

## GOD IS PUTTING THE FINISH ON A COMPANY OF SONS

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Before God began to create, he purposed to bring forth a company of sons. They would liberate all creation from the bondage of corruption by destroying corruptions dominion. He has not changed His mind, but is right on time with His original plan. Now all creation waits in eager expectation for the unveiling of God's sons.

The depth and richness of God's wisdom and knowledge are unmeasurable! His ways are beyond searching out! Unfathomable are His decisions concerning the creation. Yes, the riches of Christ are untraceable. Yet, he makes plain the partnership of the mystery. In past ages it was a sacred secret hidden in the heart of God, who created all things. Now, even the principals and authorities in the heavenly realms can comprehend the diverse wisdom of God as he reveals it through the church. This agrees with God's purpose for the ages that he creates in Christ Jesus our Lord. The ages have been like the many different stages in a play and with each new stage the plot unfolds to the observer. This progressive unveiling of God's aeonian purpose, causes us to conclude, that our present difficulties and hardships are not comparable with the glory God is about to reveal in us. (Ec. 3:10f; Ro. 8:18, 11:32ff; Eph. 3:8ff; Col. 1:26f; Heb. 1:2).

Initially God created all things through the power of his Word. Apart from the Word he created nothing. That is, Christ, the image of the invisible God became the firstborn of all creation. For **IN** him were all things created, all that are in heaven, and all that are upon earth. He is the firstborn of the visible and invisible creation of God. God created all thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers **THROUGH** him, and **FOR** him. He made nothing without him. He is before all things, and **IN** him everything coheres (Joh. 1:1ff; Col. 1:15ff).

At the heart of the creation God formed Adam from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. This man became a living soul. God then took the man he created and placed him in a place called Eden. From there he was to tend the garden that God had planted east of the Paradise in which he lived. (Ge. 2:7ff; 2Co. 2:4; Re. 2:7).

However, this federal head of the human race missed the mark of sharing in the prize of God's glory. Through this one man the whole human race was lowered out of the heavenly realm of the Eden into earthiness. God depleted him of his former estate causing him to lack the Divine character of his origin. Yet, he crowned him with glory and honor and set him over all his creation (Ge. 1:26ff, 5:1f; 3:23f; Ps. 8:5ff; Heb. 2:6ff).

Through one man sin entered the orderly arrangement of God's creation, and death came through sin. So death passed upon all, for all have sinned coming short of the prize of God's glory. Through the sin of the first Adam the whole creation became subjected to frustration, disappointment, and misery. This took place even if their sin did not resemble Adam's violation. The empty futility of creation's experience does not come through its own choice. It is God who bound all over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all. No act of "*FREE WILL*" in the creation causes this impotent condition. This situation came by the will of the Supreme Creator who subjected his creation in expectation of its complete deliverance from bondage to decay. He is liberating all that came **OUT OF** him, to be processed **THROUGH** him. That all may conclude their journey **INTO** him to experience the glory of God's offspring (Rom. 5:12ff, 8:18ff, 11:36; 1Co. 15:21ff).

Now the creation waits in intense anticipation for the unveiling of God's sons. We perceive the whole creation jointly groaning, as in the pains of childbirth, right up to the present time. Not only does the creation experience this common calamity of bondage to corruption, but we do too. That is, we who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, sigh inwardly being pressed between life and death. However, we fully expect and wait eagerly for our placement as sons. That is, we wait for the redemption of our bodies (Rom.. 8:23; Phil. 1:20ff, 3:10ff).

It is this expectation that continues to work salvation in us. We have not lost the hope of all creation being set free from corruption, or even for further change from our present condition. We expect God to accomplish all that he set out to do from the beginning of the creation. Remember! When we come to the fulfillment of our hope, nothing remains for us to expect. Why would anyone continue to hope for what he already has? However, if we anticipate what we do not have, then we persevere with full expectation to its attainment. The hope of obtaining the promise of God has been set before us. To apprehend the promise we must see Jesus. He is the only one who has reached the goal setting the example before us. (Rom.. 8:18ff; Eph. 1:4f; Heb. 6:18f, 11:39, 12:2, 2:9ff).

