



*The Light of  
the Spirit*

Dr Randy Lee Delp

# The Light of the Spirit

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# Preface

The existence of spiritual light is not a new concept. It has been around since before time. My writing upon the subject is not new either. The early apostles wrote about it, Jesus preached it to his followers, and the Bible captured the theme throughout its pages. But the lost message about spiritual light has been buried in denominational doctrines, preacher's pet peeves, and theological debates.

Without understanding spiritual light, we cannot fully understand the gospel message of God's kingdom. The kingdom of God was the only message that Jesus taught. It was the only message that Jesus commissioned his disciples to preach over two thousand years ago. And it is the essence of this gospel that he expects his followers to proclaim today.

So what is spiritual light? Where did it come from? How does it relate to us? And what is so special about its substance? These questions and others will be answered throughout the ten chapters of this book. It is a discovery about the light of the spirit.

Some religious people may object to my use of extra biblical texts to support my thesis. Others may frown at the theme claiming that it sounds so "new-age." Non-believers may object to the extensive use of Biblical Scripture, which lays the foundation of my message. It is for this reason that I changed the original title of *Spiritual Light*, published in 2010.

In truth, the concepts of a spirit world were clearly found in first century literature that were written by the apostles and other church leaders. New age theology propagates the message because it is closely related to some of its doctrines. And the Bible is filled with verses that accentuate the message about God Spirit and Light.

Our lack of understanding spiritual light prevents us from knowing about the spirit realm. It hinders us from fully examining the existence of angels and their purposes. Without the knowledge

and understanding of spiritual light, we can't fully understand the substance of Christ or the creation of the universe. And without the necessary insights to spiritual light we can't fully know our own constitutional make-up and thereby miss out on the important aspects of our own reality, which is both spiritual and physical.

Spiritual light can be fully examined in the spirit realm. At one time it was the only light that existed. And sometime in the near future, spiritual light will be the only light used to guide our steps. So we must lay aside our "religious" doctrines and learn about this central message of Christ's teachings. We must shed our cloaks of self and look inside to find true reality. As preachers of the kingdom of God we must re-examine the reality of spiritual light so we can preach the true message of God's kingdom.

# Chapter 1

## Let There Be Light?

What did God mean when He said, “Let There Be Light?”

If Moses was correct when he wrote the first few verses of the Bible then God had specific intentions in demanding and commanding light. The question remains, “What did He command to appear?”

Was this light the same light that we see today or did it have a different substance? Is it possible that this light is presently invisible, but still exists? Was the substance of His first command the source of life, as we know it?

Scientists study light through the culture of physics because they can only theorize and confirm scientific laws that have a measurable physical substance. They fail to recognize any immeasurable substances. But it is obvious from reading the first chapter of Genesis that the light mentioned in the third verse was different than the light that blazed from the heavens in the fourteenth verse.

According to these scientific scholars, the light as we know it comes from the sun and stars and is reflected by the moon and planets; hence, light is visible during the day. The nightlight that we see is merely a reflection of the sun’s light against the moon. Stars are visible at night simply because no other light is present.

Spiritual light is akin to the physical light inside of a closet that remains on at night but can only be seen coming through the crack at the bottom of the door and only when the bedroom light is out.

In reality spiritual light exists everywhere, all the time, but the door to our spiritual senses are shut and we are only able to experience spiritual light on rare occasions such as visions. When this unveiling of the spirit world occurs, we are able to grasp a snippet is of the spirit realm. I also speculate that light of His Spirit is revealed at night during our dreams but that will left for another book on another day.

## Spiritual Light at Creation

According to Moses the light that we presently see was created on the fourth day. Read Moses' rendition:

“On the fourth day of creation God said, ‘Lights, fill the heaven to divide day and night! Your mission is to separate days, months, and years. You will give light to the earth and signs to humanity.’

With this command, God made two great lights and He filled the heavens with stars that were visible to the earth. The greater light ruled the day and the smaller light ruled the night and they divided light and darkness.” Genesis 1:14-19

If God didn't create physical light until the fourth day, what was the light that he created in verse three? According to Moses it took God six days to complete creation and He rested on the seventh day. My paraphrased version of Moses' creation story accents the spiritual light as God created it:

“Before anything ever existed and before the earth had shape and form as we know it, the sea of space was a vacuum of darkness. Only God existed in a spiritual form and from His spirit everything in heaven and earth was created.”

God began His creation by commanding life to appear. The life was the light of the spirit realm. And from that light, God created everything that had life. So in the first aeon of time, God created light. He called each aeon “day” and the vacuum of darkness he called “night.” Therefore God created light on the first day and separated light and darkness.

On the second day of creation God made the heavens. And He divided the heavens so that space and water existed both in the spiritual and physical. On this day, he made air for man to breathe.

On the third day of creation God gathered the waters under the heaven and separated them so that dry land appeared, which He called earth. And God spoke to the earth and commanded that it produce grass and herbs that yields seed. He also commanded fruit that yields seed. And these seeds produced both spiritual and physical plants upon the earth.

On the fourth day of creation God created time. He commanded lights to fill the heaven to divide day and night and told them that their mission was to separate days, months, and years. He commanded them to give light to earth and signs to humanity. With this command, God made two great lights and He filled the heavens with stars that were visible to the earth. The greater light ruled the day and the smaller light ruled the night and they divided physical light and darkness.

On the fifth day God created blood. He used this same light make to cold-blooded creatures; both fishes and fowls. He filled the seas with fish and gave wings to the fowls to fly through the heavens and commanded them to reproduce themselves and fill their habitat.

On the sixth day God made warm-blooded creatures to live on the earth and commanded them to reproduce themselves. Finally He said, “Now, let’s make man in our image and likeness and give him authority to rule over all the inhabitants of the earth, sea, and air.” So God created a spiritual man and placed him in a physical form and commanded him to reproduce and take dominion over all the earth, sea, and heavens. Genesis 1:1-28

## **New Testament Belief in Spiritual Light**

The writers of John’s gospel understood these concepts in the first century when they wrote:

By His word, God made all things. In Him was life and the life was the light of men. And that light shines in the darkness but darkness doesn’t have the ability to grasp or understand the light. John 1:2-5

The author continued his progression of creation in the following verses when they declared that Jesus, the true spiritual light, gives light to every man that is born on earth. They confirmed that John the Baptist was created from spiritual light and he was sent to the earth to testify and to promote the Lordship of Jesus. According to John’s Gospel, the Messiah gives inheritance rights to those who embrace him.

The apostles of Jesus understood and promoted the concepts of spiritual light. Jesus taught, “I am the light of the world, and he that follows me will not walk in darkness.” John 8:12. He said, “As long as I



am in the world, I am the light of the world.” John 9:5. Then he confirmed, “Believe in the light while you still have it, so you can be children of light.” John 12:36.

## Jesus Teaching on Spiritual Light

My fascination with the concepts of spiritual light rests in my belief that Jesus was born on earth to reintroduce the spiritual realm that was hidden to mankind. He taught that those who believed and followed him would be children of light or children of the spirit and the born again experience, commonly referenced in John 3:3, had everything to do with becoming children of light or born of the Spirit.

The Gospel of Thomas is not a canonized text but his words can provide additional insight about how this apostolic teaching was presented in the first century. This book is allegedly a directory of words that Jesus instructed his disciples. He wrote:

“If they ask, 'Where did you come from?' Tell them that you came from the light and from the place where the light originated and established itself. It was there that the light manifested your images.

Also, if they ask, 'Are you the light?' Then you tell them, 'We are its children; we are the elect of the Living Father.' And again, if they ask, 'What is the sign that your father is in you?' You say to them, 'It is movement and rest.'" (Thomas 50)

The first century followers of Jesus focused more on the spirit than they did the physical. Our lives today are focused on physical realities more than spiritual realities. People are more conscious of their physical being than they are their spiritual being and they spend most of their time, money, and energy pursuing that which is materialistic.

As a result the advertising agencies spend billions of dollars soliciting our money to purchase houses, cars, wardrobes, and investment opportunities. The music and entertainment industries promote sex, alcohol, drugs, and violence.

We treat the physical with great respect and neglect the spiritual with little or no regard. Fitness centers, weight reduction programs, and exercise equipment are all designed to bring attention to the physical

desires. Salons fill every mall and shopping center. There are nail salons, hair salons, tanning salons, and massage therapists that are available twenty-four seven just to meet our raging physical desires. As predicted, our days and nights are filled with parties and games amply supplied with food and drink. The tragic worldwide obesity rate highlights our indulgences.

Why is there such a focus on the physical instead of the spiritual? Why are there more bars than churches, synagogues and mosques? Why did American Idol capture the network ratings and become the barometer of reality programming? The answer is quite simple. Our society is more in tune with the physical than we are with the spiritual. We promote self-indulgence instead of self-denial. And we, the clerics, are to blame.

### **Responsibility of Leaders**

Pastors, priests, rabbis, imams, and religious leaders have padded their purses, preached their pet peeves, and neglected the disenfranchised. We have acted like the leaders of Shinar who called for the people to use brick and mortar to build physical buildings in an attempt to connect to a spiritual heaven. Their intent was to keep the people from scattering to other regions because they wanted a memorial of their importance and influence.

Some Christian worship services are more entertaining than sacred and some pastors are more concerned about the number of parishioners in the pews than the pain the parishioners bring with them. Too often we pastors view them as giving units instead of needy souls. We are overly cautious not to offend, lest they find another church to attend.

We have fallen into the worldly trap where we must use gimmicks, programs, and activities to keep the people connected. And we do this in the name of the kingdom of God, but yet we are stricken without a clue as to the substance of the kingdom. As a result, we perform for the people and disgrace the message of our Lord. Certainly not all church leaders have fallen into this trap but enough have to create

a western world church that looks uniquely different than the first world church.

If we ourselves aren't connected to the light of the spiritual, then we only see what lay in front us without any spiritual perception to the destruction that we are causing in the spiritual realm. If we spiritual leaders can't see the spiritual light, how can we expect to lead the people to its source?

Jesus told us to let our light shine that others may see the light of God. He was referencing God's Spirit at work in us. Instead, we have focused the spotlight on ourselves and revealed our own selfish ambitions, inclinations, and character deficiencies.

It is time for the clerics of the world to connect to the spirit realm and refocus on that, which is eternal. It is time for religious leaders to stand against the torrents of denominational influence, financial pressure, and political propaganda to enforce the code of the kingdom.

We must proclaim the righteous standard of the king and exhibit the joy that the kingdom brings. The kingdom of light is a life of joy, peace, and righteousness. It highlights love, acceptance and forgiveness while repudiating sin. It requires spiritual perception and personal responsibility.

The kingdom of light promotes the King of Glory and offers forgiveness of a dark past. It requires a mutual forgiveness on our behalf that qualifies us to become citizens. Spiritual rocks are crying out and the world is blinded by our darkness. It is time for spiritual leaders to declare as God did in the beginning, "LET THERE BE LIGHT!"

# Chapter Two

## Blacker Than a Hundred Midnights

“Blacker than a hundred midnights down in a cypress swamp!”

Civil Rights leader and poet James Weldon Johnson understood the vast darkness that exists in the depths of the Florida swamps when he first wrote one of his most famous poems, “The Creation.” Born in Jacksonville, FL, he lived in the area where cypress trees grew out of the swamps to provide shade for the marsh creatures below. I first memorized his poem at the age of thirteen but it wasn’t until I was past fifty that I briefly understood the phrase, “Blacker than a hundred midnights down in a cypress swamp.”

We were with friends as we walked through Gatorland, a popular theme park in Kissimmee, FL. We hadn’t covered the entire 110-acre park as the sun decided to rest for the evening. My wife nudged me with words, “It’s time to go home,” but I wanted to cross the bridge that covered the cypress swamp. As we crossed the bridge and looked up into the fading sky, we could see beams of flickering sunlight through the thick thicketed branches that created an umbrella of shade.

In less than an hour the place would be pitch dark. Only the nocturnal beasts that swam the night swamps would be able to navigate the darkness. Feeling spooked by the thought I agreed with my wife, it was time to leave. I wouldn’t want to get lost in the midst of a cypress swamp at night.

Walking briskly across the bridge and feeling the warmth of the sun again, I remembered driving west on I-494 towards my Chanhassen, MN home when my left eye began to register blurry objects. Thinking perhaps it was time to change my glasses prescription; I scheduled an eye exam and learned that I had formed a cataract. Most cataracts are slow growing but mine happened quickly. Within a week I had lost vision in one eye. A quick in-and-out procedure to remove the scratchy lens would allow me to leave the doctor’s office with an artificial lens and

twenty-twenty vision.

Within a week of the surgery, I began losing sight in my right eye. That cataract grew quicker than the first and within three days of the scheduled procedure, I could only see blurry objects moving a short distance in front of me. Thankfully the surgery was successful and within three weeks both eyes had artificial lens and my eyesight was perfect, except for the need to use reading glasses. Occasionally my mind retreats back to those brief two or three days when I was totally blinded and could see only a gray blurry screen.

The last time that I recalled a momentary blindness was the day the lights went out in my Dallas office. Nestled cozy in the back of the office building without windows or a nearby exit sign I worked diligently chasing numbers on a computer screen until suddenly a transformer blew at the corner of Shady Trail and Walnut Hill Lane. Instantly my room was filled with an unimaginable darkness. These three occasions prompted me to think about and research the components of light and what causes a person to be able to see.

In physics class we learned that visible light is an electromagnetic radiation of a wavelength that is visible to human eye. The ability to see those wavelengths is measured differently among the various species of animals. Light is measured by its intensity, wavelength frequency, and polarization.

## **Theories of Spiritual Light**

Theories about light were originally found in Hindu schools of ancient India. Around the sixth century BC some Hindu schools taught that light was one of five basic elements by which everything derives. Other schools believed that the four basic atoms are found in earth, water, fire, and air. They believed light rays were a stream of high velocity fire atoms.

Theories about physical light have beamed forth throughout the last two millennia but capturing the concepts of spiritual light have been less successful. Eastern Orthodox theology promoted the concept of Taboric Light, taken from the visibility of spiritual light on Mount

Tabor when Jesus was visibly transfigured and could be seen chatting with Elijah and Moses about his upcoming crucifixion. This Taboric Light or Shekhina glory are both names for “spiritual light.”

Other names include “uncreated light” and “divine light.” All of these names imply that God is light. His substance is spirit; therefore, we conclude that God exists as uncreated light and the light of His Spirit emanates from Him. And from this spiritual light all things were created. Everything that we see in the physical realm, first existed in the spiritual realm. So that the physical things we see, hear, taste, touch, and smell also have spiritual senses that can be seen, heard, tasted, touched, and smelled spiritually.

Throughout the centuries, a spiritual sensory perception of God has played a significant role in spirituality. Religions were formed from visionary experiences. Dreams and visions were long considered sacred and as opportunities for God to impart spiritual revelation and divine direction.

The proof of the existence of spiritual light can only be verified by faith in those who have actually experienced it. At times, the Bible used the terms like light and darkness to explain the spiritual concepts of good and evil as well as knowledge and ignorance. Moses wrote that God called light “day” contrasted by darkness, which He called night. Jesus used the same terminology in the New Testament when describing good and evil behavior.

The Jewish religion sprung from a vision that God gave Abraham. The Christian religion derived from a combination of visions seen in the first century. An angelic vision to Jesus’ mother about her virgin birth was validated by her fiancé’s dream and angelic instructions.

On multiple occasions angelic visions were blamed for opening prison doors of captured Christians. An angelic vision has been the only explanation for Christians to believe that the tombstone of Christ was miraculously moved. And the post appearances of Jesus were visionary evidences of the unveiling of the spiritual world to the physical senses.

Supposedly, Constantine converted to Christianity because he saw a vision of the cross in the sky. Mohammad proclaimed the kingdom of God because of angelic visitations. His journals, which were preserved

and labeled as the Koran, have become the sacred diary of all Muslims. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints exists because one man, Joseph Smith, wrote down the revelations from his angelic visitations.

Without doubt the power and efficacy of these visions have played a major role in the great awakenings and enlightenments that have occurred since the abandonment in Eden. From that time mankind has sought to define itself in spiritual terms that cannot be otherwise defined. They have produced religions that make up more than 3.5 billion people.

## **Pioneer Teaching on Spiritual Light**

All of these people have belief systems that have derived from the pioneer of the spiritual movement. Enoch was the seventh generation from Adam. His journal revealed angelic led tours through the spirit realm where he saw, heard, smelled, touched, and tasted spiritual substances. He chatted with angels, dialogued with God, and saw the appointed Messiah.

