and beside me there is no God” (Isa. 44:6). Again in Isaiah 48:11-12, “For mine own sake I will do it... and I will not give my glory unto another. Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last.” These and a number of other scriptures show that Yahweh is the first and the last, the only God, the God of Israel, the Almighty. In the book of Revelation Jesus Christ is the first and the last, the Almighty. Let the saints of God arise to the wonderful truth that JESUS CHRIST IS THE YAHWEH OF THE OLD TESTAMENT!

People have great difficulty understanding an abstraction, a force, or a spirit. It must be personalized, it must take form, and that is why God has come in the person of Jesus Christ so that we might see Him and see what God is like. That is why in the book of Colossians the apostle Paul says of Christ, “He is the exact likeness of the unseen God — the visible representation of the invisible.. .for it was in Him that all things were created, in heaven and on earth, things seen and things unseen, whether thrones, dominions, rulers or authorities; all things were created and exist through Him and in and for Him” (Col. 1:15-16). Therefore, the embodiment referred to as Jesus in the physical world, in the atomic world, is the invisible Yahweh who exists in a Spirit or Light World. He is Almighty Creator of everything in heaven and in earth! “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Other scriptures tell us that it was Yahweh who is the great Creator! Glorious, indeed, and wonderful beyond human description is the great truth that the book of Revelation is the unveiling of God-Yahweh-Yahshua — the invisible Almighty God who came to earth as our Lord Jesus Christ!

The great Yahweh appeared to Israel in a cloud and a pillar of fire. He lived in that pillar of fire and led Israel daily. At the dedication of Solomon’s temple He announced His coming as a great cloud that appeared to all the assembly of Israel, so bright and glorious was the cloud of His presence that the ministers could not minister because of the blinding, overwhelming glory. Then one day the same Yahweh was manifested in a virgin born body that was prepared for Him. The God that tabernacled above the tents of Israel, who tabernacled in the temple on mount Moriah, now took on Himself a tent of flesh and tabernacled as a man amongst men. But He was the SAME GOD! The Bible teaches that GOD WAS IN CHRIST. The body, the outward human form, was Jesus, the Son of God. In Him dwelt and dwells all the fullness of the Godhead, bodily (Col. 2:9). Nothing can be plainer than that! Mystery, yes. But actual truth — it can’t be plainer!

No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him — He has revealed Him, brought Him out where He may be seen; He has interpreted Him, and He has made Him known so that he who has seen the Christ has seen the Father (Jn. 1:18; 14:9). The One who walked by the sea of Galilee and through the dusty roads of Palestine was none other than the living God, Yahweh in human form, the Creator who humbled Himself and came into this world. This One who died, who rose again, who ascended up far above all heavens that He might fill

all things, who sits upon the throne of the Majesty on high and who has entered into our lives by the power of His Spirit— this Lord Jesus Christ is Himself THE ALMIGHTY! “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending. ..the ALmighty” (Rev. 1:8).

I have no desire to dispute doctrines about the Godhead. I am sure each of us has our understanding of God, how God is one and how God is three, and all the rest of it. I am not writing to debate those issues, rather to point out a truth which the Spirit has made very real to my heart. There are many kinds of terminology that we still use that are not the Spirit's terminology. They are not what the Spirit has witnessed concerning God, but terms that men have coined to express their conception of the Godhead! Many of these terms have come right out of the darkness of religious carnal minds and the Lord's people have embraced them and parrot them as though they were divine revelation! Christians talk about God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. Did you know there is not a scripture in the Bible that talks about God the Son? There is not a scripture in the Bible that speaks of God the Holy Ghost! Yet the title “God the Father” appears many, many times throughout the New Testament. “To us,” Paul said, “there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him” (I Cor. 8:6).

Jesus is always referred to as the Son of God — not God the Son. Now you say, “Wait a minute, brother, are you telling me Jesus isn't God?” Not at all! I am saying that He is not called God the Son. Likewise, the Holy Spirit is most often referred to as the Spirit of God — not God the Holy Spirit. God Himself said, “I will send my Spirit; I will pour out my Spirit.” He nowhere said, “God the Holy Spirit will come to you.” Do you see what I mean? We use terminology that has been formulated by the theologians of the church systems, but which are not found in the word of God! Jesus said that the Father had sent Him, and that the Father is God. So to us there is one God who is the Father! The question follows — Was Jesus God? Absolutely! But did you know that the God in Jesus was the Father? What did He say? “Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself but the Father that dwelleth in me, HE doeth the works” (Jn. 14:10).