God set the destiny of those he knew beforehand. He appointed a time for his company of sons to appear conformed to the likeness of his uniquely begotten. Jesus is becoming the firstborn **IN MANY** brothers. Everyone God

designated as sons beforehand, he faithfully calls in their season. All those whom he calls, he also justifies them. Flesh and human desire could never produce such glorious hope for creation. This can only come from the Father of lights who works all things according to his own will. He brings forth sons by the word of truth that they should become firstfruits species of his new creation humanity. Moreover, all those whom he justifies, he also glorifies them.

We can say what in response to this? Since God is for us, who is against us? He who spared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also, along with Jesus, graciously give us all things? Who will bring charges against God's chosen ones? It is God who justifies. Who is the Condemner? Christ Jesus, who died, who also raised to life and is at the right hand of God interceding for us? (Ps. 33:10f; Joh. 1:12f, Eph. 1:11; Jam. 1:17f).

What can separate us from the love of God in Christ? Can affliction, hardship, or persecution alienate us from his love? How about famine, or nakedness can they sever us from his unfailing love? Will we become estranged from the love of God by danger, or sword? In Psalm 44:22 we read: "For your sake we face death all day long. We are considered as sheep for the slaughter." However, in all these things we have gained a decisive victory through him who loves us.

Along with the apostle Paul, Such thinking convinces me that death nor life can separate us from God's love. Furthermore, messengers, origins, height, depth, nor any powers can alienate us from the love of God. Nothing that is present, or impending divides us from his love. In short, no created thing can separate us from the love of God found in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom.. 8:28ff).

Understanding that God purposed to bring forth a people to set creation free from corruption is important. However, it is equally valuable to realize he destined them jointly formed in the image of the first born, Jesus Christ. God brings forth these sons for His glory. They will also shew forth His virtue. (Isa. 43:7, 19ff; 1Pe. 2:9).

#### **IT IS NOT BY ANY WORK WE CAN DO!**

God is not creating "**Do-Be's**," but "**Be-Do's**" to fulfill His purpose in creation. We can **DO** nothing to cause ourselves to **BE** what God intends for us to **BE**. It is grace that saves us, and this approbation works through faith. The grace nor the faith comes from humanity. They are the gifts of God. (Gal. 2:20f). It is not by human effort, so that no one can boast in their accomplishment. Simply put, we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus **UPON** the good works, which God prepared in advance for us to walk in. (Eph. 2:8ff; Col. 1:12ff).

It is the Lord that created Jacob and formed Israel. He called him by his name and said, "**YOU BELONG TO ME!**" (Isa. 43:1). In the same manner our heavenly Father created us in Adam and forms us in Christ. Even if the outer humanity perishes, the inward man of the spirit is renewed daily (Rom.. 7:22ff; 1Co. 15:44; 2Co. 4:16).

God chose us in the Christ before the creation of the world. He did this so that we would be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to son placement through Jesus Christ. This he does according to his pleasure and will. It is also to the praise of his glorious grace, which he freely gives us in the uniquely begotten One, Jesus Christ. (1Co. 15:45ff; Eph. 1:4ff).

#### **Placing Our Confidence in God**

God started something that **HE** is completing. Our trust must be in him alone. There remains a rest for God's people to enter. All who enter this rest cease from their own works, just as God ceased from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest. To do this we must move our confidence out of the realm where we think we can find an answer for ourselves. The answer is within the One who is in us. He is the Christ (Ge. 2:1; Heb 4:9ff; Col. 1:27).

"Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil.. 1:6). It is **GOD** who began the work in us, beloved. I did not begin the work in you. It was not a preacher that began it. Moreover, it was not our ability to grasp hold of some light that began it. It was the Light Himself, who is the Life of our being. He dawned upon our consciousness and began a good work in us. Since he began it, we must trust him to finish it. We may think we know what he has in mind for us. However, the One who drew up the plan and began the work is the One who really knows what the finished product is all about. So we must rest upon, confide in and trust that the One who began the good work in us will bring it to completion.