Enoch provided vivid descriptions of a spiritual realm that paralleled our physical world. He described angels as flames of fire that descended and ascended through a vertical passageway from the spiritual to the physical. He noted that spiritual angels must go to a certain place of transformation before becoming visible to the human eye.

He described spiritual locations that existed on earth, in the nether world, and in a heavenly realm. He wrote about astrological objects as if they were spiritual objects. His descriptions outlined a solar and lunar calendar. He saw the wind and described its movements through the spiritual gates of heaven. These twelve gates are the passageways of time and through them pass the sun, moon, and stars.

Enoch reported that angels of light rebelled against God and came to earth to intermarry with human women. The result was a citizenry of giants that occupied and produced evil upon the earth. He explained that these angels taught humanity things that they otherwise would never have known and their teachings led to war, malice, and evil.

From the time of Enoch to the present generation, others have written about angelic visitations but none have explained the spiritual realm with such vivid detail.

Spiritual light and physical light may possibly have the same components but are experienced in different realms. The universe in which we relate, is primarily physical and for that reason we can only measure light by our physical senses. It stands to reason then, that tapping into our spiritual senses would enable us to relate to the spirit world in the same fashion that we relate to the physical. But how do we do it? Dark light and dark energy make-up about 95% of the universe and supposedly is the substance that holds everything together. It is possible that this is a spiritual substance?

## **A Transient Spirit World**

From Biblical illustrations we are made aware that the spirit world exists in the same arena as the physical, albeit two separate realms. Early Christian literature maintained that we exist together on separate plains:

“Since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses (departed saints) let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Jesus endured opposition from sinful men so that you would not grow weary and lose heart. In your struggle against sin, you haven't reached the place of martyrdom yet. Do you remember the word that addressed you as God's sons?

‘My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you because the Lord disciplines those he loves and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.’

Endure hardship as disciples and recognize that God is treating you like a son... We all have earthly fathers who we respect because of the discipline we receive from them. How much more should we submit



to the Father of our spirits to obtain spiritual life.” Hebrews 12:1-9

This paragraph from Hebrews reveals several things that the early disciples believed and understood about the spiritual realm. They believed:

- Departed saints existed in the same spiritual arena as present physical reality with the possibility that they view our race towards eternity.
- People have spiritual eyes that can focus on spiritual objects.
- Faith is the spiritual substance that allows us to transcend the spirit world.
- Sin is a spiritual substance that draws people into the throes of death.
- Hardships and difficulties are used to thrust people into God’s spiritual kingdom and our responses to these hardships determine our worthiness of His kingdom and our legitimacy as His sons.
- God is the Father of our spirits.

To understand that God is the Father of our spirits is to accept the reality that He created our spirits from His spiritual light. That is why Jesus told Thomas,

“If they ask where you come from, you tell them that you came from the light. If they ask if you are the light, explain that you are its children. You are sons of the Living Father.”  
Thomas 50.

The question remains, “How can our spirits that were formed from spiritual light hide in the midst of the prevailing darkness of sin? If light exists in all of us, how can darkness cover up that light? If physical darkness disappears at the flicker of physical light, why does spiritual darkness prevail in those who maintain they are children of light?”

## **How To Measure Spiritual Light**

The three questions above suggest that spiritual light and darkness can be measured in the same way that physical light and darkness can be measured. And we have no other recourse but to

assume that the suggestion is correct.

If visible light is measured by its intensity, wavelength frequency, and polarization, then invisible (spiritual) light can also be measured by its intensity, emanating frequency, and polarization. If the ability to see electromagnetic wavelengths is measured differently among animals, then is it not possible that we all perceive spiritual light differently? And if that is case, how are these three measurements conducted?

We can measure the intensity of our spiritual light by the aggressiveness of our spiritual nature. By aggressiveness I mean our pursuit of God, our pursuit of righteousness, and our pursuit of right relationships with other people.

By aggressiveness I do not mean vocal or verbal intensity. Oftentimes those who are the first and loudest to declare spirituality are often the last and most silent when challenged by spiritual substances. For example, one might boldly declare his faith in God but adverse circumstances may cause that person to erupt in profanities. The intensity of his spiritual light is measured by his reaction to the adverse circumstances.

Spiritual intensity is not measured by what a person says or does. Spiritual intensity is measured by how a person responds to life's situations. The way a person responds to favorable or adverse circumstances is the measuring component of intensity. For example, an accidental death of a loved one is a negative situation that may confront us and demand a reaction.

If the death causes us to pursue God, righteousness and right relationships with others, then we can measure that response as more intense. If, on the other hand, the incident moves us in the opposite direction of God, righteousness and right relationships, then we can measure that response as less intense.

The intensity of our spiritual light is measured by our pursuit of God and His righteousness and our pursuit to build right relationships throughout our lifetime when positive and negative circumstances occur.

The emanating frequency of spiritual light is also a component of measuring spiritual light. Since spiritual light comes from God we can assume that our favorable responses to God through positive and

negative circumstances reveal the spiritual light within us.

How quickly and how often we respond favorably determines the emanating frequency. So the person with a high intensity of spiritual light will pursue God and His righteous standard immediately and often. Someone with a low intensity of spiritual light may eventually pursue God in adverse circumstances and without regularity. A person with a no intensity of spiritual light will never pursue God or His righteous standard.

Not only can our emanating frequency of spiritual light be measured through adverse circumstances, it can also be measured through favorable circumstances. For example, if a person purchased a one-dollar lottery ticket that won him one hundred million dollars most people would consider that a favorable circumstance achieved through investments. The emanating frequency of spiritual light could be measured in how quickly and how often he favorably responds to God in that situation. The time that it takes and the frequency of our favorable response to God, His righteousness and other people determine the emanating frequency of spiritual light.

Polarization is the final component for measuring light. Since darkness is the absence of light we can polarize darkness to measure whether or not light is present. Deep inside the jungles of South or Central America one can find himself in a cypress swamp without any physical light. On a cloudy night when the emanating light from the moon and stars won't penetrate the veiled clouds or the thicketed umbrella of branches covering the swamp, a person can see nothing but pitch black darkness. His perception of physical light is limited by his inability to focus on an object and see it. Physical sight requires physical light.

Likewise spiritual sight requires the polarization of darkness and the ability of a person to see God in the midst of that darkness. For example, according to most religious literature, acts of murder, adultery, lust, and idolatry are works of darkness. Declaring these actions as darkness gives us the ability to polarize these actions as darkness and determine their practice as absence of spiritual light.

One of the tests of true spiritual light is the ability to see God in the midst of darkness and therefore pursue Him and His righteousness even though darkness prevails. Hence, if a woman learns of her husband's adulterous affair, her ability to see God in the situation and forgive him and his lover is an indicator of spiritual light. On the other hand, the absence of forgiveness polarizes her into darkness. Likewise our response to others who persecute and say all manner of things against us is merely a test or gauge that measures the spiritual light within us. How we respond, determines whether spiritual light or spiritual darkness prevails.

Jesus' gave us spiritual light indicators when he preached his famous Sermon on the Mount. He said that humility, meekness, and mercy are spiritual light indicators. A pure heart that seeks peace and righteousness are measuring components of spiritual light. In the sermon, Jesus said that we are the (spiritual) light of the world and we are to let our light shine so others will see our good works and in turn see the glory or the light of God.

In order to measure the spiritual light that exists within us, we must ask ourselves three questions. "Have we polarized ourselves from darkness and alienated ourselves from evil? Do we demonstrate the measuring components of spiritual light that Jesus referred to? How quickly and how often do we pursue God, righteousness, and right relationships with others in our response to both favorable and adverse circumstances?"

# Chapter 3

## Rick's Hologram

Nine-year-old Mason and five year old Ragen were troubled when they learned that my boss committed suicide. A few months earlier they had joined my wife and me to visit his Mansfield, TX home where they played putt-putt on his outside putting green and latter engaged in a friendly game of Wii in front of his big scene television.

Our two grandchildren bring such joy to our hearts and when Ragen asked, "Why did he do that? He was such a nice man?" I knew that we had a lot of explaining to do. At the time, I didn't have an answer for our little princess but we later learned that his business improprieties was more pressure than he could handle, so rather than face the trauma of losing his business, he opted out of life.

Mason's question was more poignant and required a more delicate answer. He asked, "Where is Rick right now? Did he go to heaven or hell?" I wasn't as confident as the Baptist minister who preached Rick right into the pearly gates. He knew Rick quite well. The preacher correctly stated,

"When Rick wasn't drinking he was the greatest guy in the world to be around. But when his liquor got the best of him, he was mean and nobody wanted to be around him."

Rick had made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ. During his troubled times we had lengthy conversations about the Lord. As the controller of the company, I knew all of Rick's login and software passwords. Most of them began or ended with "holy ghost" so his mind was frequently on the spiritual. On one occasion he even talked about quitting the business and going into the mission field.

Two days prior to his tragic death, he had called me to his house to complete the fourth quarter numbers and much of the afternoon was spent discussing Jesus and the afterlife. His main concern was what

would happen to him if he committed suicide. He asked the same question that Mason asked, “Will I go to heaven or hell?”

Forty years of ministerial training had taught me to be honest and forthright. I told Rick that killing himself was akin to murder. I said, “You wouldn’t be just killing yourself. You’d be killing my boss. You’d be murdering your mother’s son. You’d be taking the life of your children’s dad. You’d be killing your sister’s sibling.” I told him, “Taking your own life involved more than you.”

These same forty years has also taught me not to judge a man’s soul. Judgment is part of God’s portfolio and I’ve learned throughout life to do my job and let Him do His.

Before leaving the house that day Rick asked me to write down some things to tell those who were closest to him. He said,

“It saddens me to know that my actions may hurt a lot of people. I’ll never know how much pain I have caused. I know that I have hurt a lot of people and for that I am sorry. I love everybody! I love Jesus! Pray for me, wherever I may wind up!”

Two days later he contacted a suicide hotline in California just three hours prior to ending his life. That cold Texas night was filled with pain, remorse, guilt, and regret. Family members from various parts of the city gathered to grieve. My heart hurt as I shared their pain but just as he requested, I prayed to God about where Rick would spend eternity.

After getting permission to perform “last rites,” I climbed into the medical examiner’s white van where they had stuffed Rick’s corpse. In a moment of silence and a few short words of prayer, I committed Rick’s spirit to God and his soul for judgment. The only thing I had left was hope.

So when my grandson asked, “Where is Rick right now? Did he go to heaven or hell?” I suddenly received a revelation about how to explain the situation in a way that he’d understand.

“Mason?” I asked. “Do you remember in the Star Wars movie when Princess Leia appeared in the form of a hologram pleading for help and wanting someone to contact Obi One Kenobi?” The nine-year had seen all of the Star Wars flicks and he had remembered that very

scene. So it became an easy task to explain to him what a person's spirit looks like. I explained,

“The hologram is not physical but it looks and appears to be just like the physical person. And only when the light is shining are we able to see the hologram. Our spirits are similar because they look like the physical person but they are invisible unless the spiritual light is shining.”

Our spiritual lives look just like a hologram; however, most people fail to understand that the hologram is the real person. The physical body is merely a place where the hologram lives. When we die, the hologram escapes from our physical bodies, leaving them limp and lifeless.

When the hologram leaves the body it returns to God to await judgment. At the end of time the Lord will judge whether or not that hologram or spirit embraced the king and obeyed his commands.

I don't know the eternal fate of Rick's spirit. All I have is hope. According to the words of Jesus, eternal life is more than saying a prayer and confessing his name. Jesus said,

“Many will come in the last days saying, ‘Lord, Lord, didn't we proclaim your name? Didn't we perform miracles in your name and cast out devils?’ But the king will proclaim, ‘Leave my sight, you workers of iniquity, I never knew you.’”

In questioning our future salvation, we must not ask, “Do you know Jesus?” Instead, we should ask, “Does Jesus know you?”

Many proclaim to know him. Many preachers prophesy, perform miracles, and cast out devils. They call him, “Lord.” But Jesus said, “The king didn't recognize some of them because their evil lives contradicted his kingdom values.”

My fascination with early church literature has caused me to study their various belief systems because I wanted to learn their teachings and beliefs. I discovered that their teachings were much different than those that are preached in today's pulpits. The Gospel of Thomas provided keen insight from the Lord's teaching regarding our spiritual lives.

In previous chapters, I quoted from Thomas' writings where Jesus explained to his disciples that God's spiritual light created our

spiritual and physical images.

The Lord wanted his followers to know how they came into existence. He also wants us to know that we originated from spiritual light and our physical images were manifested from that spiritual light. Jesus called us “sons of Light” meaning we were created from light. He said that we were children of Light, the elect of the living Father.

When his followers asked about the indicators of the Father’s presence, he simply said, “God’s presence will be recognized by your movement and rest.” Movement and rest are both activities of the spiritual realm that can be observed somewhat in the physical realm.

## **Our Physical Constitution**

Our physical bodies have no life in themselves. At birth God breathed His life into our lungs and injected His breath into our bodies. At that moment, our bodies began to display and demonstrate life. We gasped for our first breath and cried out to the world. Instantly our bodies begin moving and breathing. Movement is a sign that His spirit is in us.

While embodied inside our mother’s womb we were part of her life. We depended on her spirit for life. We grew as a fetus inside her womb until the moment of birth when we received God’s breath and began to breathe independently from her.

The mother’s body is so constructed that the baby growing inside her can be nurtured with minerals, antibodies, and food substance. That is what causes the unborn babies to grow. Even the baby’s blood is oxygenated by the mother’s respiratory system.

Doctors and scientists will concur that the blood flowing inside the veins of a preborn infant is self-contained. In other words, the preborn baby’s blood is as a direct result of the union between the sperm of the father and the egg of the mother. DNA tests validate both contributions and there is no actual blood flow from the mother to the child.

The mother oxygenates the blood until the umbilical cord is severed. At that moment the child must live independently from the



mother and breath on its own. Our independent life began when God personally breathed into us the breath of life. Instantly our bodies begin to move and breathe independently.

Prior to birth, our bodies were sustained by the life of our mothers. At birth, God injected His spirit of life into our physical bodies and we began to live independently from our mother but totally dependent on God. His spirit and light was imparted and now sustains our lives.

And while the spiritual life of God sustains our physical bodies with life, Jesus clearly taught that our refusal to recognize and submit to God's spirit could jeopardize a future existence with Him.

### **The Light of the World**

The writers of John's Gospel scripted the story about some scribes and religious Jews who caught a woman committing adultery. According to Moses' law, the adulterous affair should have ended with a judicial execution. So the religious people tested Jesus and brought the adulteress to him to adjudicate her sin. Instead of condemning her, Jesus forgave and liberated her from the sin.

Then he addressed those who tested him and said, "I am the light of the world. He who follows me shall not walk in darkness but have the light of life." John 8:12, Jesus set the woman free and expected her to discontinue her dark walk and begin walking in the kingdom of light.

The early apostles understood that life was produced from spiritual light. The writers of John's gospel conveyed that thought when they referenced Jesus: "In him was life and the life was the light of men." John 1:4 In other words, the life inside us comes from the light that created us. Therefore, we are children of light.

James, the brother of Jesus wrote, "... The body without the spirit is dead." James 2:26 He also confirmed that God was our Father when he identified Him as the Father of lights:

"Don't be deceived to think that God tries to make us fail. He is the Father of lights. He doesn't live in the shadows and

there's nothing shady about Him.” James 1:17

Thomas was one of the twelve men that Jesus selected to spread his message. Thomas recorded a conversation that Jesus had with his followers:

“His disciples said to him, ‘Show us the place where you are, since it is necessary for us to seek it.’

He said to them, ‘He that has ears, let him hear! There is light within a man of light, and he lights up the whole world. If he does not shine, he is darkness.’” Thomas 24

Although our lives and existence derived from spiritual light, unless we fulfill our purpose and mission we risk losing that light in eternity.

Jesus said that the spiritual light was placed inside us to lighten the world of darkness. That is our mission. Either we influence the world with the values of the kingdom of light or we will be influenced by the values of the kingdom of darkness. Jesus simply explained, “If a man of light does not shine, he is darkness.”

## **Rick's Future**

One day Rick's hologram will stand before the King of Glory. The Lord will adjudicate whether or not Rick influenced the world with the values of God's kingdom or whether the values of darkness overcame him.

Perhaps the Baptist minister could have served his listeners better by challenging us to live a life for the king instead of trying to get us to make a profession of belief. It is one thing to believe what Jesus said and it is another thing to do what Jesus said. According to James, “The devils believe and tremble.”

Mentally believing and verbally professing Jesus as Lord and Savior is not enough. Our faith will be judged by what we do. Jesus will adjudicate righteousness according to his standard not ours. He will justify us by our works that prove our faith.