Can you imagine GOD saying, “I can of mine own self do nothing?” Yet Jesus confessed that He, of Himself, could do nothing! Only the Father in Him could speak and do the works! So what I am saying is, THE GOD THAT WAS IN JESUS WAS THE FATHER! “Great is the mystery of godliness: GOD was manifest in the flesh” (1 Tim. 3:16). Not God the Son manifest in flesh. GOD was manifest in the flesh!

The great Indian apostle and mystic, Sadhu Sundar Singh, was caught up in the Spirit. I know not whether he was in the body or out of the body, but he was caught up in the Spirit and saw, in Spirit, the throne of God. Just as John saw, when on Patmos he was caught up in Spirit, Sadhu Sundar Singh saw the throne of the heavens of God's Spirit and “there was ONE who sat upon the throne.” He did not see three thrones! He did not see God the Father sitting on one throne, God the Son sitting on another throne, and God the Holy Ghost upon a third throne. Nor did he see one throne with three Gods seated upon it! He saw one throne and on the throne he saw One sitting, and the One he saw was Jesus. He saw Jesus sitting on the throne! But emanating, radiating out of Jesus in a never-ending and all-encompassing effulgence of glory, majesty, wisdom, power, dominion, love, mercy and goodness was the Father! Shining out of Jesus was the scintillating glory of the Father so that Jesus could say, “Have I been so long time with you, and yet thou hast not known me? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?” (Jn. 14:9).

My heart's desire and prayer to God is that all who read these pages may now see themselves in Christ. May God enable you by His Spirit to see yourself IN CHRIST! God's elect, God's chosen ones, Christ's many brethren are the body of Christ. God has one glorious Christ who is composed of many members. Jesus Christ our wonderful Lord is the Head of this Christ body and we are members in

particular. To all who have received the call to sonship Jesus says, “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne” (Rev. 3:21). And yet John sees only one throne and One seated upon the throne! The mighty, eternal, all-embracing truth of it is that when all God’s sons are seated in Christ, who is in the Father, upon that awesome throne of the heavens there is still only One that can be seen upon the throne! Truly we are able to say, “It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me.” And the Lord Christ witnesses, “It is not I, but my Father that liveth in me. “ Oh, the mystery of it! Oh, the wonder of it! If you today can by the Spirit see that one throne where the King of glory is seated in all the fullness of the nature, power, glory, wisdom, love and majesty of God, and see yourself seated in Him, then you know what UNION IS! Then you know what SONSHIP IS! If you are able to comprehend these simple truths, you know more about the Godhead than all the theologians of Babylon!

May the beautiful words of the prophet fall with divine understanding upon our spiritual ear. “For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given... His name shall be called... the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father” (Isa. 9:6). It does not say mighty man, but Mighty God. A little child is called the Mighty God! The child mentioned here refers to the child born in the stable in Bethlehem, who is not only named Jesus, but also the Mighty God, and furthermore the Everlasting Father. As a child born to us, He is called the Mighty God; as a Son given to us, He is called the Everlasting Father. This is very strange, is it not? When the child is called the Mighty God, is He the child or God? And, when the Son is called the Everlasting Father, is He the Son or the Father? If you try to figure it out you cannot do it! You must accept the truth that since the child is called the Mighty God, it means the child IS the Mighty God! And since the Son is called the Father, the Son IS the Father! If the child is not the Mighty God, how could the child be called the Mighty God? And if the Son is not the Father, how could the Son be called the Father? Then, how many Gods do we have? We have only one God because the child Jesus is the Mighty God, and the Son is the Everlasting Father.