#### **What Is Meant by a Good Work?**

Let me define this term "**good work**." In the English language when we think of "good" we relate it to that which feels good, tastes good and smells good. In short, we think about what we like, or what pleases us. If we do

not like it, it is not good. However, if it pleases us, it is good. To leave the definition at this would be to leave an inaccurate understanding of this word **“GOOD.”** A better English rendering of the word is **WORTHWHILE**. God has begun a **WORTHWHILE WORK** in us! He will also complete it! The word, worthwhile, bears wonderful significance for me. This is because I realize that with the good also comes the bitter and difficult, but it all works together for good. (Rom.. 8:28).

This reminds me of an experience I had a few years ago. God used it to teach me this lesson concerning a **“GOOD WORK.”** I was sitting in my living room reading a book when I noticed my wife in the kitchen. She was very busy gathering ingredients and cooking utensils. I became curious and began to watch more intently as she began to mix eggs, sugar and butter in a bowl. These were all **“good”** things. Next, she added flour, salt and baking soda that by themselves were not so **“good,”** however, I knew they were necessary ingredients.

Then I watched as she reached into the cupboard and took out a can of Hershey’s Cocoa. My thoughts reflected back to a time in my childhood. My Mother was out of the house for a moment and I got into her baking goods. I took the can of cocoa and put a big spoonful of it into my mouth. What a surprise! That which I thought to be **“GOOD”** was absolutely the worst thing I had ever put into my mouth. It was bitter, not sweet! At that moment, I concluded, cocoa was a **“BAD”** thing.

After reminiscing, my attention returned to what my wife was concocting in the kitchen. By this time she had already put it into a preheated oven and I could smell the aroma of ascending from the kitchen. Although it took about thirty-five minutes in the furnace of affliction, I could tell it would all work together for **“GOOD.”** Later she brought me a warm brownie and glass of milk. Now that is what I call **“VERY GOOD.”** (Isa. 43:2, 48:10; Rom.. 8:28).

I do not look at everything that comes my way as **“good.”** In fact, the vast majority of things that come my way, if I were to judge it for being good or bad, I would say, **“It is bad, not good!”** However, I have learned that it is not a matter of good and bad, but it is a matter of **WORTHWHILE** or **WORTHLESS**. I am learning that every thing that comes my way is out of Father’s hand and is **WORTHWHILE!** Sometimes it is very bitter, but it is also worthwhile. Thus, God has begun a worthwhile work, that is, a worthwhile endeavor in us. He can also bring it to its fullness, to its completion, in the day of our Lord Christ Jesus.

#### **WHAT IS THE GRACE OF GOD?**

Again, I am speaking of the grace of God that is at work within our lives. Just because grace is a gift from God we should never think of it as **“good”** or **“bad.”** The truth is, grace is not an easy way out of life’s difficulties. The fundamental definition of grace says it is the **“free,” “unwarranted,” “undeserved,” “unmerited favor,”** shown by God to humanity. This is irrefutable, for God cheerfully imparts his grace to undeserving people. **He achieves this by divinely influencing the heart of an individual, causing their life to reflect his dealings.** In other words, God uses whatever measure necessary to produce a transformation of heart in a person. He does this to fashion a life that will openly reflect the change to all creation. If we need teaching in righteousness to generate this manifestation then God’s grace provides such training. However, if correction becomes necessary to produce the desired result, grace can make the needed adjustment. (2Ti. 3:16f).

Perhaps some have forgotten the word of encouragement that addresses us as sons? (Pr. 3:11 f). It warns us not to make light of the Lord's grace, or discipline. Moreover, it encourages us not to lose heart when he rebukes, challenges, and reprimand us. Understanding that chastisement is not always punishment for wrong doing is important.