When we stand before him on judgment day, he won't ask, "Why should I let you into my heaven?" And if we try to answer, "Because I gave my heart to Jesus and confessed him as my Lord and Savior." It will not be the secret password that opens the pearly gates.

Jesus will not ask our opinion about righteousness. He will judge us according to his standard not ours. He told us how he would adjudicate righteousness on the judgment day when he returns with his holy angels. The king will separate the righteous and unrighteous and he'll address them both. To the righteous he will say:

"My Father's blessings are upon you. Come and take possession of the kingdom that was prepared for you before you were ever born. There was a time I was hunger and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you housed me. I was naked and you gave me clothes. I was in prison and you came to visit me."

But the righteous will answer and say, 'Lord when did I do all these for you?' The King will say, 'When you did it for others, you did it for me.' Then the King will address the unrighteous and say,

'You are cursed! Leave my presence and go to the everlasting fire that was prepared for the devil and his angels. I was hungry and thirsty but you gave me nothing to eat and drink. I was a stranger without clothes and you didn't house or clothe me. I was in prison and you didn't visit me.'

The unrighteous will respond by saying, 'When did we fail to do these things?' The King will say, 'Not doing for others is the same as not doing it for me.'" Matthew 25:31-46. Jesus finalized his decree, "And the unrighteous will go into everlasting punishment but the righteous will go into eternal life."

The things that we do throughout our lifetime will determine where we will spend eternity. The Lord will judge the actions of our hearts rather than the doctrinal traditions of our past.

When the hologram inside leaves your body lifeless and alone, when the spirit escapes the physical to face the Judge of eternity, and when everything has been said and done in your lifetime, what will the king say to you?

# Chapter 4

## The Light of the Body is the Eye

Jesus taught with simplicity yet his words are often confusing, especially when we try to apply his words to something other than he intended. Matthew recorded his teaching on light as it relates to the eye.

“The light of the body is the eye. If your eye is good then your entire body will be filled with light. But if your eye is evil then the entire body will be filled with darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, that darkness will be great! “  
Matthew 6:22-23

Before analyzing the text we must first understand to what realm Jesus referred. When surveying other statements that he made regarding light, which are recorded in and outside Biblical texts, we find that his words were of the spiritual nature and required a spiritual application before they could be understood.

Our lack of understanding Christ’s words should not overrule the simplicity of what he said. Descriptively explaining how the eye is the organ that allows the body to see physical light, Jesus explained that our spiritual perception is through our spiritual sight.

Consistent throughout Jesus’ teachings, light connoted good while darkness implied evil. His teachings also maintained that the light within us derived from a spiritual source and that light will be judged whether or not it fulfilled its mission while encased inside the physical body.

In the above text, Jesus stated three facts. First, the light of body is the eye. Second, if the eye is good then it will influence the whole body with good. If our eye is evil it will influence the whole body with evil. Third, Jesus stated, “If the light in you is darkness then that darkness will be great.”

In a nutshell, Jesus said, “The way we view things spiritually determines our character of good and evil.” If our perception is good

then we will live a life of goodness. If we have an evil perception, then our lives will lend toward evil.

## **Is Money Good or Evil?**

The context of Christ's words relates to the believers instructions to seek God's kingdom and His righteousness instead of seeking treasures, money, or a future. Contrary to our opinions today, Jesus taught that riches and wealth had the tendency to rule people's lives and as long as we are loyal to money's dictates, we cannot be loyal to the Lord's.

Anytime we allow something physical and tangible to rule our lives, we are not able to totally surrender to God and allow Him to rule our spirits. When we trust in earthly treasures, our hearts won't long for heavenly treasures. Such is the plight of our American society.

Although we have "In God We Trust" plastered across our currency, the opposite is true. We have yo-yoed from poverty to wealth, from depression to inflation, from recession to progression and about the time the financiers think they have figured out the formula for financial success we hit a speed bump that takes everyone back to the drawing board.

The problem is not the lack of financial understanding. Jesus said regarding money, "The sons of the world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light." The financial woes that overcome to America are a direct result of their priorities.

We value money more than we value God. We are more faithful to the stock futures than we are to the One who determines our future. We haven't figured out that the Ruler of heaven rules the earth. And we haven't learned that the shifting of money and politics moves at His behest.

Our spiritual perception of money causes the whole country to be filled with evil. When a country, family, or individual looks to money and wealth as the cure-all we have successfully managed to make it our Master.

Quality of life is a sacred term in our society that is often used to describe our living conditions. Husbands and wives both work so the family can have “quality of life.” Both incomes are needed to pay mortgages, car payments, student tuitions, and meet the family budget. Unless a family has discretionary spending they are viewed as not having quality of life. Simply living from paycheck to paycheck and having nice things doesn’t count.

The Almighty Dollar has become our god. We spend fifty to seventy hours a week trying to get more and more; we bow to its dictates; we worship what it provides. Whatever our income doesn’t provide we substitute with credit and become servant to the lender.

### **Solomon’s View on Money**

We have become like Solomon in his youth who thought, “Money answers everything.” Ecclesiastes 10:19 We fail to realize that Solomon spent his whole life searching for what was important.

The theme of Ecclesiastes is futility. Verse two described his life as he searched for happiness, peace and joy, “Vanity of vanities says the Preacher! Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!”

Although an Israeli king, Solomon was the forerunner of the American dream. First, he sought for knowledge and earthly wisdom, which he later said was vain. Next he pursued pleasure and found futility. He sought to gratify the flesh with wine but it only led to folly.

Next he spent his life acquiring things. He built gardens and orchards. He hired many servants and gathered silver and gold as treasures. He became the greatest in the world but he found no contentment. He realized that all his hard work would be left for others to enjoy.

In his wisdom he realized that the gift of God was simply enjoying one’s work and having food on the table. He said that riches and wealth are gifts of God but unless man finds joy and happiness the gifts are all vanity.

At the conclusion of his life Solomon offered this advice to his son:

“Fear God and keep His commandments for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether it is good or evil.”

Speaking to his disciples, Jesus condensed Solomon’s life into one statement, “You cannot serve God and money.”

The spiritual light of the body is the spiritual eye. How we view money will determine whether our bodies are full of light or darkness. Jesus told a story about an unjust steward and after the parable he said,

“Use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.”  
Luke 16:9

The love of money is rooted in all evil, but friendships and relationships are an eternal commodity. When we understand that the Lord gave us money to use for eternal things, then our perception will align us to with his kingdom rule. Our perception of money will determine how we are ruled, whether by the spiritual or the physical domain.

Although the context of Christ’s words was in regard to wealth and riches, the intent of his words have a far greater reach. The light of the body is the eye and how we view life will determine good and evil.

Why do we exist? Why were we born? What is our mission in life? The answers to these questions may determine the good and evil in a person.

## **Understanding the Kingdom of God**

Whether or not we want to admit it, we were spiritual specimens that God selected to be born on earth. His selection was also accompanied with a mission or calling by which we are to deposit on earth during our stay. As light creatures from heaven we must stay connected to the source of light to learn our calling.

This concept sounds so “religious” because of its spiritual inclinations but the far-reaching goal is nowhere close to religious obligation. It is for this reason that so many people confuse the kingdom



of God with religious garb.

The kingdom of God is not a religious culture; it is the type of government that rules the spirit world. If we assume that everything physical derived from the spirit, then we can safely assume that the ruler of God's kingdom rules everything. But to understand how the kingdom operates we must first understand the principles of every kingdom, both spiritual and physical. All kingdoms possesses four things:

- Every kingdom has a king with monarchical authority who owns and rules the kingdom.
- Every kingdom has laws that were established for the sake of the kingdom and the betterment of its citizens.
- Every kingdom has subjects who are expected to obey the laws, submit to the king, and make a contribution to kingdom.
- Every kingdom has a domain or realm that limits or quantifies the ruling authority of the king.

The third aspect of the kingdom informs us of the expectations and responsibilities of those who claim to be kingdom citizens. We must adhere to the laws of the kingdom. We must recognize, respect, and honor the king. We must make a contribution to the kingdom. God's kingdom has these four elements. Jesus is King. He established the Royal Law of love for us to live by. We are the subjects that adhere to his laws. As kingdom servants, the Lord rules our heart and spirit.

### **Parable of the Talents**

Jesus told his disciples a parable to explain that all people in his kingdom are required to make a contribution. It is called the parable of the talents.

"Again, God's spiritual kingdom is similar to a man who took a extended trip. He left instructions with each of his servants and provided the necessary resources for them to accomplish their tasks.

He gave one servant five times more money than he gave the lazy servant because he had greater potential. Another servant received twice as much as the lazy servant but everyone had the necessary resources to accomplish their tasks.

The servant with the most money immediately went to work and doubled his money. The second servant also doubled his income but the lazy servant failed to contribute to the kingdom and instead hid his master's money because he was afraid that he'd lose it.

In time, the master returned to see the accomplishments of his servants. The first servant pleased the master when he showed him how his investment was doubled. The second servant also pleased the master and to these two servants the master said, "Well done! Your service is good. Your contribution and faithfulness have earned you more responsibility.

The lazy servant approached his master without a contribution and told him that he was afraid that the master would treat him unfairly; therefore, he hid the resources instead of using them to make a contribution.

The master was displeased with the wicked, lazy servant because he failed to make a contribution and because of the way that the servant viewed the master. The servant's perspective of the master caused him to hide the initial resources and prevented the servant's production."

Jesus explained that everyone who produced in the kingdom would be rewarded with more but those who failed to make a contribution would be considered worthless and would be removed from the kingdom.

Worthless wicked servants will be cast into darkness with those who angrily cry out as they await eternal judgment." Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 19:12-27

Our spiritual perspective will determine how we view God, sin, other people, and ourselves. People who fail to recognize God's power will become self-centered, self-indulgent, and self-preserving. People who understand God's power will become God centered, kingdom oriented, and totally submissive. The more we know and understand God the less and less we become self-dependent.

## **Kingdom Perspective**

Jesus required his servants to have a proper perspective of the kingdom. He knew that people responded to life according to the way they viewed the kingdom. On one occasion Jesus called a meeting of all those who wanted to follow him. As his followers approached he said,

“If anyone desires to be my disciple, he must first deny himself, take up the cross, and then follow me.” Mark 8:34

Christ’s three prerequisites for kingdom discipleship included: self-denial, martyrdom, and obedience. The term “take up the cross” was a cliché denoting martyrdom. Roman crucifixions were designed for traitors to the Roman kingdom. Because Christ promoted the kingdom of God and declared himself as God’s appointed king, he was affixed to a cross with other criminals who were accused of treason.

From a kingdom perspective, men and women who committed murder, rape, and thievery were classified as criminals because they defiled the kingdom. The king or lord of the kingdom owned everything within this domain, including people, animals, and real property. Everything in the kingdom belonged to the king. If one person stole from another, he was stealing kingdom property. By killing another person, he murdered a king’s servant.

The laws of monarchial kingdoms were created of the monarch, by the monarch, and for the monarch. The monarch adjudicated citizenry problems and the king’s decision had no appeals. One’s perspective of the monarch often determined the subject’s actions as well as his destiny in the kingdom.

## **Rich Young Ruler**

Caesar’s kingdom was too large to micromanage so he appointed provincial rulers throughout the kingdom to assure the allegiance of the servants. These rulers were very wealthy because they co-owned the province.

Technically everything belonged to the king but when he appointed someone to rule in his stead, the ruler owned everything in his

jurisdiction as long as he understood that everything he owned belonged to Caesar.

One of these rulers came to Jesus and seriously inquired about God's kingdom that promised eternal life. It was something the Roman kingdom didn't offer. The wealthy ruler wanted to know what he had to do in order to possess eternal life.

The Lord told him that he had to obey the laws of God's kingdom: "Don't commit adultery; don't kill; don't lie and defraud others; honor your parents."

The rich young ruler told Jesus he had kept those laws from the time of his youth. That is when Jesus looked at him with great love and compassion and said,

"Then there is only one thing that you lack. Sell everything you own and give the money to the poor. By doing this, you'll have heavenly treasures.

Once you have completed that task, you must take up your cross. That is your requirement to follow me." Mark 10:21

The cost of discipleship for the rich young ruler was huge. He had to deny his political appointment. He had to take his possessions, sell them, and give to the poor. In reality he had to choose kings

The wealthy ruler knew that his possessions belonged to Caesar. Selling Caesar's possessions required Caesar's approval and to do so without approval was an act of treason. That is why Jesus told him that selling his possessions would mean a certain execution. But Jesus still required it to become a citizen of God's kingdom.

## **Kingdom Requirements**

As citizens of God's kingdom, we must have the same perspective because our view of God's kingdom will determine our attitude, actions, and future destiny. The same requirements for the rich young ruler remain in tact for us:

- We must deny any allegiance except God.

- We must serve none other than Him.
- We must respect, honor, obey, and worship the king.
- We must consider that everything we own belongs to Him.

Failure to carry out these duties will prevent us from living the kingdom life and will eventually remove us from God's kingdom altogether. As kingdom servants our only allegiance is to Jesus. We can't titter-totter on the fringes of eternity. Either we are in or we are out. Either we believe Jesus or we don't. Either we follow him or go sadly our own way.

Religion, churches, denominations, good works, charity, and religious institutions are not a substitute for kingdom allegiance. The leaders of these entities often require more or less than God does. Many of these institutions and churches actually compete with God's kingdom instead of serve it. They have blind leaders who lead blind followers down the pathway of destruction. These leaders will pay a severe price and those who follow them will be charged the same.

The kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom. It is a kingdom of light. The light of the body is the eye and our view of the kingdom will determine our attitude, our actions, and our eternal destiny.

If our spiritual eyes are filled with light then our spiritual perception will be good because we are enlightened by God's spirit within. But if our spiritual eyes are evil then we will have evil inclinations because the light inside us doesn't shine and our lives will be filled with darkness. Jesus said,

“If the light that is within us is darkness, that darkness will be overwhelming.”

# Chapter 5

## Kingdom of Light

The concepts of spiritual light that were shared and believed in the first century were highly propagated in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Prophets and priests loudly touted the belief of a Messiah. They called him the Son of Man.

### Ezra

Ezra wrote about two visions that he had on Mount Horeb and Mount Zion. These visions included an angelic conversation that required his obedience to preach the commandment of the Lord even though Jerusalem would reject his message. The angel even told him what to say. Below is an affidavit validating Ezra's angelic visit.

“While on Mount Horeb, I received a commission from the Lord to preach a message. I obeyed even though they rejected the message and hated what I told them. Here's what the Lord told me to preach:

‘All you heathen, listen and understand. Start looking for your Shepherd who will give you eternal rest. The end of the world is closer than you think. He is coming!

Get ready to receive the reward of the kingdom. The everlasting light will shine upon you forever. Flee from the shadows and darkness of this world and receive the joy of your glory and light.’

I openly testified of my Savior. ‘Receive the gift that has been given you. Be glad and give him thanks because he has led you to the heavenly kingdom.’

Then the angel said, “Rise up! Stand up and see how many have been sealed and invited to the Lord's feast! These are those who have departed from the shadows and darkness of the world and have received glorious garments of the Lord.

Your number is up, Zion! These that are clothed in white are the ones who have fulfilled the law of the Lord's kingdom. Worship the power of the Lord. He has hallowed and completely fulfilled the number that has been called from the beginning." II Esdras 2:33-41

Later Ezra saw another vision and interacted with an angel on Mount Zion. He wrote:

"I saw an enormous amount of people. There were so many that I couldn't count them. They were all singing and praising the Lord. In the middle of all these people was a very tall young man who placed crowns on their heads. I marveled inside because I knew that he was more exalted than the rest.

I asked the angel, 'Sir, who are all these people?'

He answered, 'These are the ones who have shed their mortal clothes and have confessed the name of God. You can see that they are now crowned and are carrying palms.'

I saw the crowns and palms and asked the angel, 'Who is the young man that crowned them and gave them palms?'

He replied, 'It is God's Son whom they confessed while in the world.'

I looked with great commendation at those who had stood up for the name of the Lord. Then the angel said to me, 'Go your way and tell my people about all of these wonders that you have seen.'" II Esdras 2:42-48

The concepts of Christianity that Jesus introduced were not original with his inception. The kingdom of light, Shepherd and Savior, the gift of eternal life, and a heavenly reward were all doctrines that Ezra foretold more than five hundred years prior to Christ's birth.

Ezra's end time message about the arrival of the Messiah weren't new to his generation either. Enoch foretold the same end-time message some three thousand years earlier than Ezra.