When Jesus came, He came to take the place of Adam — to fulfill the eternal purpose of God for man to be the expression of God to the whole universe! Is that not why God created all things in the heavens and the earth, then as the crowning glory of His creation He brought forth in the earth man in the image and likeness of God. It was by, through, and in man that creation would see, touch, and know the invisible God. Man was destined to be the manifestation and revelation of the invisible Creator to the visible creation! When Christ came as the last Adam, to fulfill that great purpose which had been aborted in the first Adam, His emphasis or principle was: “I will be a man and I will fulfill the divine plan. I will be a man living wholly unto God.” His first consideration was not evangelistic — that is, toward man. His first consideration was toward God! “I will live unto God. I will live by the Father. I will draw upon His life. I will be simply a vessel filled with God! I will express Him, manifest Him, reveal Him. I will do nothing on my own; I will not initiate anything. I will not show how much I can do, how much I know, how much power I have. I will not display my own attributes. I simply will be humanity, a human vessel, but God the Father will be in me, living out His life, speaking His words, acting out His purpose, and working through me His glory, power, and will.” That, my beloved, is sonship! And that is how the child became the Mighty God, and that is how the Son became the Everlasting Father! Sweet mystery of God!

In Luke 21:12-15 Jesus told the disciples:

But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake .And it shall turn to you for a testimony. Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.

When Jesus came into the world He said two things. First, "A body hast Thou prepared me" (Heb. 10:5). He was saying, "I have a means of expressing God among humanity." A body is for expression. If I never moved my hands, or my mouth, or my eyes, you never would know what I was thinking. But having a body gives me this unique physical capacities, and I am able to express outwardly what I am inwardly. Well, Jesus Christ said, "I will not express what I am; I will express what HE IS!" As I have pointed out earlier, Jesus also said, "I do nothing of myself" Oh, my! That is just contrary to what we have thought. We have thought that Jesus was the second Person of the Godhead, and He could do anything! Yet He plainly said, "I do nothing of myself" "As I hear, I judge." "What I see the Father do, that I do." In effect He said, "My judgments are just, because I judge no man; my Father judges and my Father never makes a mistake. He knows what's going on! I just listen for His judgment and as I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, for it is not mine, but His." This is the man Jesus speaking! If Jesus were the second Person of the Godhead, as the theologians tell us, He could never say, "Of myself I can do nothing." Imagine God saying, "Of myself I can't do anything!" One impotent God waiting for another more powerful God to act! Oh, no! The man Christ Jesus is saying, "As a man, I can do nothing. But the Father, the Mighty God who dwells in me, who is my life, my reality, He can do all things!" And that, my beloved, is sonship!

Again Jesus said, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but THE FATHER THAT DWELLETH IN ME, HE doeth the works" (Jn. 14:10). You could ask the Lord Jesus, "Where are you going?" He would answer, "I'll go where my Father goes. My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. I don't stop and consider when I take a journey. When the cloud of my Father's presence within me begins to move, I move with the cloud. Now I'm going to Galilee, then to Judea, and then across the river. I never anticipate anything. I just walk as my Father walks. He guides me this way, and that way. I just walk as my Father walks, for it is not I, but my Father who lives in me." This is the way He was living His life, moment by moment. He had no desire to speak, unless the Father had something to say. He did not heal, unless the Father in Him was healing. He had no desire to do anything —just the Father's will. He had no desire to perpetuate anything. When the Father changed directions, He changed directions. When the Father was finished with something, He was finished with it. When the Father passed something by, He passed it by. When it looked as if the people wanted to set Him up as king, He said, "My hour is not yet come. I can't anticipate anything. I can't jump ahead of schedule." And that, precious friend of mine, is how the child became the Mighty God, and the Son became the Everlasting Father! That is sonship!

Now here is the second thing Jesus said when He came into the world. "I delight to do Thy will, O God!" Jesus never stopped to consider whether He was going to be understood or misunderstood. He never stopped to consider if He was going to suffer. He never stopped to think about whether He was going to die. He knew that as long as He walked in the will of His Father, nobody could take His life from Him, because it was the Father's life. Whatever His Father willed moment by moment, that was all He could will. "I come to do Thy will, O God."

The record states of Jesus, "And when even was come, they brought unto Him many possessed of devils: and He cast out the spirits with a word" (Mat. 8:16). That word was not Christ's word at all! I do not believe that Jesus ever cast out a devil. I do not believe that Jesus ever healed anybody. I believe what Christ Himself said, "The words that I say unto you I speak not from myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, HE doeth the works." Who did the works? The Father! Did Jesus do them? No! Oh yes, the record does say that He did mighty works, but Jesus made it plain that it wasn't really Him at all, it was the Father, the Mighty God, who dwelt in Him. Jesus never said that He did any works! Men recorded that He did, but Jesus said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (Jn. 5:17). In other words, it was the Father that worked in and through Him. All glory to the Father! The words which flowed from the Christ's lips were not the words of Christ at all. They were the words of the Father. For you see, Jesus was possessed. He was possessed by a Spirit. He was possessed by God!