Paul wrote to Titus that the Grace of God that saves made its appearance to all humanity. He went on to tell us that this grace teaches us by discipline to renounce irreverence and worldly desires. It also teaches us to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope. That is while we wait for the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus. (Tit. 2:11 ff).

Let us consider a story told to me, sometime back, by a young man in the Marine Corp. It involves an example of discipline in the military. He told me that one morning, during boot camp training, their DI (Drill Instructor) took the platoon out to a field and ordered them to dig a long, deep trench. He told them they could not eat or rest until the task was completed. It took them all day in the hot sun to complete the assignment. However, as the sun began to set in the west they began to take comfort in looking forward to a good hot shower and nights rest.

Just before they finished, their DI came to the field to check on them. As he approached, they witnessed his anger. He loudly shouted, cussed and fussed at them. He said, **“Who told you to dig this hole in MY field!”** A young

recruit responded, “You did, Sergeant!” He strongly replied, “You are mistaken soldier!” No one dared to argue with him. Then he said, “Fill that hole back up!” It took nearly the whole night to complete the job and no one got any rest or food, until they had finished the assignment. This young Marine then told me how he did not understand this discipline until he went to Vietnam. It was in the heat of battle he learned that such training often made the difference between life and death. In the battlefield he experienced going without sleep or a proper meal for days at a time.

A person involved in such training possibly feels at times that the one in charge is punishing and afflicting him unnecessarily. To some this discipline would even seem cruel. Definitely it was a hardship on those young recruits while in boot camp and did not seem pleasant at the time. However, it yielded good, or worthwhile fruit on the field of battle where the necessity of staying alert without needed rest became obvious.

Teaching is a form of discipline needed to equip us for God’s purpose. This is not a reference to the emotional inspiration brought on by the antics of religious fervor. We need instruction that is disciplined tutoring in the things of God. The Lord faithfully tutors and trains those he loves. He also administers the necessary corrections on everyone he accepts as a son.

As sons we need to endure discipline to become equipped for God’s purposes. Many of God’s people refuse to accept any kind of authority figure in their lives once they come out of the church system. If correction or adjustment comes through a human vessel, they quickly call it Babylon, or Confusion. It is time for the sons of God to grow up. After all, even **BABYLON IS A GOLDEN CUP IN THE LORD’S HAND** (Jer. 51:7). It is time to place oneself under supervision so that we do not lack or miss in the grace of God. The most demanding and stringent experiences of my Christian life have been since leaving “**MOTHER’S CARE**” and coming under Father’s roof. Another way of saying the church system is Mother’s house. I still have a deep respect for the ministry that brought me up in what they understood of my Father’s ways. Their methods may not have always been correct and the house was definitely out of order most of the time, but it was all they knew. The authorities in “Mother’s house” expressed discipline through condemnation and threats in the place of wholesome teaching. They did their best to control us by causing us to fear what Father was going to do to us when he got back.

However, since Father called me into his realm I am learning that not everything that has order, methods, and restrains is Babylon. God himself is a God of order, methods and restraints. The tabernacle of Moses, the priesthood, the feasts, even creation itself teaches us these things. Read the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew chapters five through seven, to refresh your thinking on what Jesus taught was the order, method and restraint of the Father’s kingdom.

Paul said, “*Since we live by the Spirit, LET US ALSO WALK IN THE SPIRIT*” (Gal. 5:25). The English word “*WALK*” comes from a Greek military term that means **TO MARCH IN RANK**. That is, **KEEP STEP BY CONFORMING TO VIRTUE AND GODLINESS**. What son is not disciplined by his father? Remember! Everyone undergoes discipline. If God does not discipline us, then we are illegitimate children and not true sons. God disciplines us for our good so we may share in his holiness. Thus, we need to submit to the Father of our spirit and live! Truly no discipline seems pleasant at the time. It is often painful and unpleasant. However, later it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those whom it has trained. (Heb. 12:5ff).