## David

David's deathbed sermon enlightened the people of his day. He said,

“The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me. This is what the God of Israel said, “The king that rules over men must be just and rule in the fear of God. He must shine like the morning light without clouds and glow as the tender grass after a refreshing rain.” II Samuel 23:1-5

David confessed that he had not ruled in that manner but still God made an everlasting covenant with him to bring order to everything and assured him of salvation and fulfilled his desire. In contrast David mentioned the sons of darkness. He said,

“The Sons of Belial will be like piercing thorns. They will not be taken with hands.” II Samuel 23:6

According to the Satanic Bible, Belial is one of the four crowned princes of Satan. The Old Testament writers indicated that the Sons of Belial were demonically inspired. David contrasted the Sons of Belial with the good king that rules justly in the fear of God.

This contrast sets a stage for the end time war when the King of Light will come to destroy the Sons of Darkness. David referred to the spiritual nature of Belial by saying he couldn't be captured with physical hands.

## **Paul**

The only reference to Belial in the New Testament was from Paul's letter to the church at Corinth. Paul appealed for the Corinthians to separate from the world of ungodly evil. He wrote:

“Don't yoke up with unbelievers! How can righteousness and lawlessness live together? How can light and darkness be in the same room? What do Christ and Belial have in common? How can a believer agree with an unbeliever? How does the temple of God entertain idols? Don't you realize that you are the temple of God?” II Corinthians 6:14-16

Paul understood the kingdom of light message that Enoch, Ezra, David and Jesus proclaimed. He carried their message to the church of Colossae:



“For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the Kingdom of the son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” Colossians 1:1-14

Paul acknowledged that God’s kingdom is a kingdom of light. He said we must be qualified to share in the inheritance of His kingdom. That qualification comes as we learn more and more about the spiritual wisdom and understanding of the kingdom.

As we seek God, He provides the necessary wisdom and understanding that helps us endure the difficulties of life. It also helps us to become patient with other people and forgive those who offend us.

Central to our learning experience are the trials and tests that the Lord sends to view our responses. Our responses determine whether we are living in the spirit realm or the physical realm.

Forgiveness is a spiritual substance that is required for kingdom citizenship. Jesus said that if we fail to forgive others, then our unforgiveness would fail us. He also said that we wouldn’t find forgiveness in God’s spiritual kingdom if we failed to forgive others.

## **Isaiah**

The renowned Jewish prophet, Isaiah, preached an eternal kingdom of light message that named God’s son as king. He wrote:

“The people who walk in darkness will see a great light and those living in the dark shadow of death will see it.

A child will be born and a son will be given to cause the people to rejoice. When the light comes, the rod of the oppressor and the burdens of the people will be broken.

The government will be placed upon his shoulders. His authority will increase without ever ending. The LORD of hosts has ordered and established judgeship upon him to rule the people in fairness. His kingdom will even rule over the throne of David from that time and forever.

You can count on this happening because the LORD of hosts is zealous to perform it” Isaiah 9:1-7

Isaiah predicted a Messiah that would break the rod of the oppressor and lift the burdens of the broken people. He prophetically described this Messiah so the people of God would recognize when he arrived.

- He would be a king that ruled Israel.
- This kingdom that would last forever.
- This king would be light.
- This king would come as a male child.
- This king would be a gift.

Even though Isaiah mentioned Israel as a state, his message obviously referred to the spiritual realm. He spoke of an eternal kingdom. He used the term “light” to describe the king. The intriguing part of his prophecy was the fact that this king would be God’s gift and God’s son.

An unwritten rule existed among nobility about the order of royalty. Only one king could reign in one domain. For a prince to become king, the father must first die. The prince had to wait upon his reign until after his father’s funeral. After the death of the king, the royal prince was crowned with power and authority. But Isaiah prophesied a different Messiah. He predicted an eternal King of Light who was given from the Father of lights.

It wasn't until the appearance of Jesus that the people understood the concept of the kingdom of light. Christ's parabolic explanations stumped the Jewish sages and prevented them from the revelation of Christ's appearance. But those who received the gospel of the God's kingdom embraced their Lord and received the eternal life that he offered.

## Job

The story and character of Job is considered one of the oldest Biblical stories. In a dialog with his friends Job recalled:

I really long for the days when God watched over me and when His light helped me get through the darkness.

How I long for the days of my youth when His friendship was intimate and my house was blessed.

The Almighty was with me and my children were still around. During those times my path was drenched with cream and streams of olive oil poured from a rock. Job 24:1-6

Whether or not the story of Job was true or fiction is irrelevant. The point of this reference is to concur that God's people during his age believed in the "light of the kingdom." They understood the concepts of good and evil as it related to light and darkness and these same concepts have been passed to succeeding generations.

## Jesus

Certainly Jesus proclaimed the concepts of spiritual light. He told his disciples,

"I am the light of the world, he that follows me will not walk in darkness." John 8:12

His words were not allegorical. The sons of his kingdom were sons of light who existed prior to their birth. He told the disciples that they came from the source of "uncreated light" and their spiritual images

could not be seen in the physical realm because they were concealed in the Father.

Although their spirits were invisible, Jesus pointed to a time that they would see their spiritual images. He taught:

"The (physical) images become visible to man, but the light in them remains concealed in the image of the light of the Father. The man's body can be seen but his image remains concealed by his light.

"When you see your likeness, you rejoice. But when you see your (spiritual) images that came into being before you, which are invisible and never die, how much of that can you handle?" Thomas 83-84

The first century church understood that the kingdom of light was a spiritual kingdom. What we commonly call spirit, Jesus and others labeled as "light." The light of the spirit is that which emanates from us. Our spirits are invisible. Jesus called them "light" or "images" indicating that the light of our spirits exists or lives inside our physical bodies.

His prediction of the time when our spirits would become visible is theologically called the day of glorification. According to Enoch, Ezra, Jesus, Jude and others, this event will occur when the Messiah comes to earth at the end of time to judge mankind and the fallen angels.

Jesus claimed to be that Messiah and he told his followers that he would have to go away for a while but he would return. Over a period of forty days after his resurrection, Jesus appeared to them and taught them things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

Luke wrote that he didn't remain with his disciples continuously. Instead, he appeared himself at various times for a month and a half. The puzzled disciples knew he lived in a spiritual place and they asked him to reveal the place where he lived spiritually because they wanted to go there. Here was their dialog:

"His disciples said to him, 'Show us the place where you are, since it is necessary for us to seek it.'

He said to them, 'If you have ears, then listen to what I am saying. There is light within a man of light, and he lights up

the whole world. If he does not shine, he is darkness.”  
Thomas 24

He also told them, “I am the light of the world as long as I am here.”  
John 9:5

Later he confirmed, “Believe in the light while it is present and so you can become children of light.” John 12:36

In answer to their initial question Jesus told them, “When I am not here teaching you, I am with the Light--the same Light that is inside you.”

## **Kingdom of Faith**

Jesus confirmed that simply believing in him would cause us to be sons of light. But believing is not as simple as we might suppose. Problematically, the English language damages the full understanding of the word “believe.” We treat the word like a passive verb instead of an action verb. Believing requires action on our part. If we believe something, there will be a corresponding action that proves our belief.

I once illustrated the word “belief” to my students to help them understand its meaning. During a teaching session, I told them that I had secretly placed a bomb in the room that was set to explode in 30 seconds. Then I stood motionless to watch their response.

Without exception, no one moved. Some looked at their neighbors while I gandered at my ticking stopwatch. Some starred at me, awaiting my response. But none of the five hundred students made an attempt to leave the room and escape the explosion.

After waiting 30 seconds, I calmly informed them that no one left the room for one of two reasons. Either they wanted to experience an exploding bomb or they didn’t believe the bomb existed. And if they didn’t believe the bomb existed, then they didn’t believe in me since I was the one who told them about the bomb.

Such is the travesty of Christianity. All Christians say they believe in Christ. But too many of them respond with unbelief. For example Jesus said, “If you want to be my disciples, you must deny yourself, welcome your martyrdom, and obey what I say.”

Unfortunately our society has been duped to embrace a selfish, self-centered lifestyle that is self-preserving, and self-indulging. This diametrically opposes the self-denial, death-of-self doctrine that Jesus promoted.

We are taught to think for ourselves instead of believe with our hearts; therefore the message of the kingdom ricochets from our hard crusty hearts like a rubber ball bouncing against a concrete wall.

In order to believe in the kingdom of light we must believe that we are sons of light and children of the kingdom. This requires us to embrace the good and to reject evil. It also requires obedience to the laws of his kingdom. It requires an unconditional servitude to the wishes of the king. Nothing else matters! Nothing else is satisfactory.

Our modern version of the Christian religion is strictly anthropocentric or man-centered. People join the Christian movement to be free from sin, to win a get-out-of-hell-free card, to escape the world, and to someday go to heaven.

This however, was not the message that Jesus proclaimed. He taught that we were created as children of light and if we embraced his kingship, obeyed his commands, and followed him, then we would become children of light in God's kingdom with certain rights, which included eternal life.

Jesus also taught that some people would call him Lord, testify of his lordship, and even do great and mighty miracles and wonders using his name as their authority. These same people would come to him at the end of time with great anticipation of entering through the kingdom door. But Jesus informed his disciples that these wicked disobedient servants would not be allowed to enter. In fact he will cast them out of the presence of his kingdom and sentence them to a fiery future.

The kingdom of light is a spiritual kingdom of good thoughts, ideas, and behavior. Jesus was appointed king and judge of this kingdom with sole responsibility to judge our actions and obedience. As good citizens we must obey his laws and wait for his commands.

His response to such faithful loyal servants is to offer a bright future in the kingdom of light that is filled with life, love, joy, peace, and

righteousness. This kingdom life embraces peaceful, like-minded servants; whose submissive hearts await the commands of the king.

His first command will be,

“Well done good and faithful servant. Your faithfulness has earned you greater responsibility. The door of my kingdom is open to you. Enter into my joy.” Matthew 25:21-23

# Chapter 6

## Father of Lights

According to many theologians, the Lord's brother wrote the Book of James. If this is true, then we can gather much information about Jesus' teaching by reading and understanding James' message.

While Jesus was alive, his brothers, including James, chided him for his irrational beliefs and outlandish teachings. The Book of John highlighted one story that indicated their embarrassment and ridicule. The event occurred just prior to one of the regular Feast of Tabernacles that all God-fearing Jewish men made an attempt to attend.

John wrote:

“Jesus lived around Galilee, purposely staying away from Judea because the Jews were waiting there to kill him. His chiding brothers mocked him and suggested that he accompany them to Jerusalem for the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles,

In a sarcastic mode they said, ‘You should take your disciples to Judea where there is a lot of people and perform your miracles there. No public figure acts in secret. Go show yourself to the world.’”

John explained: “Even his own brothers didn't believe in him and that is why they said these things.” John 7:1-5

The Lord's resurrection made a believer out of James. He developed an entirely different character and a complete reversal of opinion and belief after Christ's resurrection than he maintained when Jesus was still alive. One might say that he found his mission in life and fulfilled it.

James not only became a believer in the gospel of the kingdom, he also became the leader and spokesmen for the church. During strategic times when the elders and apostles disagreed on various



doctrines and directions for the church, James was the leader that everyone looked to for a decision.

On one occasion the leaders debated whether or not they should embrace the Gentile converts. To do so would require that they either disband the sacred ritual of circumcision or require it for the Gentiles.

In the heat of the debate James stood to adjudicate the matter and his decision became New Testament law. He decided that Paul and Barnabas should take the message to the Gentiles and not require circumcision to be a test of covenant.

I had always wondered why no one in the room challenged his authority to make that decision and it wasn't until I read the Book of Thomas that the question was answered.

## **Jesus Appointed James**

After Judas committed suicide, the eleven remaining apostles used Psalm 109:8 as a validating verse to fulfill Judas' office. They established certain qualifications for the new apostle.

- The successor must be a follower of Jesus from John's baptism to Christ's resurrection.
- The successor must be an eyewitness of the resurrection.
- The successor must have accompanied the remaining apostles when Jesus taught them about the gospel of the kingdom.

James didn't become a believer until after Christ's resurrection; therefore, he didn't qualify to replace the fallen treasurer, yet he moved to the top of the church as ranking spokesman to adjudicate spiritual matters to influence the others.

What event could have caused the Lord's chosen apostles to look to James for leadership? The Book of Thomas provided the answer and easily explained why the early church leaders readily embraced James' authority.

Although not sanctioned and canonized by the fourth century bishops, the Book of Thomas remained a collection of Jesus' sayings that the apostle Thomas gathered and scripted. These raw messages have no context, no stories, and no timetable. They are merely words and teachings that Jesus spoke.

One statement however, can accurately be dated to the time that Jesus engaged his followers after the resurrection. According to Luke, the Lord revealed himself to his apostles for an extended period of time to teach them about God's kingdom of light. Luke wrote:

“After his suffering, he showed himself to these men (apostles) and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.” Acts 1:3

It was during that time that the disciples asked Jesus for leadership direction. At one point, prior to Christ's death, the chosen apostles debated over who was greatest among them. Two of these were brothers James and John who were also called “sons of thunder.”

Earlier their mother knelt before Jesus and asked him to place her two sons in positions of great authority. Her political positioning prompted Jesus to say that those appointments were pre-determined by God.

Her petition angered the other ten and caused dissention among the group. But there was no dissension among them once Jesus had named his successor. Thomas revealed why:

The disciples said to Jesus,

"We know that you are going to leave us. When you do, who will be our leader?"

Jesus said to them,

"When that day comes, you are to go to James the righteous. Heaven and earth brought him into existence for that very reason." Thomas 12

No one can really know the true identity of James the righteous but speculation from the theological society suggests that he was the

Lord's brother who authored the Epistle of James.

After years of watching the church struggle internally, the church leader wrote a letter to edify the Jewish people who had embraced the gospel of Jesus. These people were scattered throughout the nations and he felt that it was necessary to address the irrational teachings that were being circulated throughout the church.

Some of errors he felt that needed corrected included:

- God tempts us to sin
- Believers can say what they want and still be a follower of Christ.
- Only hearing and believing God's word was necessary for salvation.
- We are only saved by faith and our works are unnecessary.

By writing to the churches, James corrected these and other erroneous doctrines that circulated the church. When addressing the doctrine, which advocated that God tempts us to sin, James said it was not possible. He wrote:

When a person yields to sin, he shouldn't say, "God is making me do it." Listen! God can't be tempted by evil and He doesn't entice others to do evil either. People sin when they yield to their inner evil desires.

Once that desire conceives, it germinates and gives birth to sin. When the sin fully matures it produces death.

My dear brothers, don't be deceived to think that God gives us evil. In fact every good and perfect gift comes from Him. Remember? He is the Father of lights who doesn't hide in shady dark places.

He chose to berth us through the word of truth as a template for all creation. James 1:13-17

James advocated and preached the same message that Jesus preached. He maintained that God was the Father of lights. We were created in His image, which makes us sons of Light. Our mission on the earth is to be a light to the world and that mission is fulfilled through righteous living.

## The Light that Leads

The exodus of Israel is an intriguing story that has been told for more than 3500 years. One of the most popular stories of the exodus included the time when the Egyptians chased and almost caught the Israelites.

Pharaoh regretted that he had released the slaves; so, after his son's funeral he gathered all his chariots and royal army to retrieve the escaping Israelites. Moses found his nation trapped between the Red Sea and the ravaging Egyptians who chased them from the rear. He called out to God for help and the LORD told him to hit his rod against the Red Sea and move the people forward.

The Egyptians were about to overtake Israel but the Angel of the Lord created a stall tactic to give the Israelites sufficient time to cross the Red Sea. Moses recorded the story in his memoirs to give us an accurate account of the event. He wrote:

"The angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel as a fire and cloud, dispatched himself to the rear and became a barrier between Israel and Egypt. The pillar of cloud created darkness over the Egyptians while the pillar of fire remained upon the Israelites throughout the night and provided them light." Exodus 14:19, 20

Ironically the same source that covered Egypt with darkness also revealed light to Israel. How is that possible?

The possibility can be explained in its spiritual substance. The angel of God that went before Israel and later encircled them from the rear was a "spirit being" commissioned by God to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Various places in the Bible provide an ample description of angels:

- Angels of are spirits. Hebrews 1:7
- Angels appear as humans. Genesis 19:1,15
- Angels are commissioned by God to help the elect. Psalms 91:11 Angels can be seen during dreams ascending and descending into heaven. Genesis 2:12
- Angels can appear as flaming fire while carrying out their duties. Psalm 104.4
- Angels will return with Jesus at the end time harvest. Matthew 13:41,49; 16:27

- Angels are able to see the face of the Father in heaven.  
Matthew 18:10

The Jewish sages associated God's angels with "light" because of the many evidences that He had given them. During their valiant escape from Egypt, the LORD unveiled His spiritual light when He sent his angel before the wandering nation as a pillar of fire at night and a covering cloud during the day.