Jesus never said to a sufferer, "Brother, be of good cheer!" All Christ's words were the words of the Father! He always said, "Son, be of good cheer!" Was that not the Father speaking? When He said to the woman who touched the hem of His garment and was healed of the issue of blood, "Thy faith hath made thee whole," did He call her "sister"? Was it our Brother or our Father who was speaking? Hear what He says! "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole!" These were the words of the child who was the Mighty God, and these were the words of the Son who was the Everlasting Father!

My spirit is stirred with the knowledge that the Father was in the Son. Deity was in humanity. There was no revelation of sonship until Jesus came and revealed the Father in human flesh. Since the child has become the Mighty God, and the Son has become the Everlasting Father, we are to honor the Son even as we honor the Father! The beloved John saw a throne set in the heavens of God's Spirit, and One sat upon the throne. He that sat was to look upon as a jasper and a sardine stone, and there was a rainbow round about the throne, with a glory like unto an emerald. And yet — in the midst of the throne He saw a Lamb as it had been slain! The One who sat upon the throne was also a Lamb! And the little Lamb was furthermore the Lion of the tribe of Judah! And in the midst of the throne were four living creatures. Four is the number of universality. It speaks of that which is world-wide, all-encompassing in relation to earth. Again and again the Revelation speaks of the "four winds" of the earth, the "four corners" of the earth, and the "four angels" with their action earthward. The four "living creatures" in the midst of the throne represent the worldwide or universal expression and revelation of THE LIFE OF THE GOD OF THE THRONE! They are the figure of all the overcomers, of all the holy sons of God who sit with Christ upon His throne! Just as the twenty-four elders round about the throne represent the ministry of priesthood, so the four living creatures in the midst of the throne represent the power of kingship.

Kings and priests! These are all pictures of THE THRONE. Understand what is in the throne and you will understand the greatness of the One who sits upon the throne! There is One who sits upon the throne, yet that One is also a Lamb, lie is as well a Lion, He is furthermore Four Living Creatures, and in addition He is Twenty-four Elders. All of this is included in the revelation of the throne! "And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb. . . and they sung a new song saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:8-10). Oh, yes! There is only One upon the throne, but that One is a MANY-MEMBERED ONE, THE RULING FAMILY OF GOD, THE FATHER AND HIS SON WITH HIS MANY BRETHREN BROUGHT TO GLORY!

I am still speaking of Jesus Christ who is "the Almighty." Paul says in II Corinthians 3:17, "Now the Lord is that Spirit." The Lord is what Spirit? The "Lord" spoken of here, of course, is the Lord Jesus; and "the Spirit," of course, is the Holy Spirit. Then again Paul tells us, "And so it is written, the last Adam was made A QUICKENING SPIRIT" (I Cor. 15:45). Today's Christians, steeped in the false doctrines of the church systems, blinded by the traditions of men, have a traditional way of saying that "Christ is in the Holy Spirit." But the word of God does not say that! There is not one verse in the whole Bible, which says that Christ is in the Spirit! "Christ is in the Spirit" is, therefore, a traditional saying, whereas "The Lord IS the Spirit" is the scriptural expression. This is made very plain in chapter eight of Romans, as well as many other passages. "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. 8:9). The Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ are one Spirit! And there is an even greater mystery than this! "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit" (I Cor. 6:17). Oh, the wonder of it!