#### **ONE FOR ALL AND ALL FOR ONE!**

The writer of the book of Hebrews encourages us to watch out for one another. It takes a unified effort to make it through God’s boot camp to the fulness of son placement. Let us look at three common ways of thinking among God’s people: *dependence*, *independence*, and *interdependence*. The first is fully acceptable in a child. *Depending* on its parents is proper for a child. He should be fully able to trust in the one that brings him into this world. However, the time comes when fully depending on their parents is no longer normal. There comes a time when they need to decide matters for themselves. This is where *independence* usually shows itself. Most teenagers go through this stage. Many parents call it rebellion. It is often a difficult time filled with the struggles of life. However, it is a necessary stage of growth in one coming to maturity. During this time the wise person learns not to exert their independence, but to watch, listen, and learn. This is so they can develop an ability to be like the Father. Finally, the time of *interdependence* arrives. This is a sign of maturity. No longer fully dependent on another, yet not threaten by other opinions so they must exert independence. These folks pool all the resources to come up with a corporate decision. They willingly lay down their life or soul for a friend. Having his way is no longer important

for him, because he understands Father is in charge. They want to participate as one who is *interdependent* on the Christ in many. This person encourages and strengthens those whose arms hang down. That is, stirring up those who no longer function by ministering, serving, or practicing principles of the kingdom. Furthermore, they strengthen those who have weak knees and walk in uncertainty, hesitancy, and disbelief. They diligently make correct plain paths for others to walk in, so those who crippled in their walk with the Lord do not become further disabled, but healed. With all that is within him he lives peaceably with all humanity. Moreover, the interdependent person sees to it that no bitter root grows up in the midst of the body, because he knows it would cause trouble and defile many. He is careful not to become like Esau, who showed a lack in self-control, and for one revelation gave up his own birthright. Finally, because of his sense of corporateness he completely separates, dedicates and consecrates himself to God the Father, realizing that without holiness no one will see the Lord. (Joh. 15:13; Heb. 12:12ff).

#### SALVATION IS PROGRESSIVE

The apostle Paul understood that salvation is not experience once, but a progression into the fulness of God's plan. It is God who delivers us by grace through faith without human effort. This glorious gift of God's divine influence to transform our hearts became visible at the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. On Calvaries hill God made Him who had not sinned as the sin offering for us. He did this so that in Christ we might become God's righteousness in the earth. (2Co. 5:21). No amount of human effort or sacrifice could do what the Lord has done. Therefore, no one can vaunt, boast or strut as though they accomplished something in their own strength. (Eph. 2:8f).

The apostle Paul understood the indispensable part that grace plays in every life. This is why he opened and closed every one of his letters with this prayer for the church, "Grace and peace be to you." He also wrote to the church in Corinth, saying, "*God can cause ALL GRACE TO ABOUND INTO YOU. He does this so you being contented and satisfied always in all things, may abound to every good work.*" The apostle Peter wrote to the church saying, "*Grace and peace be multiplied to you THROUGH THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD, and of Christ Jesus our Lord.*" The apostle John wrote to the seven churches in the province of Asia saying, "*Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, and from Jesus Christ.*" Then he closes his prophetic letter with, "**THE GRACE OF THE LORD JESUS BE WITH GOD'S PEOPLE. AMEN.**" (2Co. 2:9; 2Pe. 1:1f; Re. 1:4ff, 21:22). It is the prophetic writing of the apostle John that we look into at this time.

#### SOME DIFFERENT WAYS OF INTERPRETING THE BOOK

The following are different approaches used traditionally to interpret the book of Revelation. Some have said we should understand the book from a **HISTORIC VIEW**. This is because they believe the things contained in its pages happened a long time ago. Others say we should understand it as a book of **CURRENT EVENTS**. This is because they believe we are presently living in the time of its natural fulfillment. Their interpretation is mostly negative as they try to fit news headlines and events into this prophecy. They also attempt to make it fit the story of gloom and doom that traditional teaching has passed on to them. However, they hope to escape from it all. Still, others hold to a **FUTURISTIC OUTLOOK**. That is, they put it all off to a time that is yet to come. Finally, others use **SOME OF ALL THREE** approaches for interpreting the book. That is, they look at parts of it as *historic*, parts of it as *presently* being fulfilled and remainder as *futuristic*. This is possibly the most popular method of approaching the book of Revelation. No matter the method used, most all who set out to decipher the book of Revelation attempt to verify "*the end of time*" is upon us.