That wasn't the first time that He revealed Himself as light to the Jewish nation. When distributing the plagues, the LORD told Moses to stretch out his hand over the Egyptian nation and for three days a thick darkness pervaded all of Egypt.

The Egyptians couldn't work. They couldn't travel. They remained in their houses for three days because of the thick darkness that shielded them from the sun, moon, and stars. They had no physical light.

But the lack of light wasn't a problem for the tribes of Israel who lived there. Although the nation of Egypt remained in physical darkness, the Jewish dwellings, residing in Egypt, were lit with the supernatural glow of God. During those three days God revealed Himself as light.

Later Isaiah prophesied that this light would return to Israel. Seeing the future he wrote:

"The people who walk in darkness have seen a great light and a light will dawn upon those who live in the shadow of death.  
Isaiah 9:2

### **Enoch's Insight on Angels of Light**

The *Book of Enoch* also provided clues about the nature of angels. His books included memoirs of his angelic visitations and his revelations of the spirit world. Enoch said that the archangels took him to a place where angels, who looked like flaming fire, transformed their spirits to appear as men. Enoch 17:1

At another place Enoch described the place where rebellious angels are imprisoned. He wrote:

“Beyond these mountains was the region where the earth ended and the heavens were completed. It was at this place that I saw a deep abyss with columns of heavenly fire. Those columns of fire extended towards the height of heaven and downwards towards the depth into infinity. And it appeared that fire was falling and moving downward through those columns.”

I asked Uriel about this place and he said,

“This place is the end of heaven and earth. It has become a prison for the stars and the heavenly angels. These stars that look like great burning mountains are the ones that disobeyed the Lord’s commandment when he told them to rise. They didn’t come forth at their appointed times and He was angry with them. So He bound them here for ten thousand years at which time their guilt will conclude.” Enoch 18

One of the lost doctrines and beliefs that pervaded the early church was the integration of angels among humanity. Paul was a second-generation apostle who was credited with writing two-thirds of the books that were later canonized by the Catholic bishops. Not only did Paul believe in the integration of angels he wrote:

“Allow brotherly love to continue and remember to be good hosts to strangers. You never know when you might be unknowingly hosting an angel.” Hebrews 13:1,2

Paul also contrasted evil people with Satan and said:

“For such are false apostles and deceitful workers who transform themselves into Apostles of Christ in the same way Satan transforms himself into an angel of light.” II Corinthians 11:13-14

From the beginning of time, light and dark have been synonymous with good and evil but by using these terms allegorically, we have unfortunately lost the true meaning and understanding of the Kingdom of Light and the Kingdom of Darkness.

## Glowing With Supernatural Glory

The Kingdom of Light is God's kingdom. It is literally a domain of "spiritual light" that can be seen in the spirit world. God's angels are called "angels of light" because they were literally created from light. They were created to serve in God's kingdom and oftentimes their appearances are accompanied with light or a supernatural glow. Ancient artists used halos to depict that glow; hence, halos are symbolic of glory.

The stories about Moses glowing with God's glory after seeing God on the Mount Horeb are not without question. The writer of Exodus verified that Moses didn't realize that a glow had encircled his face. But it was so visible to the people that they were afraid to come near him. To combat the problem, the leaders placed a veil over his head when Moses appeared publically and they unveiled him when he went into the tabernacle to talk with God.

There were so many stories told about the angelic light that they could not all be fictitious. Luke validated that the spiritual light blinded Paul for a time. And today, greeting cards that are exchanged at Christmastime vividly show each angelic halo to signify angels of light. Luke also described a scene where an angel met some shepherds on a hillside to announce Christ's birth. He wrote:

"And the angel of the Lord appeared before them. The light of the Lord glowed all around them and frightened the shepherds." Luke 2:9

In this instance, the light of the Lord created a supernatural glow around the shepherds.

Stephen was one of the first deacons who troubled the religious community with the signs and wonders that he performed. The Synagogue of the Freedmen accused him of blasphemy and brought him before the council for adjudication. Luke wrote:

"And all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel." Acts 6:15

That statement lends to the fact that "angels of light" were recognized for their consistent spiritual glow. Luke also told the story how Peter was released from prison on the night prior to his scheduled execution.

He wrote:

“An angel of the Lord stood by him and a light shone in the prison. He touched Peter’s side to awaken him and told him, ‘Arise quickly!’ Instantly the chains fell from Peter’s hands.”  
Acts 12:7

According to the story, the people thought Peter was an angel. They assumed that an angel of light had invaded the dark dungeon and set Peter free. The angelic light must have transferred onto the apostle because it was later seen on Peter.

There is some controversy about the authorship of the Book of Revelation. It was either written either by John or some of his followers. This allegorical book conveys the truth about Jesus, his gospel, and his return to earth as seen in a vision. Like many apocalyptic writings of the day, this book uses a series of numbers, animals, and angels to explain the vision that John had while exiled on Patmos Island.

Sprinkled throughout the stories are vivid descriptions of what John saw. One such description was the appearance of an angel upon earth. John wrote:

“After these things I saw another angel with great power, descend from heaven. As he appeared, the earth was enlightened with his glory.” Revelation 18:1

Angelic appearances are often described in terms of glory, light, brilliance, etc. Obviously these depictions reflect the certainty that heavenly angels are indeed angels of light not only because they are good angels but also because they were created from the light of God’s spirit.

At the beginning of this book, I noted that God created spiritual light before he created anything else and from that spiritual light everything spiritual and physical were created. According to some theological understanding, Lucifer was an angel of light prior to leading a rebellion against God. His insubordination earned him the title Satan, which means adversary. Paul indicated that Satan could transform himself into an angel of light to appear good while evil was intended.

## **Angels of Light – Sons of God**

There are three reasons why heavenly angels are called angels of \_\_\_\_\_



light. First, they are good angels with assigned missions in God's kingdom. Second, when seen in their spiritual environment, these angels radiate with a special light or glow. Third, the Light created these angels, which denotes that they were both sons of God and angels of Light.

When describing angels, Enoch said that they appeared as flames of fire ascending and descending in columns from heaven to earth. He also said that they went to a disclosed location for transformation in order to be seen by humans in the physical realm. Physical fire has always been used to provide warmth and light as well as to destroy

Spiritual fire has the same capacity in the spirit realm. How else will rebellious angels and evil spirits be destroyed on the Day of Judgment? All the prophets from Enoch to John agree that they will be cast into a lake of fire. This is a spiritual fire that is capable of destroying spirit beings.

Enoch, Job, and Moses concurred how angels came into existence. They wrote that angels of light were sons of God. Arguably, Jesus defined the elect as sons of light. He said,

“If they ask, 'Where did you come from?' Tell them that you came from the light... If they ask, 'Are you the light?' Then you tell them, 'We are its children; we are the elect of the Living Father.’” Thomas 50

The terms angels of light and sons of God were synonymous. This certainly explained why Jesus told the Sadducees that the elect would be like angels in the resurrection.

Jesus called God “the Light” and said, “The light originated and established Himself.” With this explanation we can easily understand that the kingdom of God is the kingdom of Light. It isn't a kingdom of Light because it exists in the realm of good. It is a kingdom of Light because the owner and ultimate authority of the kingdom is Light.

According to Jesus there is only one entrance into that kingdom. Entering the kingdom of God is just like entering any other kingdom. We are either born into the kingdom or we embrace the kingdom, while renouncing citizenship to all others. To find acceptance into God's kingdom, we must embrace the king, obey the laws, or be

excommunicated. Submission and obedience are two spiritual substances that are necessary for those who have been born into God's kingdom. The gospel of the kingdom, which Jesus preached, required submission and obedience. Without these, we cannot live in the light.

The Father of Lights has appointed and designated Jesus to be king of His kingdom. Anticipating the final event and at the conclusion of his vision, John saw the Father and son seated in the spiritual temple being worshipped by the citizens of the kingdom. He wrote:

“I saw no temple in the city for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. And the city had no need of the sun or the moon to shine in it for the glory of God illuminated it and the Lamb is its light.” Revelation 21:22

# Chapter 7

## Spirit People

The connection between light and spirit dates back as far as Daniel. We know that Daniel was a great prophetic hero who perhaps was responsible for influencing King Cyrus to release the captive Jews so they could return to their homeland and re-established their nation.

Prior to the Persian reign over the Jewish captives, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon was in power. It was this king who cruelly castrated young Jewish boys of royal birth and brought them into his palace to serve his royal wives and concubines. Daniel and his close friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were four of these young Jewish boys of noble birth. The Christian world knows the last three by their Babylonia names, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

While serving in the royal kingdom of Babylon, the queen noticed the brilliance of Daniel. So when King Belshazzar encountered a supernatural problem that his own spiritualists and prophets couldn't solve, the queen recommended that her husband engage Daniel for the answer.

She had remembered Daniel's divine connection when he prophesied over King Belshazzar's father and the word was fulfilled exactly as Daniel prophesied. The queen described Daniel as, " a man who has the spirit of the Holy God. In him are light, understanding, and the wisdom of God."

Defining Daniel as a man with God's spirit who had light, understanding, and wisdom not only amply described him; it connected the light in him with God's spirit. That is why it was so easy for the followers of Christ to embrace his spiritual light message. And while the early church recognized that we were created by the Light, their progeny tended to engage more in the concept that we are spirit creatures.

Apostle Paul clarified to the Church of Thessalonica that we are "tripartite beings," comprised of spirit, soul, and body. To correctly

modify our composition, we generally say that men are spirits and we have souls that are housed in physical bodies.

Theological debaters haven't concluded whether or not our soul and spirit are separate or the same. But they have decided that the spiritual aspects and functions of humanity are different than the physical systems and functions.

They also agree that the physical body will cease to function but the spiritual body will continue on into infinity. This agreement can only lead to one conclusion. Man is a spirit and he has a soul (life) that exists inside his body.

## **Our Physical Composition**

The composition of physical man is easily identifiable. The body is comprised of various functional systems. All of these systems have tissues and cells that remain in their fixed positions. Each cell has DNA which is a nucleic acid containing the genetic development of each individual. Forensics use DNA to determine identity and generational relationships.

God created our bodies to have one connecting system that bridge all the other systems and their cellular structures. The main organ of this system is the heart. Interestingly, this circulatory system reaches every cell in every system.

Once every minute our blood flows throughout our twisted veins, arteries, and capillaries to nurture our physical bodies. If it were possible to stretch all the veins, arteries, and capillaries from one single body, the distance would extend around the world twice; yet that blood travels throughout the body to oxygenize each cell for healthy growth and production in less than one minute.

It is easier to explain the function and nature of our physical bodies because we relate so easily to the physical realm. It is more difficult to explain our spiritual senses that exist in the spirit realm because the door to the spirit realm has been shut and we are not privy to experience it until the day of glorification.

Although these spiritual senses are not operative in the physical

realm, they still exist. Ever since Adam sinned, this has been the frustration of humanity. We are spiritual creatures, living spiritual lives, in the spiritual realm without the capacity of exercising our spiritual senses to appreciate them. It is for this reason that Jesus initially came to earth. His mission was to preach the kingdom of God.

The gospel message of the kingdom promoted the need to recognize the spiritual realm and live our lives as spiritual creatures. God's kingdom is a spiritual kingdom, comprised of spiritual laws that are governed and judged by one king. Throughout the generations, predictions of this Messiah provided hope for struggling societies. Today, the same hope is offered to people and societies who live in the spirit and embrace the king of God's light kingdom.

## **Spiritual Substances**

Although defining the spirit world is difficult, it isn't impossible. We all recognize spiritual substances. Love, joy, and peace are spiritual substances that are easily seen, felt, touched, and heard in the spirit world. We can't use our spiritual senses to see, hear, feel, taste, or smell them because the spirit world is not tangible to us. But we are able to experience these spiritual substances because we are spirit people.

As spirit people we are also able to experience hate, despair, and confusion. These spiritual substances exist in the same spirit realm as love, joy, and peace but they are spiritual forces that keep people from living abundantly in God's spiritual kingdom. These spiritual substances are ordered from the kingdom of darkness.

Confusion ensues when we substitute spiritual substances. For example if our spiritual senses were enlightened, we would be able to see, smell, and taste the difference between sexual lust and sacred love. But our spiritual senses are inoperative and we can only experience these spiritual substances in the physical realm.

Actually these two spiritual substances have similar feelings when experienced in the physical realm. Both emotions are often indistinguishable. Unfortunately we are driven more by the physical than the spiritual and we don't have the physical ability to discern the difference. So, we find ourselves yielding to lust, thinking it is love. But

by yielding to God we'll find that discernment quite easily. By seeking God's will instead of our own will, we can develop the keen sense of knowing the difference between love and lust.

Peace and contentment are two more spiritual substances that are easily defined in the spirit realm but are indistinguishable in the physical realm. Lust, happiness, and contentment are usually experienced through situations and circumstances that bring us pleasure. We are happy when everything is pleasant in life. We are content when things go our way. Lust or desire is a motivational spiritual force that seeks self-pleasure.

On the other hand, love joy and peace are spiritual substances, which are not affected by situations or circumstances. They are actually spiritual laws in God's kingdom that supersede the spiritual laws of the kingdom of darkness. Lust seeks to pleasure one's self, love seeks pleasure for others.

By seeking God, we are able to discover true love instead of an artificial lust. By seeking God we'll find a permanent joy that will not be uprooted by negative influences. And by finding peace, we can remain calm in devastating situations.

## **The Connection Between Spirit and Light**

We are spirit people because we are people of light. New Testament writers often interrelate spirit and light. Paul said, "If you are led by the spirit, you are sons of God." But he also wrote, "You are all children of light and children of the day."

John wrote, "God is light and in Him there is no darkness." And referring to Jesus, he wrote, "In him was life (spiritual) and the life was the light of men." In other words, God is light and upon Christ's incarnation, God placed His life inside baby Jesus. That life is the light that Christ gives us. Referencing Jesus he also wrote, "He is the true light that gives light to everyone who comes into this world."

Thomas recorded the Lord's teaching about light and provided us an understanding about how we were created from light. Jesus said,

"If they ask, 'Where did you come from?' Tell them that you

came from the light and from the place where the light originated and established itself. It was there that the light manifested your images. If they ask, 'Are you the light?' Then you tell them, 'we are its children; we are the elect of the Living Father.'" Thomas 50

The early apostles had no doubt as to Christ's substance. He was of the same substance as his Father. He was light. They had no doubts about our substance either. We also are light. James said of God that He is the "Father of Lights."

Even though they emphasized that we are light, they also associated that light with the spirit. Jesus predicted that his followers would be arrested, arraigned and brought before earthly judges but he told them,

"Don't even think about how you will answer them. You will be given what to say at the right time. It will not be you speaking. It will be the Spirit of the Father speaking in you."

The early apostles understood the difference between their physical and spiritual bodies. Jesus helped them to distinguish this difference by some of the statements he made.

Once when they were praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, Peter, James, and John were unable to stay awake and kept falling asleep. Jesus told them, "Your spirit is willing but your flesh is weak."

The conclusion that we are children of Light and the Light of Spirit operates through us is merely an example of the spiritual reality that our future glorification will manifest. At that time there will be no need for the physical light of the sun, moon, and stars because the Lord will be the light. But until that time, we remain confined to the physical realm groping with the need to focus on the spirit realm in order to live by the spiritual laws of God's kingdom.

Paul taught us how to live in the spirit. He told the Churches in Galatia,

"When the Holy Spirit controls our lives, he will produce spiritual fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."

These spiritual fruit are spiritual laws in God's kingdom and there are no other laws that can supersede them.

Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. If we are living now by the Holy Spirit, let us follow the Holy Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. Don't become conceited or irritated with one another, and don't be jealous of each another. Galatians 5:22-26

Recognizing that we are spirit people who are governed by spiritual laws in God's spiritual kingdom will help to guide us in difficult times and lead us out of the paths of temptations. By staying sensitive to the spirit realm, we'll find it easier to recognize spiritual substances and distinguish those that are profitable and those that lead to dismay.

Through His Spirit, God leads us into the pathways of righteousness and if we follow His spirit we will live a righteous life that pleases Him. But when we yield to spiritual forces that lead us away from kingdom life, then the sons of darkness will use us to mobilize an evil army.

Influence is a spiritual substance that polarizes people. We can either influence others for God or against God. We must learn to walk in His kingdom, adhere to His spiritual laws and thus influence others to follow in our footsteps. We are spirit people. We should eat, sleep, live, and breathe His Spirit. Such are the requirements for the citizens of God's kingdom.