The last Adam was made a quickening or Life-giving Spirit, Paul explains. The last Adam, of course, is the Word made flesh, the man Christ Jesus. The Life-giving Spirit, of course, is the Holy Spirit. There can never be another Life-giving Spirit beside the Holy Spirit! The Word was made flesh and became the last Adam, and then through death, resurrection, ascension and glorification, became THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT! "Now the Lord is the Spirit." John wrote, "This spake Jesus of the Spirit, which they that believed on Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given; because JESUS WAS NOT YET

GLORIFIED” (Jn. 7:3 9). Two things were essential before Jesus could return as the Spirit. He must go away. He must be glorified. “If I go not away, the Comforter will not come. I will not leave you comfortless: I WILL COME UNTO YOU.” On our behalf, as man and the Head of man, Jesus was resurrected, and then ascended, being admitted into the full glory of the Divine, and His human nature received up into union and participation with the eternal Spirit, becoming of the same substance and essence of the eternal Spirit. He was glorified and He was truly spiritualized! And the Holy Spirit could now come down as the Spirit of the GOD-MAN — most really the Spirit of God, and yet as truly the Spirit of Jesus the man. He could come down as the Spirit of the GLORIFIED JESUS, to be in each one of us who receives Him. And to as many as receive Him, to them gives He the power to become the sons of God! God be praised! Jesus has been glorified! The child has become the Mighty God! The Son has become the Everlasting Father! The Lord has become the Spirit! There is now the Spirit of the glorified Jesus and we have received Him! Christ in us is our hope of glory, and our reality of sonship to God!

When Christ the Spirit comes into us, He comes to fulfill this high and holy calling. He comes within as the all-sufficient Spirit to make us all that we must be as God-men. In our modern era man has learned much about nutrition. Nutrition is the science and study of the foods that build the human body and make it strong and healthy. The body gets the nourishment it needs from the raw materials contained in foods. Starch, sugar, fat, protein, minerals, vitamins and water are all raw materials. From these raw materials the body builds flesh, bones and muscles, and makes blood and other body fluids. There are some foods that build body tissue, others that make strong bones and teeth. Many of these materials are minerals. One of the important materials that helps the body grow and function is vitamins. There are several different kinds of vitamins and each has its particular use. All of these minerals and vitamins are important! For instance, calcium promotes proper formation of teeth and bones. Iron helps build red blood cells. Vitamin A aids good eyesight. B vitamins are good for the nerves. Niacin builds healthy skin. In order to supplement your diet and get all the vitamins and minerals your body needs you can go to the store and purchase them in tablet form. There you will find bottles containing calcium, bottles containing iron, others of niacin, vitamin A, B vitamins, vitamin C, D, E, etc. You could soon fill your entire cabinet with bottles of all kinds of vitamins, minerals, enzymes, and other food supplements. But the supplement companies have simplified all this for us by creating the “multi-vitamin-mineral” tablet! One of these tablets will contain sufficient amounts of every known vitamin and mineral needed by the human body. You don’t have to swallow fifty different pills — you just take the one! This one is the all-inclusive dose! And friends, have we ever realized that Christ the Spirit is the best and most all-inclusive “dose” in all the world? HE is the one complete dose, which is enough to meet all our spiritual need! I-IE is the raw material of the new creation man! HE is the stuff sons of God are made of! The Spirit of Christ is all that God is! Christ in us is our hope of glory! And we are the hope of creation!

Our human body needs all the vitamins and minerals in order to develop and function. The body of Christ, the new creation man, the sons of God need the all-inclusive dose of the quickening Spirit of Jesus, the last Adam, in order to grow up unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ and be perfect God-men. God is preparing to manifest His sons to deliver creation from the bondage of corruption. We shall see the glory, wisdom, and power of God’s Christ manifested in all fullness in a many-membered body right here upon this earth! How can we attain to this? By taking liberally of the all-inclusive dose of the Life of God in Christ!

Adam had the opportunity to become the full revelation of the image and glory of God to the whole universe. This was offered to him in the tree of life! The tree of life was nothing else than the life of God in Christ. This life was in man’s very spirit. The tree of life was the all-sufficient “dose” which would have built eternal spirit life in Adam, making him in turn the very source of that life. But Adam refused his “dose” of incorruptible life, choosing rather to live from the devitalized, insufficient junk-food of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in his soul. Consequently, Adam quickly sank into degeneration, weakness and death. In the natural, a person who does not

get enough vitamins may have poor eyesight, rough skin, sore gums, or a host of other ailments. People who are too thin or feel tired much of the time usually need more nutrients. There are ugly diseases, such as pellagra, scurvy, and beriberi, that occur when the body does not get enough vitamins. We have all seen the debilitating diseases of osteoporosis, arthritis, heart trouble, cancer, and others that often come from a lack of proper nutrients. Have you not seen the pictures of the pitiful children in third-world countries suffering from acute mal-nutrition? The eyes are large and protruding, cheeks sunken, stomach bloated, arms and legs thin and bony, and other awful conditions.