We approach the book from a little different vantage point than the afore mentioned. The following is an introduction to the book of Revelation. We will also share some thoughts that help us to discover the life in this writing. May this series of writings help open the words of the prophecy to your understand also. "**HE WHO HAS AN EAR, HEAR, WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCH.**"

#### THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

*"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 unto his servant John: Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw"* (Re. 1:1ff).

Milleniums ago God began a work in His people and in the book of Revelation He recorded it by His servant John. The authorities in Ephesus had banished John to a small island in the Aegean Sea, called Patmos, off the coast of Asia Minor. They imprisoned him because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. (Re. 1:9). During his imprisonment on this small volcanic island John received and recorded the visions contained in this book.

Someone has said, “*You cannot tell a book by its cover.*” How true this statement is. However, the title of a book reveals its content. For example, If I mailed out a booklet entitled “*Pamla’s Cook Book,*” how many would expect it to contain lessons on how to repair your automobile? I hope no one would, because the content of the booklet would be Pamla’s recipes and how to prepare them.

Now, nothing is different about the book of Revelation. John did not name the book “*The Revelation of Beasts and Frogs.*” He does not call it “*The Revelation of Armageddon and 666.*” He did not even entitle it, “*The Revelation of Saint John the Divine.*” We find the title in the first verse and it is simply “**THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST.**” This proclamation says everything needed to understand the content of this book. This title helps us to understand immediately that the focus of this book is none other than Jesus Christ. Although the mention of beasts, frogs, Armageddon, 666, Babylon and other horrific visions are found in this writing, the central theme is **THE UNVEILING OF JESUS CHRIST.**

We should also notice that it is **THE REVELATION** and not *revelation*. That is, the book contains *one revelation*, and it is of Jesus Christ. The messenger of the Lord instructed John to write with one purpose in mind. That is, to reveal **THE PERSON** of Jesus Christ and not the gloom and doom of world events.

In Revelation 21:5, John records that the One seated on the throne said, “*I AM MAKING EVERYTHING NEW! Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.*” Thank the Lord for not saying, “*I will make all new things.*” This promise **INCLUDES EVERYTHING** and excludes nothing. Consequently, we consider the book of Revelation a **POSITIVE STATEMENT** from God to the whole creation. Remember. “All the promises of God in Christ Jesus are **YEA**, and in him **AMEN**, to the glory of God through us” (Rom. 8:18ff; 2Co. 1:20).

This writing is a **POSITIVE** illumination of Jesus Christ as Conquer and Lord. It destroys any religious notion that there is something left for man to do to save himself. God is exposing every matter and every problem to the solution, Jesus Christ. The objective of every seal, woe, thunder, vial, and beast is the same. They are to bring forth **THE UNVEILING OF JESUS CHRIST.** Until the time of the uncovering the light shines in the darkness, but the darkness does not understand it. However, with each unveiling of Jesus Christ more light to breaks in the darkness, until even the darkness will not be dark any longer. The night will shine like the day, for darkness will be as light to the creation. God said, “*Let Light shine out of darkness.*” In the Revelation he makes his Light shine in our hearts to give us the Light of the knowledge of his glorious presence in Christ Jesus. We have the deposit of Light in earthen vessels and this is where the unveiling takes place. God did not send Jesus into the world to condemn, or punish it, but to deliver it from futility of decay. The Lord says, “I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them. I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them.” (2Sa. 22:9; Ps. 18:28, 139:11f, Isa 42:16, 45:7; John 1:5, 3:17; 1Co. 4:5; 2Co. 4:6).