# Chapter 8

## Road of Patience Leads to Rest

The title of this chapter seems a bit misplaced with the other chapters. It could also be the title of another book. But in reality the only way we can become light to other people is to demonstrate the spiritual attributes that light produces.

Recently my son and I had a theological debate to determine whether or not God had patience. Using deductive reasoning he stated that God couldn't have patience because God lived in eternity and one of the main components of patience is time. He accurately confirmed that God transcends time and He presently exists in the past, present and future simultaneously and is therefore not affected by time. And since patience requires time, God doesn't need or have patience.

My conclusions were different. I debated that patience has nothing to do with time. Patience is a spiritual substance that can be experienced when one transcends the physical and dwells in the spirit. I told him that patience is the road that leads to rest.

After pondering the debate for a few days, Kevin came into my downtown office and we spent about an hour and half finishing our conversation. He blew me away with the revelation that he had received. He opened the conversation by saying, "I found in the Bible where God has patience?"

Eager to learn his findings I perked my ear to hear the answer. He simply quoted:

"And God saw the light, that it was good. And God divided the light from the darkness." Genesis 1:4

Knowing his genius to spark a deepened revelation I asked, "How does that verse prove that God has patience?" My question was answered as he began to preach the sermon of a lifetime. He began with a question: "If God is perfect why didn't He see His creation as perfect? Why did He only see His creation as good?"

We read the creation story together. We read in verse two how God created the heavens and Kevin pointed out that again God saw that it was good. After creating the earth and plant life on the third day, he restated that God saw that it was good. We read about the fourth day when God created time and once again Moses wrote that God saw that it was good.

On the fifth day God created fish and birds and saw that they were good and on the sixth day, He created land animals and saw that they were good. Finally near the end of the sixth day, He created man to complete His creation and God summarized that all His creation was very good.

After surveying the creation story, my son presented his conclusion by saying, “The perfect God didn’t make anything perfect because perfection can only come through testing.”

## **David and Bathsheba**

My mouth dropped as he turned my attention to the story of David and Bathsheba. As king of Israel, David determined that everything in his kingdom belonged to him. So when he saw beautiful Bathsheba sunbathing on her porch, he decided that he wanted more than God had given him. He wanted someone else’s wife.

The beautiful woman obliged the eager king and conceived his child. When David learned of his dilemma he plotted her husband’s death by sending him into the heat of battle.

God responded to David’s greed with a heavenly message delivered through an earthly prophet. Nathan visited the king’s palace to ask David to adjudicate a problem in the kingdom. David was unaware that Nathan was presenting him a hypothetical situation and was completely caught off guard when Nathan told him the principals involved. Nathan presented the accusation.

“There were two men in one city. One was rich and the other poor. The rich man had many flocks and herds but the poor man had nothing except one little baby lamb that stayed in his

home, drank from his table, and lay in his lap. He loved this little lamb like a daughter.”

One day a traveler came to visit the rich man whom he felt obligated to entertain; so the rich man took the poor man’s only lamb to entertain and feed the traveler.”

David was inflamed at the rich man’s audacity but his anger turned to remorse when Nathan stared him down and said, “You are that rich man.” The following message that Nathan delivered from the Lord brought the proud king to his knees.

“I anointed you king over Israel and delivered you from the hands of Saul. I have given you the king’s house and all his wives. I gave you the house of Judah and Israel **and if that had been too little, I would have given you more.** Why have you despised my commandment to do evil? You killed one of your own soldiers and took his wife to be your own.

I am going to do the same thing to you. I will instigate evil in your own house. I’ll take your wives and give them to your neighbor. I will expose the very thing you did secretly and the whole world will see openly my judgment upon you.” II Samuel 12:7-12

David’s sin was exposed and his heart was humbled. Israel’s law required David’s death but the Lord spared him and took the firstborn son of Bathsheba as a sacrifice for his sin.

## **Greed – America’s National Sin**

In America we find ourselves burdened with the same problem. Greed is American’s national sin. Our greed is exposed in three ways: the lust for power, the lust for things, and the lust of the flesh. Greed is simply defined as wanting more than enough.

Our nation is consumed with bigger and better. We have adopted the philosophy that the more we have the better off we are. We have bought into the erroneous idea that what we have is ours so we seek different ways to fill our coffers with jewels.

We turn our blessings into curses by tearing down the barns we can afford to build bigger ones that we can’t. We hoard our goods by investing into artificial bullish stock markets manipulated by man only to

find our futures wasted when God leads the bears downward.

## **Greedy for Gold**

Wall Street is greedy for gold. Corporate mongrels spend entire lifetimes building personal fortunes at the expense of causing millions of people to lose theirs. The real estate markets swell and shrink because bankers take advantage of the little guy. They charge interest upon interest and they do it without mercy. They market and solicit their money to greedy people who want everything “now” and then take advantage of those same people when times are tough.

My first experience in the finance industry was in my early twenties when I managed a branch office for Capital Financial Services in Huntington, WV. At that time we were permitted to make three kinds of loans: personal loans, mortgage loans, and retail purchase loans.

The government regulated interest rates and capped the market for finance companies at eighteen percent APR for a maximum of three years. Any one charging over that amount was called a “loan shark” and circumvented the law. Even that interest rate was considered excessive but the government permitted it because the loans were often given to high-risk individuals who couldn’t obtain a loan from the bank.

The recession of the 1980’s caused high interest mortgage rates to accelerate to seventeen and eighteen percent. This happened because the lust for gold moved the slick bankers to lobby Washington for less control and their efforts successfully drove the interest rates up temporarily.

At the turn of the century bank lobbyists made another trip to Washington to solicit their favorite politicians. Once again the politicians remove some of the stiff regulations resulting in a free-for-all interest gorge at the public expense.

On October 29, 2008, a business owner, named Lajko, blogged a complaint against Advanta bank because of excessive interest rates. Here was the post:

“They just raised my company credit card interest from 18% to 34% for no good reason. We always pay on time (they

admitted that) and always pay much more than the minimum (they admitted that, too). When pressed for a reason for the ultrahigh interest rate, they said it was "based on various factors which are proprietary." They even admitted that my company had an "A" credit rating but because of those other "factors" they feel we could not pay our credit card so the interest was raised to 34%.

I couldn't get any real reason from them until I asked if it was because their bank was failing, they had lots of bad debt so I, as a good customer, had to make up for it. They said, "Yes, that's the reason." So I said, "Gee, I'm glad this conversation is being recorded. The news media will be glad to learn that."

The person replied, "I retract my last statement. Since it is being recorded, I can retract anything I said." So we paid off the balance today and destroyed all our Advanta cards."

This scenario is typical of the usury that banks and credit card companies demand of businesses and individuals.

Most people borrow money because they want something now and they don't have the cash to purchase it. The "buy now pay later" mentality has pushed the public debt to excessive proportions filling courtrooms with bankrupt cases simply because people were greedy for more than enough and bankers were willing to satisfy their lust.

We need more people like my wife's first cousin who has spent his entire lifetime as a programmer for several large banking institutions. During a staff meeting at his new job, his supervisors proposed a course of action to produce more money. John believed the action was immoral and unethical because it took advantage of credit card holders. He refused to program the action at the risk of losing his own job.

Wall Street's greed for gold has set off a multiplicity of sins that corrode our schools, corrupt our politicians, and create a mistrust between corporations, unions, and politicians.

## **Greedy for Gain and Gore**

Washington is greedy for gain. Their greed is for power and the ability to create laws that personally benefit them and their political sponsors. The structure and purpose of politics is to bring order out of

chaos, to govern the unruly, and to bring safety and security to society. But the strife in politics creates chaos instead of order, causes the unruly to govern, and leaves society insecure and vulnerable.

Washington's greed has caused us to pander to foreign nations, opening our skirts to all passersby just to get our fix. Perhaps that is the reason why politicians want to legalize prostitution. Somehow they think that legalizing the sin will sooth their conscience and free them from their guilt.

Hollywood is greedy for gore. Horror, violence, and sex sells billions so they pollute theaters, homes, and highways with movies, prime time TV, and advertisements that feeds America's lust. But Hollywood is not the culprit; they are only the pimps that sell it. We, the American people are to blame. Our buy-sell agreements with the entertainment world produce the very thing we desire. Our lust has caused the plague.

Why is lust so rampant? Why are we so greedy for violence and sex? Why haven't our traditional values of the fifties transcended into the mores of the millennium? Why are talk show hosts so avid promoters of their political agendas? Why does our economy run on the words of politicians, bankers, and brokers? These questions come down to one final answer. We have no patience.

### **Lack of Patience**

We live in the "now" generation. We want everything now. We are like little children who when offered five pieces of candy tomorrow, will instead choose one piece of candy today. We have no sense of delay. Our greed prompts us to get all we can now for no one knows what tomorrow will hold. Our country has no patience and without patience, we'll find no rest.

During our debate, I told my son that patience is the road that leads to rest. America can't find that place of spiritual rest because our restless souls are eagerly lusting and desiring for things, for power, and for pleasure. Patience is a spiritual substance that can only be experienced in the realm of the spirit. The person who wrote the *Book*

*of Hebrews* understood the concepts of spiritual rest. He vividly pointed out that God promised us a place of rest and he accurately pinpointed the problem of those who fail to find that blissful state:

Since God's promise of entering His rest still stands, let us be careful that none of us fail to locate it. God adjudicated Israel and angrily declared, "They will never enter my rest." And we have had the same gospel preached to us, just as they did but they rejected the message because they could not spiritually apply it in faith.

We will only enter that place of rest when we believe what He said. For when God created the world, the writer wrote that He rested from His work on the seventh day. That rest remains for those who obey Him, but those who formerly had the gospel preached to them failed to enter that rest because of their disobedience.

God even spoke to them through David when the king pleaded for them to not harden their hearts. He said,

"There remains a Sabbath-rest for the people of God. And those who find God's resting place will rest from their own labors, just as God rested from His.

Nothing can be hidden from God. He knows and judges the thoughts and attitudes of our hearts. Only He can decipher the difference between our soul and spirit and only His word can penetrate our being to separate joints and marrow. We are naked before Him. Our feelings and desires are totally exposed and uncovered. And we must give an account of our lives to the very God who judges us. Hebrews 4:1-13

We must understand that the gospel of Jesus proclaimed a spiritual kingdom where patience is produced in times of testing. Patience will take us to that resting place. Everything that God created had to be tested before it became perfected. He created the earth and saw that it was good but it wasn't perfect. He created mankind and saw that it was very good but man wasn't perfected because he hadn't encountered the tree of testing.

Even before the creation of the world, God created good angels that were untested until they challenged His authority. Even King Jesus, our Messiah, had to be tested.

Thirty years after Jesus was born, the Spirit led him into the desert to test his character. Later his Father took him to the Garden of Gethsemane to test his loyalty. And after that Jesus had to go to the cross to test his integrity. It was in the Garden that Jesus said, “Not my will.” But his words weren’t tested until he hung on the cross and proclaimed, “Father, I give You my spirit!”

## **How Do We Obtain Patience?**

People face crisis after crisis and wonder why they must endure hardships. Societies wail and moan when things aren’t perfect. We fail to realize that perfection only comes through patience and patience only comes through trials and tribulations. When we understand that patience takes us to the resting place then we’ll relax, sit back in our spiritual limousines, and let the Driver take us to that place.

Earlier in this chapter we pointed out that lust was “wanting more than enough.” We also said that the problem of lust is answered with patience. But the chapter has yet to explain how to successfully achieve the status of patience. Apostle Paul amply defined how to obtain patience.

“Brethren, since God is so merciful to us, we should offer ourselves to Him as living sacrifices and do everything that we know to do that pleases Him. This is truly a spiritual act of worship.”

We will be able to do that when we have a different mindset and no longer conform to this world. This is how we will be able to test and approve God's will. This test will move us from a good creation to that which is pleasing and perfect. By God's grace, I've listed just a few things to help in the process of perfection:

- Don't think you are better than what you are. Be sober when judging yourselves and do it with the measure of faith that that has given you.



- Use the gifts the God gave us, whether it is serving, teaching, encouraging, prophesying, giving, governing, or showing mercy. Whatever gift He has given, demonstrate it through faith.
- Let your love be sincere by hating what is evil and preserving what is good.
- Honor others above yourselves and thereby express your brotherly love and devotion.
- Serve the Lord with spiritual fervor and zeal.
- Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.
- Practice hospitality by sharing with God's people who are in need.
- Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.
- Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.
- Live in harmony with one another.
- Do not be conceited and proud but be willing to associate with people of low position.
- Do not retaliate against those who have done evil against you.
- When everybody thinks that they are right, try to go along with them if at all possible. By doing so, you will be able to live at peace with everyone.
- Don't try to get revenge. That's God's job. Remember what was written, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay!" says the Lord. Instead of revenge, we should feed our enemy if he is hungry and give him something to drink if he is thirsty. These loving actions will soften his heart toward you.
- Remember, don't allow evil to overcome you. Instead overcome evil with good." Romans 12:1-21

By patiently demonstrating these virtuous acts, we will find ourselves at that holy resting place, filled with patience, letting our lights shine, and positioned in God's kingdom.

# Chapter 9

## Sons of Darkness

In every good story there is an emotional invoking drama created to paint the portrait of life. Scenes filled with war, peace, love, conflict, romance, tragedy, comedy, and action are stone casted onto Hollywood's screenplays.

While life doesn't always end like the optimists project, the novels and movies that move me are filled with non-stop action where the hero has many encounters with the villain but ultimately wins. My wife enjoys the sacred serenity of romance and smiles as the hero carries the beautiful but desperate victim far away from the throes of the evil villain.

Why do we enjoy movies and television shows that offer these special but required dramatic stories? Because they celebrate hope! Life is filled with emotion. Every person, family, organization, and country has conflict. And stories with built-in plots that dictate a beautiful tomorrow convey a secret hope that everything will turn out okay in the end.

Pastors who preach hope have pews full of people desiring a good ending. Politicians who promise hope win victories over those who promote reality. Writers who assure their readers that the final pages will leave them on the edge of their seats just before the heroic conclusion will ultimately become the best sellers.

Why do we listen to music about life and enjoy the lyrics that offer hope? Because we secretly want to be that hero, that good guy, that celebrity that brings peace. In the game of life we all want to win.

Perhaps that is what makes the Bible and other religious literature so intriguing. They are filled with real stories about life that offers a future hope. Mixed and meddled inside these sacred stories is the promise of a better life and a hope to escape life's unexpected tragedies.

## **Shrine of the Book**

On my first trip to Israel our tour guide took us to a Jerusalem museum called Shrine of the Book. We wanted to see some of the ancient Dead Sea Scrolls that were displayed there.

The shrine is built as a white dome and has the appearance of an alien spaceship. Across from the white dome is a black basalt wall. The tour guide explained that the building's colors and shapes depicted the imagery of the scroll of the War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness. The white dome symbolized the Sons of Light and the black wall symbolized the Sons of Darkness.

Various translations take their liberty to interpret the sons of Belial. Some call them "sons of darkness." Others simply use the word evil but all agree that the sons of Belial are the evil forces that will find eventual ruin.

Who are the sons of Belial? Where did they originate? Can we be sure that they truly exist? What role do they have in the final screenplay of history?

The War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness was only one of many scrolls found in the Dead Sea collection. Another scroll called War of the Messiah was also found, which contain a series of fragments describing the conclusion of a battle led by the Prince of the Congregation. Some believe that the scrolls are all interrelated suggesting that an end time war was prophesied where good and evil fight for their own survival.

This Armageddon will pit the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness. Their leaders will face off in one last battle. According to prophetic writings the Messiah overcomes Belial and assigns him to an eternal death where he burns in a lake of fire. The Sons of Belial will join the demise of their faithless, failing leader while the Sons of Light will rejoice in the final victory.

## **Lance Allred's Paper on Belial**

In May 1995, Lance Allred discussed The Figure of Belial in the Dead Sea Scrolls. He summarized the seventy-five times that the name

Belial was mentioned. The scrolls support the notion that the Qumran community believed the end time was near, at which time the Sons of Light would encounter the army of Belial.

This army was not only described in allegorical tones of darkness it was also given geographical boundaries where the descendants of Edom, Ammon, and Moab lived. The land of Philistia and the companies of Kittim of Ashur are also named as Sons of Darkness.

One story that was found in the collection brilliantly asserted that God will defeat Belial in the end and He will give His servants rest from their enemies. They will rest from warring with all the Sons of Belial.

This eschatological theme continued with a book about Melchizedek, who acted as an agent of God that defeated the spirits of Belial. Interestingly enough there are various passages where the writings point out that Israel was sinning during the “dominion of Belial.”