Lorain and I saw this scene thousands of times when we were on the mission fields. It is a heart-rending sight! And friend, this is the spiritual portrait of old Adam! It is also the spiritual portrait of millions of professed believers in Christ in all the churches of the world! This is the picture of the horrible spiritual image into which men sink when they refuse, or cannot acquire, their "dose" of the all-sufficient life of God in Christ! This is the sad result of the deficient diet of the tree of religion's empty forms, lifeless ceremonies, man-made doctrines, carnal programs, vain traditions and commandments of men — the tree of the knowledge of good and evil!

All of mankind today, enslaved by sin, sickness, sorrow and death, are manifestations of Adam's wretched condition. Mankind today, after six thousand years of degeneracy and impoverishment, bears absolutely no resemblance to man as God destined him to be from the beginning! And religion hasn't helped one bit. Religion has brought mankind their "Care Package" of religious junk-food, religion has given men a little strength and cosmetically dressed up the outside and made men appear a little better, but the internal disease is still raging out of control. Death has passed upon all men. But, blessed be God! God is forming a people into the image of His Son to bring to all mankind the all-sufficient dose of the incorruptible life of God! He has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given unto us the ministry of reconciliation! "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, WE SHALL BE SAVED BY HIS LIFE" (Rom. 5:10). It is wondrously true! We have been reconciled by Christ's death, and we are being saved by His life! Yes, we shall be saved COMPLETELY, spirit, soul and body, by His life! Through the death of His Son God has opened Eden's gates, and brought us back into the garden of God! In the garden, in the tree of life, God has again made available to us the all-sufficient dose! Within the Spirit of Christ there is an all-sufficient supply! Everything we need to be God-men is contained in the Lord the Spirit! We are now becoming what we have never been. We are now becoming all that man was intended to be. We are now becoming the sons of God! We are now able to live in His sight! There is no need to cry, beg, or fear. We have only to draw near with a confident heart, and full expectation of faith, to take Him, eat of Him, appropriate Him. We are being saved, changed, transformed BY HIS LIFE!

Is it not therefore wonderful that Christ should be called the True Light, the Truth, the Life, the Resurrection and the Life, the Holy One, the Just One, the First and the Last, a Just God and the only Saviour, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Lord the Spirit, God our Saviour, the Creator and Maker of all things, God over all, blessed forevermore, who only hath immortality; our Lord and our God, whom we are commanded to worship, and whom all the angels of God are commanded to worship, for unto the Son He saith, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever" — is it not wonderful, I say, that this Jesus Christ declares Himself to be "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come — THE ALMIGHTY!"

JOHN

“I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 1:9).

John has the supreme distinction, and the everlasting honor, of being our Lord’s most intimate friend on earth. And what an exalted light that casts on the character of John, on the qualities of his spirit, and on the disposition of his heart! When we would know all about a man, the first question we may ask is, “Who are his friends?” “Who is his most intimate friend,” we seek to know, for, any man is known by the company he keeps and by the friends he chooses. And when we ask this question about our Lord, the answer comes back, “John — he was the disciple whom Jesus loved!” He was one of the twelve, the one who leaned on his Master’s bosom at the last supper. And he was the disciple, above even her own sons and daughters, to whom Jesus from the cross, committed the care of His grief-stricken mother.

The Lord Jesus, at the opening of His ministry, had a whole multitude of disciples who followed Him about. But both the needs of His heart and the nature of His work led the Christ to make a selection, and to choose an inner circle of more intimate friends out of that large and loose multitude. And after much prayer, and listening carefully to the voice of the Father within Him, Jesus at last chose just twelve men to have them always with Him. They were more than His staff, they were His friends, His very brethren. But as time went on, both the drawing of His heart, and the discernment of the Father’s purpose in each of the chosen ones, led their Master to make yet another selection of still more special associates, inside the circle of the twelve. And thus we may notice as we read through the Gospels from chapter to chapter, we read less and less of the inner, and more and more of that chosen three — “Peter, James, and John.” And then, even of the select three, John more and more stands out as the loved disciple — the special, distinct, prominent, and by far the most intimate friend of his Master!