The English word “*revelation*” comes from the Greek word “*apokalupsis*” which means **DISCLOSURE** or **TAKE OFF THE COVER.** It speaks of the removal of a covering that has concealed something from view. Moreover, it **DOES NOT** signify that someone must bring the hidden object from some place for the unveiling. It in fact suggests the veiled object has always been there, but hidden from view.

The following is an example of unveiling. A few years ago a renown sculptor volunteered to create a unique work of art for a city in Canada. He would sculpt a huge piece of stone in front of a new mall, near the center of the city. The city leaders asked for a large tarp or canvas to put around the sight as a protective barrier so no one would get hurt by falling debris and rubble. This was all right with the artist because he wanted complete privacy. As the sculptor worked behind the covering no one could see what he was creating. The tarp would remain upon the work until the appointed time of the *unveiling*. Those who passed by could hear the sound of the chisel and hammer striking against the stone, but they could not see the work of the artist. What would the people see when they removed the tarp? Would it be man, beast, flying creature, or an abstract form? No one, but the artist, knew for sure. He continued to work day after day behind a veil that concealed everything from view. Finally, the work had been completed and the appointed time for the disclosure came. A large crowd of on lookers gathered for the occasion. Dignitaries from England and Canada were present with the people of the city. The veil of canvas suddenly dropped and what had been hidden became a *revelation* for every eye to behold.

We may not know all the details of the unveiling that is about to take place. However, we do know that it is **THE REVELATION IS OF JESUS CHRIST!** Moreover, “*we know when he appears we will be like him. This is because we*

will see him as he is." God is about to unveil Jesus, the head of the church. At his coming he will become glorified IN his saints. Furthermore, he will become admired IN all who are believing in the day. God is about to reveal the uniquely begotten, Jesus Christ, IN many sons to set creation free from corruption. God's glory will become unveiled, and seen by all humanity together. Moreover, "The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. 40:5; Hab. 2:14; Rom. 8:29; 1Co. 12:12f, 27; Ga. 3:16, 29; Eph. 1:20f, 4:13; 2Th. 1:10; 1Jo.3:2f).

### TO SHOW TO HIS SERVANTS

God gave the Revelation to Jesus, "**TO SHOW TO HIS SERVANTS.**" This unveiling first came to Jesus through his heavenly Father. He received this disclosure in the Father's appointed time, as we also will. Whom does the Lord show it to? God gave it to Jesus to show to "**HIS SERVANTS.**" (Lk. 2:40; Heb. 5:8ff).

The word "*servant*" is a little weak for the Greek word "*doulos*" which means *A SLAVE*. It speaks of someone that is bound or restricted, whether it is voluntarily or involuntarily. It never refers to one who works for hire. The statement, "*born free,*" does not apply to God's creation. Through the first Adam the whole creation became enslaved by futility, sin and death. Some believe because Jesus, the Son of God, sets them free, they become free in every way. Now that is not true. Jesus freed, or liberated us from futility, sin and death. We do not belong to ourselves to do as we please, because God has bought us with a price. One died for all. He died for all, **SO ALL THE LIVING ONES SHOULD NO LONGER LIVE FOR THEMSELVES, BUT FOR HIM WHO DIED FOR THEM.** Therefore, let us glorify God in body, soul, and spirit, for we belong to him. We are all born slaves. The Lord never intended for us to become anything else. Let us recognize that when we offer ourselves to someone to obey that we become his slave. Simply, we are slaves to the one whom we obey. We are either slave to missing the mark of the prize of God's glory, which leads to death. Or we are slaves to attentive hearing, which leads to righteousness? Thus, we see that becoming constrained by the Lord is to our benefit, because It is Christ's love that constrains us. (Joh. 8:36; Rom. 6:16ff; 1Co. 7:23, 6:19f; 2Co. 5:14f).