In the Rule of the Community various laws were laid out that directed the community to seek God with their whole heart and soul. The Damascus Document text says that Belial will tempt the people of Israel with fornication and wealth. The text also infers Belial’s destruction upon those who break Israel’s covenant with God.

There was only one place; albeit it is mentioned, where Belial is directly associated and the Sons of Darkness. The poetic hymn chanted for Yahweh to set the people free from every affliction. Lyrics of the same song read, “There are the devils.... The prince of enmity is Belial, who rules the abyss of darkness.”

Clearly the scrolls pointed out that Belial was a spiritual creature who distressed, afflicted, and oppressed God’s people. Summarizing the scroll was one text that stated,

"Reflect on all these matters and seek from him so that he may support your counsel and stay away from evil scheming and the counsel of Belial, so that at the end of time, you may rejoice."

Allred’s paper helped this author to pinpoint and focus attention on the spiritual dimension of Belial’s effects and his demonstrative efforts to subvert the kingdom of God.

Other literature such as The Testaments of the Twelve provided insight to the early church's understanding of Belial. Here are some quotes from this recently discovered book:

“Choose between the Law of God and the works of Belial.”

“Fornication separates man from God and brings him near to Belial.” Simeon 5:3

It also stated:

“When the soul is constantly disturbed, the Lord departs from it and Belial rules over it.” Levi 19; 1

“The purposes of Belial do not conform to the Law of God and the will of God.” Naphtali 26; 31

When Israel leaves Egypt, they will be with God in light while Belial will remain in darkness with the Egyptians. Joseph 20:2

### **Belial of the Bible**

The name Belial was only used once in the New Testament. Apostle Paul argued to the Corinthian Church that believers should not be joined with unbelievers. He illustrated that light and darkness don't mix and arguably questioned, “Can Christ and Belial agree?” This was his only New Testament usage of the term Belial, choosing to use the more accepted term, “Satan,” which means adversary.

In contrast, the Old Testament writers saturated their books with the term, “Belial” and only used the word “Satan” on rare occasions. The author of Job was an exception. He pinned the term, “Satan,” fourteen times.

King David was the valued king of Israel who has been inscribed as the father of the Messiah. After his death, the ancient historical writers quoted his last words. They were canonized in the Bible and found in the *Book of Samuel*. David said:

“The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me. His words flowed from my tongue. He said, ‘He that rules over men must be just and rule in the fear of God. If he does, he will be like the light of morning that comes with the rising sun. Cloudy days will not prevent him from making the tender grass to grow.’

Unfortunately my house wasn’t like this. The tender grass hasn’t grown. But my hope, my desire, and my salvation finds rest in the everlasting covenant that He has made, which orders my future.

Stay away from the sons of Belial. They are like thorns that can’t be removed with hands. The man that touches them will be incarcerated by their influence and will utterly burn in the same place where they will meet their doom.” Psalm 23:1-7

The phrases, “men of Belial” and “sons of Belial” were synonymous in the Old Testament. They referred to people who were used by the prince of evil against Israel. Most often they referenced foreign countries. But the Prophet Samuel, without apology, proclaimed that the sons of Eli, the high priest, were sons of Belial. He said, “They knew not the LORD.”

Although most references about a spiritual evil forced named, “Belial” were directed toward people, it is akin to Jesus looking at Peter and saying, “Get behind me Satan.” The early church obviously believed that Satan or Belial could easily influence them and their only hope to escape the clutches of evil was to submit to the will and word of God.

## **Belial of the Satanic Bible**

And while the Christian Bible is somewhat confused about Belial, the Satanic Bible is certain of his identity. Anton La Vey named Belial as one of the Four Crown Princes of Hell and said his name means “without master.” He represents the earth and its carnality is known as the Master of Mankind and the Champion of Humanity.

Interestingly enough, Belial symbolizes true independence, self-sufficiency, and personal accomplishment. The followers of Christ were told to renounce these things when entering God’s kingdom. Instead, we

are to be totally dependent upon God, die to self, and esteem others.

Anton La Vey is commonly called “Belial” among Christians because he is antichrist, but probably not the Antichrist that many denominations believe will arise in the last days to deceive the world, claiming to bring hope to society.

## **Sons of Darkness**

The New Testament is filled with passages describing Christ’s enemy. Several names include, the devil, Satan, prince of this world, Belial, Beelzebub, antichrist, the evil one, to name a few. Those people he influences are called sons of darkness.

Jesus perhaps described the sons of darkness best when he told a group of Pharisees,

“Your father is the devil and you lust just like he does. He was a murderer from the beginning and couldn’t live in truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks, lies flow from him because he is not only a liar, his sperm produces liars like you.” John 8:44

In another passage Jesus referred to Satan as an angel of light when he said, “Satan appeared to be lighting as I watched him fall from heaven.”

When the religious leaders accused Jesus of performing healings and miracles by the power of Beelzebub, he flatly refuted their words. He indeed acknowledged that Satan had a kingdom but said, “A kingdom divided against itself won’t stand; therefore, Satan wouldn’t cast out his own.”

Jesus knew his mission and repeated it often. His purpose in life was to engage the enemy and destroy him. That enemy was the prince of this world. On two occasions John recorded Jesus’ words when he referred to Satan as the prince of this world.

Jesus described the spiritual conquest for humanity as an ongoing battle with Satan in charge of evil forces. Paul named this world



seizer when he told the Church at Ephesus that they once submitted to the prince of the power of the air when they walked according to the world's ways. He also said this same power currently worked in those who are disobedient.

All New Testament leaders understood the powers of darkness. When Jesus sent seventy of his followers to share the gospel of the kingdom he gave them specific instructions. They had seen his spiritual encounters and watched him perform healings and miracles. He merely told them to go and do likewise. They returned with joy and told Jesus, "Lord, even the devils are subject to us through your name."

Jesus told them,

"I gave you power to walk on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy so that nothing can hurt you. Don't rejoice because devils are subject to you; instead, rejoice because your names are written in heaven." Luke 10:17-20

### **Sons of Darkness in the Book of Enoch**

The concept that the sons of light have their names written in heaven was not a new concept to first century believers. Three centuries earlier the compilers of literature merged the writings of Enoch, the writings of Noah, and some of the prophetic speeches of the compilers into a book called the Book of Enoch. Here is a passage taken from that book.

"I swear unto you, that in heaven the angels remember you for good before the glory of the Great One. Your names are written before the glory of the Great One. Be hopeful!

There was a time you were put to shame through sickness and affliction but you shine as the lights of heaven. You will shine and be seen as the portals of heaven open to you.

At that time you will cry for judgment, and it shall appear to you. For all the tribulation you have experienced will come upon the rulers and those who plundered you.

Be hopeful! Don't cast away your hope because you will possess the same joy as the angels of heaven.

What will be your obligations at that time?

You will not have to hide on the day of the great judgment because you will not be found as sinners. And eternal judgment will be far from you throughout all the generations of the world.

Listen to me you who are righteous! Don't be companions with sinners when you see them growing strong and prospering in their ways. Keep afar away from their violence because you will become companions of the hosts of heaven.

And even though sinners say, "Our sins are hidden and are not recorded." In truth, they write down their sins every day to the point that light and darkness, day and night, see all their sins. Enoch 104:1-9

*The Book of Enoch* also addressed the struggles that believers have on earth. The writer assigned the blame to demons that were given permission by God to oppress, afflict and bring trouble upon the righteous. He asserted that some angels, who were called sons of God, left their heavenly assignments to copulate with earthly women, which resulted in the women giving birth to giants.

These rebellious angels and their offspring were not permitted into heaven and were assigned to earth as terrestrial spirits. God's future judgment of these giants was recorded in the Book of Enoch.

Jesus knew his earthly life was nearing an end so he began to solicit leaders to carry on his mission. One day his soul was troubled and he began to pray to God in front of the people. During his prayer, he asked the Father to glorify his name.

Suddenly those present heard the Father speak from heaven. Many thought it was an angel who said, "I have both glorified it and will glory it again." But Jesus told them that the Father had spoken to validate his message of the kingdom and that the time for world judgment had come. According to Enoch, that would be the time when the prince of this world will be permanently judged.

Jesus predicted his own death and it confused his followers because they thought the Messiah would live forever. Then Jesus explained.

"The light is with you for only a little while and then darkness comes.

Walk while you have light because when darkness comes, you won't be able to know where you are going." But believe in the Light so you may be the children of Light." John 12:35-36

We need not fear the sons of darkness. When we walk in the kingdom, the Lord gives us power over their influences and afflictions. According to most religions, the powers of darkness have a certain ending.

## **Demon Possession**

One of the conversations that Jesus had with demons not only teaches us their future destination, it also informs us of their limited powers on this earth. On a visit to Gadara Jesus encountered a couple of demon-possessed men. These fierce demoniacs were so strong that people tried to capture them with chains and fetters but were unable to do so. The demons inside these men recognized Jesus.

As Jesus approached them, they cried out, "Jesus, son of the Most High God! Have you come to torment us before the designated time?" Then one of the demoniacs came running to Jesus and worshipped him.

Recognizing the powers of darkness over the man, Jesus commanded the unclean spirit to leave his body.

The demon inside the man spoke and said, "What have I done to you? I adjure you by God not to torment me!"

Jesus communicated with the demon and asked his name. The man said, "My name is Legion for we are many."

These demons knew their eternal demise. They also knew that Jesus was the king and judge of God's kingdom and they were afraid that Jesus would send them to the Abyss before their designated time of the end. That was why they said through the man, "I adjure you by God not to torment me."

To us it might seem strange that these demons appealed to God so that Jesus wouldn't torment them. But it wasn't strange at all for them to make the appeal. Nor was it strange for Jesus to honor their request to

send them into a herd of pigs instead of sending them out of the country and into the abyss.

According to the writings of Enoch, the rebellious angels asked him to intercede for them hoping that God would answer his prayer. While Enoch interceded, an archangel translated him into the spirit realm where God awaited to personally give Enoch the answer to his prayer. Here was God's judgment:

“When these giants die they will become evil spirits and be confined to earth. Evil spirits will proceed from their bodies because they were born from earthly human flesh and heavenly angelic spirits. From now on, they will be terrestrial spirits, not celestial spirits who dwell in heaven.

And the spirits of these giants shall afflict, oppress, destroy, attack, do battle, work destruction, and cause trouble on the earth. They won't eat even though they hunger and thirst. They will also cause offenses. And these spirits will attack the children who are born to men and women.

It is my decision that when these giants are slaughtered and killed that their souls can destroy without incurring a present judgment. But on that great judgment day, at the end of the age, when the rebellious angels are judged, these godless, evil spirits will also face their final judgment.” Enoch 14:8; 15; 16

After hearing the judgment of these evil spirits, God gave Enoch an assignment:

“And now, as to these rebellious angels who have sent you to intercede for them, you go and tell them,

‘Although you have been in heaven and knew about these reprobated mysteries, you did not know about all the mysteries because they were not revealed to you. So because of the hardness of your hearts you showed these reprobated mysteries to the women and caused much evil on the earth. Therefore, you will never have peace!’”

*The Book of Enoch* was not canonized in the Christian Bible. Many Bible scholars shutter at the thought that angels could come to earth, copulate with women, and their giant offspring become evil spirits

when they die. But Enoch provided the only explanation why these evil spirits appealed to God to prevent Jesus from sending them to the Abyss before their end of time.

## **Melchizedek**

One of the fragments found among the caves at Qumran was named “The Heavenly Prince Melchizedek.” Jewish tradition concurs that Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek who was the King of Salem, which is present day Jerusalem. According to the rabbinical tradition, Melchizedek descended from the lineage of Seth. He was most probably Shem, the son of Noah, who would have been the patriarch at that time.

The first century Jews adopted the belief that God would send a Messiah to proclaim liberty to the captives. (Isaiah 61:1) This Dead Sea document predates the life of Jesus but heartily suggests that Melchizedek would be that Messiah. According to the document, Melchizedek would bring forgiveness to the sons of heaven. It predicted his arrival on the Day of Atonement during the first week of the tenth jubilee. On that day, all the sons of light and the men of Melchizedek would find atonement.

Historians assert that this Melchizedek document predated the birth of Jesus and assigned various dates between the first and third first century BCE. The writer of the document stated, “And your Elohim (God) is Melchizedek, who will save them from the hand of Belial.”

This document arguably became the fuel for the writer of Hebrews who combined two Old Testament Scriptures to validate Jesus as the Christ after the order of Melchizedek. It was probably used by the bishops of the first three centuries to seal of the debate of the deity of Jesus.

Throughout religious history, Belial and the sons of darkness have existed as enemies of God. The battle between the sons of light and the sons of darkness has been a spiritual battle that takes place in the spiritual realm. We must understand that our victory over evil begins and ends in the spiritual domain where we comply with the laws of God’s kingdom in order to find victory over evil.

# Chapter 10

## The End

Every book has an ending! Every song has a final verse! Every story has a conclusion! Only a few things continue on into infinity: numbers, colors, spiritual substances, and life. However, Andrew Greeley once said, “We are born with two incurable diseases; life, from which we die, and hope, which says maybe death isn't the end.”

Have you ever thought about the existence of time? Everyone has twenty-four hours in a day. We all have 365 days in a year. Without time, we'd have no clocks, appointments, engagements, calendars, birthdays, and anniversaries. We'd have no night and day experiences, no seasonal crops, vegetation, or food sources.

Yet time only exists because God created the sun, moon, and stars on the fourth day of creation. Not only did He create them, He defined their purpose.

These heavenly juggernauts were created to provide physical light to the earth and to function as a seasonal calendar with specific hours, days, months, and years. They are the constant ticking of the earthly clock.

Although we can't imagine life without time, somewhere in the distant future, time will cease to exist. And at that moment, eternity will continue. The purpose of this chapter is to define that moment and to explain what happens just before and afterwards.

### The Prophetic End

Apostle John had a vision about the end of time. In the vision he saw an angel standing with one foot on the sea and one foot on land. The angel raised his right hand towards heaven as if taking a solemn oath and swore to God that time would cease to exist. Then he said,

“In the days when the seventh angel blows his trumpet, the

mystery of God will be complete, just like He told His prophets." Revelation 10:7

At this point I'd like to use Biblical and other religious books to describe what will happen at the end of time. Jude, the brother of Jesus quoted from Enoch's book when he said,

"And Enoch also, the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied about these (heathen) when he said, "Look, the Lord is coming with ten thousands of his saints, to execute his judgment and to bring light to the ungodly so they will remember the deeds they committed and the harsh words they spoke against him." Jude 1:14-15

Enoch prophesied that the Most High would send a Messiah to bring an end to sin and to judge those rebellious angels who had left their place in heaven and came to earth against God's will. Here was his prophecy:

Let not your spirit be troubled because of the times, for the Holy and Great One has appointed days for all things. The righteous one shall arise from sleep and walk in the paths of righteousness. He will communicate eternal goodness and grace. He will be gracious to the righteous, giving them eternal uprightness. The Holy and Great One will give him power and gift him with goodness and righteousness so that he walks in eternal light. Then sin will perish in darkness forever and never be seen again. Enoch 92

Enoch didn't know how sin would perish, he only knew it would happen when the righteous one (Jesus) arose from sleep (resurrection.) Enoch was the first to promote the concept of a Messiah and many prophets after him preached the same message. The three major faiths of Judaism, Christianity and Islam all claim a Messianic arrival. Both Christianity and Islam claim that Jesus was born to a virgin maiden and is the returning Messiah.

Jude wasn't the only apostle to quote Enoch. Peter quoted an entire chapter from his book when he wrote about the "day of the Lord." Throughout Jewish history, the "day of the Lord" was the day

that the Messiah came from heaven to punish the enemies of God. Peter quoted Jesus when he said,

“The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night. The heavens will pass away with a great noise and the elements will melt with fervent heat. At that time all the earth and everything in it will burn up.” II Peter 3:10

Peter then asked his readers a question:

“Since everything will be dissolved, don’t you think you should live and act holy and godly by looking for and desiring the day that God dissolves the physical heavens with fire and melts the elements with fervent heat? Only at that time will there be a new heaven and new earth where righteousness dwells?” II Peter 3:11-12

Muslims, like the Christians, believe that Jesus, the Messiah, will come to earth to fight Satan and evil. But problems arise between Muslims, Christians, and Jews when certain groups begin to name the people of Satan.

Some Imams teach their Islamic followers that the Trinitarian Christians and Pagan religions such as the Hindus, Buddhist, etc. have influenced the Jews and they are all part of Satan’s army. Islamic belief maintains that God has no equal; therefore they view Trinitarian Christianity as polytheistic. These same Imams believe and teach that some Jews and Christians will fight with Jesus against the army of Satan, who they name Dajjal or the Deceiver.