The root of all friendship is always found in likeness — in likeness of nature, likeness of character, likeness of mind, likeness of interests, likeness of tastes, likeness of purpose. What a validation that is, then, of John’s heart, character, and purpose — to be told that, out of all the men that our Lord met with and chose as His associates while on earth, John was the man He best loved and made His closest and most intimate friend! What a close and precious relationship they had! This is clearly and powerfully revealed in John’s Gospel, for far above the other three Gospels, John wrote not about the day by day happenings in the outward ministry of Jesus, but of the deep things of the Father made known to man by the Son of His love. The depth, the spirituality, the heavenliness, the supreme divineness of John’s Gospel makes it a perfect miracle of revelation, truth, and inspiration. How close must have been the likeness, how deep the love, and how perfect the friendship between Jesus and John! Little wonder, then, that when the time came for the full and complete REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST, that it was to John that the heavenly vision came! And John is himself in the book of Revelation a type — representing that chosen elect, the footstep followers of the Lamb, who follow their Lord all the way from mount Calvary to mount Zion; the little remnant who turn from all the delusions of the church systems and the carnality of their own ways and wills, to lean upon His breast, to know the beat of His heart, to sup with Him in the secret place, partaking of His mind, filled with His love, one with His purpose. These have a higher heritage and are heirs to a higher calling. These have privileges, and duties to perform. These blessed ones are about their Father’s business. These are arising and beginning to shine, going forth and leading the way for all who will follow. These are the sons of love. These have ascended into the heavens of God’s Spirit, they have beheld the throne set in heaven, they have stepped into the day of the Lord, and to them is given the kingdom of Heaven!

COMPANIONS IN THE KINGDOM

“I John, who also am your brother... and companion in the kingdom of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 1:9). Some people think that the kingdom of God has been held in abeyance, it has been held up in heaven somewhere, until Jesus comes back and establishes it in the earth. Why, my beloved friend, you are just about two thousand years behind time! Don’t you know Jesus already came and established His kingdom in the earth? “Now after that John was put into prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the good news of the kingdom of God, and saying, the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the good news!” (Mk. 1:14-15). “The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man is pressing into it” (Lk. 16:16). You say, “Well, we re waiting for Jesus to come back and make the kingdom take over.” Well, my beloved, He has come back in you in His fullness to make it take over! “That you may be accounted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven...when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day” (II Thes. 1:5-10). That’s how it’s going to take over! There will be no other take over of the kingdom of God except it comes in and through you who are hearing the word of the kingdom, who by faith and obedience are entering into the kingdom of God. The kingdom has been planted in the earth and God is now preparing and equipping a company of king-priests to expand it, extend it, and increase it, until every enemy is defeated and all things are subdued unto Jesus Christ the King!

One glorious day the firstborn Son of the living God walked among men and announced, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand.” The new reign of God had come to the birth! The call went forth throughout all the earth in the power of the Spirit for men to become willing subjects of the kingdom of God. First twelve, then seventy, then vast multitudes responded to the call. On the day of Pentecost alone about three thousand precious souls, quickened by the Holy Spirit with eyes to see and ears to hear, answered the call and were gathered into the reign of God. No longer did devout men wait for the kingdom, but they were in it, and they ate new heavenly food and drank new heavenly wine with Christ in the kingdom of heaven! Let God be praised! For His rule in ransomed hearts had begun. Everywhere men and women were translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God’s Son. Even in lonely exile on the isle of Patmos, John the disciple could exult that he was a brother and a companion to the saints “in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.”

The kingdom of God is established in that domain where God’s saving power has defeated all opposition, broke down every wall, transformed all that is contrary to God’s nature, mind, and will, and has brought men into willing submission to His authority. Where the nature of God and the mind of Christ have mightily conquered, the state of things is called the Kingdom of God. Where hearts are changed, where sin and error and darkness have been defeated, where truth and righteousness advance, where the will and ways of God are raised up as reality and life in a people, where the mind of Christ rules out of union with God — there the kingdom of God has come and is advancing! In the kingdom it is no longer God ruling over you by His sovereignty from without, but the life, mind, heart, nature, power, wisdom, knowledge and will of God entering into you, becomes your very own reality.