Some would still say, "*I am not a servant, I am a son.*" They say this as though being a son is a *higher calling*. However, the apostle Paul wrote to the church in Philippi to tell them to think with the same mind and attitude that was in Christ Jesus. Jesus, being in the nature God, did not consider he needed to grasp for equality with him. Why reach for what he already had? He put his attention to making nothing of himself. **TO ACCOMPLISH THIS HE TOOK ON THE NATURE OF A SERVANT.** Since he resembled the first Adam and possessed the outward appearance, he humbled himself and became obedient to death! Now that is being a slave in the true sense of the word. A true slave lays down all self importance and recognition. That is, he surrenders without reservation to the Master's plan. Remember! If we are one of his servants, the secrets contained in this book are ours to understand (Rom. 1:1, 6:16ff; Eph. 6:6; Ph'l. 1:1, 2:5ff; Tit. 1:1f; Jam. 1:1; 2Pe. 2:1; Jude 1:1).

### A BRIEF SPACE OF TIME

"***These things,***" He says, "***must shortly come to pass.***" (Re. 1:1). The Greek word translated "**SHORTLY**" in this passage does not mean that these things would happen within a few days. This word infers that once they begin they will take place in "**A BRIEF SPACE OF TIME.**" They will also continue until God has fulfilled or brought them to completion. It is my persuasion that we now live the time of this fulfillment. We are in the days when things are "***shortly***" coming to pass. The season has arrived when the purposes of God are marching forward to their fulfillment and completion. The days are upon us when events recorded in the book of Revelation are suddenly happening IN us and ABOUT us. That is, God has set into motion events that have been progressively unfolding in His body from age to age. Every age has become brighter and brighter with the illumination of God's purpose for the creation. (Pr. 4:18). Each generation being increased with the knowledge of God until in the finale, when he pulls the veil off from his chosen people and causes them to BE.

### HE SENT AND SIGNIFIED IT

"He **sent** and **signified it** by his angel to his servant John." Understanding God "**sent**" and "**signified**" the word is important. The word "**sent**" comes the Greek word "*apostello*" which simply means **TO SET APART**. This word has been set apart for an appointed time and chosen people. Furthermore, God "**signified it,**" which means he gave the message to John in **SIGNS** and **SYMBOLS**. That is, the revelation of Jesus Christ was "**SIGN-I-fied**" or filled with **signs**. For God's servant to grasp those things written in this book he must learn to read, understand and obey every sign.

As a young man in Bible school, the teacher told me to take everything in the book of Revelation literally. If for some reason I could not take something as a mater-of-fact possibly then, and only then, should it be interpreted symbolically. How ridiculous to think we can take a writing given in symbolic language by a God who is spirit and understand it from an earthy vantage point. Eight times in the book of Revelation we read, ***“HE THAT HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS.”*** The Lord makes both the hearing ear, and the seeing eye. (Pr. 20:12). Therefore, let us listen and watch as the Spirit of the Lord begins to break open this glorious revelation in our earth.

None of the religious leaders in the apostle Paul’s day understood the mystery, or sacred secret, as God unveiled it in Jesus. If they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. The prophet said, *“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him.”* How true this statement was to that generation of religious leaders. It is also true for many who sit in places of authority in the church today. However, God continues to reveal this mystery to us by his Spirit. The Holy Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. It takes the Spirit to open the book of Revelation to us for no one knows the thinking of God but the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the present religious order, but the Spirit who is from God. He has given us his Spirit so we can understand what God has freely given us. This is what we share at this time, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit. **WE ARE LEARNING TO INTERPRET SPIRITUAL REALITIES WITH SPIRITUAL REALITIES.**

The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God. This is because the things of God are foolishness to a person without the Spirit. **A PERSON MUST SPIRITUALLY DISCERN THE THINGS OF GOD BECAUSE THEY CANNOT UNDERSTAND THEM WITHOUT THE SPIRIT.** After all, "who has known the mind of the Lord so he can instruct him?" Thanks be to God. **WE HAVE THE MIND OF CHRIST.** God did not spare his own Son Jesus, but gave him up for us all. **HOW WILL HE NOT ALSO, ALONG WITH HIM, GRACIOUSLY GIVE US ALL THINGS?** (Isa. 64:4; Rom. 8:32; 1Co. 2:8ff).

To be continued . . .

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