Some Christians argue that Jesus is God and those who refuse to accept that doctrine must be declassified as a Christian because they have become anti-Christ. Both of these religious groups have failed to embrace the true gospel message that Jesus preached.

The gospel of the kingdom has nothing to do with arguing who is right doctrinally. It has everything to do with living according to the spiritual laws of God’s kingdom, which are the same laws that Jesus enacted and preached. Although Jesus embraced the sinner, he



repudiated the self-religious people for spewing man's doctrines onto society.

## **What Jesus Said About the End**

Jesus claimed to be the Messiah. According to Enochian teachings the Messiah would come at the end of time with thousands of his saints to wage war against Satan and the sons of darkness.

Near the end of Jesus life on earth he told his disciples that he would be leaving but he'd return. So they asked him,

“What signs and indicators should we look for that will indicate your return? And what are the signs of the end of the world?”

There were many signs and indicators. First, he said deception would come. He said there will many who will claim my lordship but they will deceive many. Next Jesus said there will be fighting and conflicts between nations and kingdoms. Famines, pestilences, and earthquakes will erupt.

Believers can expect to be afflicted for their faith. A new wave of martyrdom will arise. Offenses, betrayal, and hate will fill the land. False prophets will rise and deceive many. Sin and iniquity will run ramped in the streets. And many followers will grow cold and indifferent. And only those who endure these things will find salvation in the kingdom. Then Jesus said,

“The gospel will be preached in all the world to testify about Christ to the nations and then the end will come.”

Based upon this statement we know that the world is coming to an end. The question is when?

## **Shortened Days**

A fascinating statement that I've heard all my life leaves one to ponder the future. Jesus spoke about a great tribulation that would be

like no other. He followed that promise by saying,

“Unless those days are shortened, no flesh will be saved. But for the elect’s sake, those days will be shortened.” Matthew 24:22

Without an historical background, one might consider that Jesus was the first to disclose this new revelation to his disciples. On the contrary, Enoch first mentioned this in his book more than 3500 years earlier, when an angel named Uriel escorted him through the heavenlies. Referring to the end of time, Enoch wrote,

“In those days Uriel said to me, “Enoch, I have shown and revealed to you everything about this sun, this moon, the leaders of the stars of heaven, and all of those who turn them. And I have explained their tasks, their times, and their departures.

But in the days of the sinners, the years will be shortened, their seed will be tardy in the lands and fields, and everything on the earth will be altered, be out of sync, and not appear in their time.

Heaven will withhold the rain and keep it back. During those times the fruit of the earth will be backward and won’t grow at their time. Even the fruit of the trees will be withheld in their time.

The moon shall alter her order and not appear at her time. And in those days, the sun will be seen and he shall journey in the evening on the extremity of the great chariot in the west. He’ll shine brighter than what his light orders and many of the star’s chiefs will transgress their prescribed order.

These will alter their orbits and tasks and not appear in the seasons that they should. And the whole order of the stars will be concealed from the sinners.

Those on earth will err concerning the events. They’ll even worship these new variations as if they were gods. Evil will be multiplied upon them and punishment will come upon them to destroy them all. Enoch 80

The seers of the Old Testament saw the same thing. When they wrote about the “day of the Lord,” their intentions were to describe the events when the Messiah would come to earth to avenge the righteous. They spoke of cataclysmic events.

Prophecies resounded throughout the generations declaring destruction and annihilation of evil. They said the sun wouldn’t shine and the moon would turn blood red and many of them said it would begin with a loud sound. Could this be an atomic blast that scorches earth? Will mankind eventually become so intelligent that we destroy ourselves? If so, how will it play out in the end?

## II Esdras 4

Enoch wasn’t the only human to encounter the angel Uriel. Ezra was a priest in Israel in 500 BCE, around the time that the Jews were permitted to return to Israel and reestablish itself as a nation. He wrote two books. First Esdras (Ezra) was canonized in the Bible but separated and labeled as two books, Ezra and Nehemiah. Second Esdras consisted of his journals and a testimony of Jewish history.

Ezra was like us. He was confused about how life seemed unfair and he was unsure about the future. During prayer, he expressed his concerns to God and the answer came in the most unusual way. The same angel that visited Enoch over 3000 years earlier showed up to enlighten Ezra.

By reading the entire Second Esdras one can understand why Jews and Christians maintain our beliefs and understanding about heaven, hell, present age and the future. Chapter Four provided the dialogue between Ezra and the angel Uriel, which summarized end time judgment:

The angel Uriel was sent to me. He replied, " You can't even understand what happens in this world. Do you think you can understand the ways of God Most High?"

"Yes, sir, I do!" I answered.

The angel continued, "I have been sent to ask you to solve three riddles about what happens in this world. If you can explain even one of

them to me, I will answer your questions about God's ways and teach you why the human race has an evil impulse."

"I agree, sir," I said.

Then he said to me, "Good! How do you weigh out a pound of fire? How do you measure a bushel of wind? How do you bring back a day that has passed?"

I answered, "Why do you ask me such questions? No human being could answer them."

Then he said,

"What if I had asked you how many dwelling places there were at the bottom of the sea? How many rivers flow into the waters beneath the earth? How many rivers are there above the dome of the sky? Where are the exits from the world of the dead? Where are the entrances to Paradise?"

If I had asked you these questions, you might have answered, 'I have never gone down into the waters beneath the earth, and I have not yet entered the world of the dead. I have never gone up to heaven.' But all I have asked you about is fire, wind, and the day that has just passed - things that you have experienced. Yet you have given me no answer. You can't even understand things that you have been familiar with since you were a child. How then can your little mind understand the ways of God Most High? Can someone who has already been worn down by this corrupt world understand the ways of the incorruptible God?"

When I heard this, I fell face downward on the ground and said to him, "It would have been better to have never been born than to have lived in a world of sin and suffering without understanding why things happen as they do."

The angel Uriel answered,

"I once went into the woods and heard the trees plotting together. They were saying, 'Let's go to war against the sea and push it back, so that we may have more room.' But the waves of the sea also plotted together and said, 'Let's conquer the woods and extend our territory.'"

But all the plotting of the trees was useless because fire came and destroyed them. And the plotting of the sea was just as useless because the sand stood firm and blocked its advance. Now, if you were the judge and had to decide between them, which would you pronounce right?"

I replied, "They were both wrong, because trees belong on the land, and waves belong in the sea."

"You have given the right answer," he said. "So why can't you see the answer to your own problems? For just as trees have their place on land, and waves have their place in the sea, so the people of this world can understand only what goes on in this world, and only heavenly beings can understand what goes on in heaven."

"Please tell me, sir," I asked,

"Why then was I given the ability to understand anything? I am not interested in asking questions about what goes on in the heavens; I am only concerned about things that go on around us. Why has God allowed Israel to be disgraced by foreign nations? Why has he let the nation he loves be handed over to the power of godless nations? Why do the Law and the covenant that were given to our ancestors mean nothing anymore? Why do we die as quickly as insects? Why is our life shorter than a breath? Why does God think us unworthy of his mercy? Why doesn't God do something to help his own people? These are the questions that I want to ask."

Uriel answered,

"If you live long enough, you will be surprised at what you will see, because this age is rapidly passing away. This age is so full of misery and imperfection that it cannot hold all the blessings that God has promised the righteous in the time to come. This evil, about which you have asked, has already been planted, but the time for its harvesting has not yet arrived. This evil must be harvested. And this world, where it was planted, must be removed prior to the new age. At that time, the good, which will be planted, will finally appear.

At the beginning of time one grain of evil seed was sown in the heart of Adam. See how much wickedness it has already produced! Think of how much more it will produce before it is cut down and threshed out at Judgment Day. You can see for yourself what a big crop this one evil seed has produced.

How terrible will be the harvest on Judgment Day when these countless heads of grain are threshed out!"

Then I asked, "How long do we have to wait before this happens? Why are our lives so short and so full of misery?"

Uriel answered,

"Don't be in a greater hurry than God Most High! You are thinking only of yourself, but God has to be concerned about everybody. Your questions are the same ones asked by the souls of the righteous dead in the places where God is keeping them waiting: "How long must we wait here? When will the Day of Judgment come? When we will get our reward?"

The archangel Jeremiel answered them when he said, "It will happen as soon as the complete number of those who have suffered as you have are here. For God has weighed this age, measured the years, and numbered the days. Nothing will be changed until time has run its predetermined course."

"But, sir," I replied, "All of us here on earth are such wicked sinners. Is it possible that because of our sin the righteous dead are having to wait for their reward?"

He answered, "Can a pregnant woman keep her child from being born after her nine months are up?"

"No, sir, she cannot," I answered.

And he continued,

"In the world of the dead, the place where God has stored the souls is like a womb. It is as eager to return the souls entrusted to it from the beginning of the world, as a woman is to end her labor pains. When that happens, you will have the answer to all your questions."

"Please, sir," I asked, "If you think I am able to understand it, can you tell me one more thing? Is the time that is still to come longer than the past that has already gone by? I know how long the past has been, but I don't know the future."

"Come here and stand at my right," he commanded, "and I will show you a vision and explain its meaning."

So I stood by him and looked, and I saw a blazing fire pass by in front of me, and when it was gone, I saw the smoke that remained. Then a rain cloud passed by in front of me, bringing a heavy downpour of rain; and when the downpour was over, there was still a light rain and midst.

"Think about this," said Uriel. "Just as the downpour was greater than the light rain that followed it and the fire was greater than the smoke left behind, in the same way the time that has passed is much longer than the time to come. The time that is left is like the light rain and the smoke."

"Please tell me," I asked, "do you think I will live until that time? If not, who will be alive when it happens?"

He answered, "I can tell you some of the signs of the end, if that is what you are asking about; but I am not here to tell you how long you will live, and in any case, I don't know."

This dialogue between Ezra and the angel reveals that the same desires and difficulties that exist today also existed 2500 hundred years ago. Ezra wanted to know about the end of time. He wanted to know his future. Today millions and millions of dollars are spent on books, songs, and magazines because people are seeking to know that will happen in the future.

## **What Will Happen to Believers at the End?**

Apostle Paul gives us the best description of what will happen when the Lord returns. Most prophets, including Jesus, addressed the warring component of his messianic return. And because the battles are so descriptive we tend to think that the end time battle will be a physical engagement. But Paul helps us to understand the realm where the warfare will be fought.

Ever since visiting Israel I have struggled with the idea of Jesus returning to earth to fight this physical Battle of Armageddon in the valley of Megiddo. The Book of Revelation and other visions seen by

various prophets reveal a literal battle. I personally believe the battle will be literal, real, and final, but I don't believe there will be physical forces fighting that battle. What we fail to remember is that the kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom, not made up of flesh and blood. So how can flesh and blood fight that end-time battle?

The Battle of Armageddon will be a spiritual battle. Forces of good and evil will fight the final war. The powers of Christ versus the powers of Satan! The sons of light against the sons of darkness! But we will not engage the battle with physical armor against humankind.

When Jesus returns, our physical bodies will suddenly disappear and give way to our spiritual bodies. The spirit realm that has been hidden from humanity for millenniums will suddenly appear. It will happen as quickly as you can blink your eye. The spirit realm will come alive. It will be the first time since Adam and Eve's initial sin in the Garden that humanity will experience our spiritual senses in the same way that we presently experience our physical senses. We'll be able to engage in the spirit realm. We'll see angels and communicate with them. We'll even be able to see and hear God.

No longer will we have to wonder what is right or wrong, good or bad. We'll not need to discern the forces of good and evil. There will not be any gray areas of righteousness. We'll all know the Lord's standard of righteousness. Our selfish lives will cease to exist. Our service in his kingdom will be priority.

Paul outlined for the Corinthian church the great event that will occur when Jesus returns with his host of holy ones:

The heavenly images that you will see later will be the same physical image that you see here on earth. Listen brethren, your physical body can't possess the kingdom of God no more than corruption can possess an incorruptible life.

I'm going to reveal to you the mystery. Not everyone is going to die but every believer will be changed. It will happen instantaneously, quicker than a blink. It will occur when the Lord finally calls everyone together. There will be a sound like the blast of a trumpet, and suddenly everyone who is alive will be changed.



We'll see our spiritual images because our corruptible flesh will give way to the incorruptible spirit. Mortality will cease to exist and we will all be immortal.

When our flesh ceases and our spirit continues, when mortality ends and immortality begins, then the lyrics of David's song will be realized! "Death is swallowed up in victory!"

At that time we'll trash talk with David as he sings, "Death where is your sting? We'll high five each other shouting, "Grave where's your victory?" In an instant the stinger of death, which is sin, will be removed. Although the strength of man's law is sin, we can thank God because He will have given us victory over sin, through our Lord Jesus Christ. So let's be like a steadfast immovable object, always laboring diligently in his work because you know your labor will pay good dividends in the future. I Corinthians 15:49-58

Jesus said on that occasion that we will be like the angels. We'll return to the spiritual light from whence we were created. Enoch described in his book what angels looked like in the spirit realm. He said,

"They appeared as flames of fire ascending and descending down a tall shaft or pillar moving from heaven to earth and back again."

We too will appear as transparent flames of fire but we'll be able to identify each other because our spiritual images will look just like our physical bodies.

Apostle Paul said, "Right now we can only see vague impressions of the spiritual. Everything is so dim. But when the Lord returns, we'll see him face to face and we'll know each other just as we are known now." I Corinthians 13:12

Paul wrote two-thirds of the books in the New Testament. In one of his stories to the Corinthian church he wrote about his experience of being translated into the spirit realm. He said that he couldn't tell whether or not he was still in his physical body because everything seemed so real. During the phenomenon he saw Paradise, which we know to be the Garden of God. According to Enoch and Ezra, the Tree of Life is still in the Garden.

Enoch saw Paradise and gave a vivid description of it. He talked about the beautiful appearance and wonderful fragrance. His spiritual senses were so activated at the time that he described the spiritual realm as if it was a physical place.

Apostle John also described its beauty and grandeur. In a vision John saw a huge city descending out of heaven. He called it, "Holy Jerusalem." He said the city had the brilliance and glory of God. He described it as a city of light where the bricks looked like diamonds and were as clear as crystal.

In the vision John was given a golden measuring stick to measure the golden fortress. He said the walls were diamonds and everything glistened like pure gold. The city was built like a twelve-storied building with each level displaying a radiance of precious stones. All twelve of the gates looked like they were hewed from a single pearl and the streets where people walked were pure polished gold that shined like transparent glass.

John saw Almighty God and His Messiah in the city. He said that their presence illuminated everything and there was no need for the sun, moon, or stars. And because there was no sun, moon, or stars, there was no distinction between day and night.

The pearly gates in the city remained open continuously and never closed. He said there was nothing in that city that could defile or cause abomination. There was no deception or lies and only those people who were pre-selected by the Lord were there.

Inside the city John saw God's throne and the pure river that flowed from it, which he called, "the river of life." In the midst of the river grew a huge tree. The tree was so large that its trunk proceeded out of the water but the tree spread to both sides of the river's banks. And that tree, which he called the "tree of life," produced amazingly delicious spiritual fruit that grew year around.

John's description of spiritual life after the big battle has left eager believers with the intense desire to give up everything for the assurance of seeing and living in the city of tomorrow.

As believers we must strive to enter into that city of rest. We must endure the difficulties of this age to embrace the blessings of that age. But how do we do that?

We must live life in the spirit today. Even though we can't see, feel, taste, touch, or smell the spiritual realm, we must believe that it exists and that it will continue on after the temporary physical realm passes away.

Jesus came to earth to preach about this kingdom and laid down the eternal laws that are required for its citizens. The laws are really quite simple and are summarized into two categories: love God and love one another.

We must learn what it means to love, respect, and worship our Almighty Creator and Judge. We must also learn what it means to love and respect one another. Most of the laws that Jesus laid down were spiritual laws that require us to forfeit selfishness in order to enact. He taught us how to respond to people, bad people. He taught us to be gracious when ridiculed and to be patient through trials. He taught us to love and pray for those who oppose us, allowing God to avenge instead of personal retaliation.

He told us that we came from light and that we were sons of God in a kingdom of light. He declared, "You are the light of the world!" When we display the spiritual attributes to fulfill the laws of his kingdom, the Lord said his blessings would overcome us. Those blessings include the future life after the final battle.

So if the light of the spirit is housed in a physical body, and if we have been commissioned by the king to display that light for others to see, and if we want peace, joy, and righteousness in a corrupt and violent society, then perhaps we should listen to the first words that God spoke at creation when He said, "Let there be light."

**The End**