The kingdom of God that John was in, and the kingdom of God that I am proclaiming today is composed of that company of elect sons of God who have aligned themselves with God; who lean upon His breast, who listen to His voice, who put on His mind, who obey His commands, who walk in His nature, who do His will and carry out His divine purpose in the heavens and on the earth. They are loyal subjects of His kingdom, for they ever do His bidding. Their King is the Lord God Almighty and He is their Father. They obey without question; for it is their nature to do only and always those things that please the Father! They are true citizens of the kingdom of God! They are first under His rule and authority, but they are ambassadors of that divine and heavenly kingdom. They are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ! They are destined to share all His glory and sit with Him upon His throne! They are the members of the government of God and the kingdom of heaven is expressed through them and the power and the glory of the kingdom is being committed into their hands for the age and the ages to come. Thank God for John who, in the dark distress of inhospitable Patmos, could testify, “I am your brother and companion in the kingdom of Jesus Christ.” He was on Patmos, but he was in the kingdom!

While the irons wore deep grooves in his arms and legs, through the long nights and the cold ground, while the rats scrounged for food, scurrying around and over the sleepers, John was living in the righteousness, peace, and joy of the kingdom! It was not on Patmos, but in the kingdom, that God spoke to John, and started showing John things, and He opened up to him like you would do when putting one of your video tapes in the VCR and playing it through the television. As the gulls wheeled and screamed, John was lifted up in spirit so he could see the outworking and consummation of God's great plan of the ages. All the vain things of this age passed away and the real was in the panorama before him.

Before him passed the vision of the church. He saw the condition for centuries to come. It was a mix of tragedy and triumph. He saw the four living creatures of God's divine life and dominion revealed in the holy sons of God in the midst of the throne, and he saw the twenty-four elders of the Royal Priesthood round about the throne, emanating from the throne in grace, mercy and restoration for all creation. He saw the Lamb upon the throne open the book of God's great dealings and purposes. He saw the seals of revelation opened, he heard the trumpets of initiation sounding their herald, and the vials of consummation bringing an end to all that opposes the kingdom. He saw the horses of conquest desolating that earth which we are, and he saw those slain who laid down their lives that they might take up the life of Christ. He saw the stars of human wisdom fall from the heavens of men's minds like the wind shaking figs from a fig tree. Every mountain of man's kingdom, every stronghold of fleshly dominion was shaken so violently that none remained in its original place. The sun and moon that lighten the outer court were darkened, the trees and grass growing out of the earth of the carnal nature, and bearing the fruit of the works of the flesh, were completely burned up, and Mystery Babylon the Great fell.

John staggered as he witnessed the sealing of the hundred and forty-four thousand sons of God, with the Father's name in their foreheads, standing in the authority of God's kingdom upon the heavenly mount Zion. With amazement John gazed upon the great multitude that no man could number, the vast company of earth's redeemed, clothed in the white robes of Christ's righteousness, with palms of victory in their hands, singing praise to God and to the Lamb. He saw a new heaven of spiritual dominion and a new earth of righteous expression. He saw the city, not the city of Rome with her pomp and power, but the glorious city of God, which originates in the heavens of God's Spirit. He saw the manchild upon the throne, and the great dragon of deception, accusation and death cast into the abyss. He saw the refining inferno of the lake of divine fire which burns for the ages of the ages until all things are purified and God is All-in-all. Then he saw "every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and a//that are in them, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever!"

John is our companion in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ! There is on Patmos a grotto enshrined today as the place where John received the Revelation, but it was not there that he saw the glory of the unveiled many-membered Christ of God, for John was in the Spirit on the Lord's day when he saw all these things. You can climb Patmos' rocky slopes, you can stand there in the grotto and receive nothing. I have stood there upon that lonely mountain myself, and I testify that I received no enlightenment there. God is not on Patmos! It is in the holy mountain of God, upon the spiritual mount Zion, in the heights of the kingdom realm of God's Spirit, that God is seen, touched, and known. Those sons who are walking with God in the Spirit today are eye-witnesses of His majesty, and have heard the Voice from heaven as they stand with the Lamb upon the holy mount. We are companions with John —with Jesus — in the kingdom of God!

J. PRESTON EBY

