

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 245

THE HOLY CITY (continued)

“And the wall of the city had *twelve foundations*, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And the foundations of the wall of the city were *garnished with all manner of precious stones*. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, a crysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst” (Rev. 21:14,19-20).

As we read these wonderful words it becomes at once clear that the use of gems in the description is not by chance but instead by divine purpose, because it specifies the kind to be used in relation to each foundation and the gates. What wealth of joy and instruction for God’s elect is contained in this highly figurative language! Here we are told that the twelve apostles of the Lamb are the foundations of the city. This alone should be ample evidence to us that God never intended to present that this new Jerusalem is a literal city. For it says that the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb are written upon the foundation stones, associating them in a living way with the foundation. By inspiration the apostle Paul has told us that we who are the temple of God are *built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets*, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone (Eph. 2:20). So we see that the apostles and prophets *are the foundation* and that we are to build upon this foundation. The very truth I am proclaiming to you today is rooted in the word and ministry of those early apostles! The very work that God is doing in you today to bring you to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ is rooted in that foundation laid down by the apostles of both that day and this day! And we, the body of Christ, are God’s building, God’s house, God’s temple, and we are the Holy City that He is building in the heavens of His Spirit!

There are twelve foundations — not separate foundations apart from one another supporting different parts of the city, but twelve foundations laid one upon another, giving perfect and full support to the whole. This, furthermore, indicates that in John’s vision the foundations of the city come to rest on the surface of the ground, signifying that this heavenly city is to touch the earth — its ministry, light, glory, life, and dominion are all prepared to bring heaven down to earth in the midst of men! One might suppose that, according to human custom, rougher material would be selected for the foundation. Not so, however. The most brilliant and costly gems were chosen to lay these courses. Nothing cheap nor common had anything to do with the raising up of this marvelous city. It is God’s handiwork, and we cannot but admire its wondrous beauty. Since these foundations are adorned with dazzling stones it is evident that they are not beneath the ground, but underneath the city in a heavenly realm, clearly visible for all to see.

In rearing earthly structures men seek such materials as combine durability and beauty. Look at this wall with its foundations! For *durability*, it has the most indestructible material that can be found on earth. For *beauty*, the language of man cannot even convey a meager description of its exquisite loveliness. Oh, wonders of God’s handiwork! How inexpressibly glorious! Jewels are brilliant. How often the clear

sparkle of a gem set in a ring or as an ornament of adornment catches our eye, and almost without thinking our gaze follows the every movement. We are fascinated by the delightful way facets reflect in varying hues the rays of light that fall upon them. Oftentimes the large, well-cut gem seems to possess an inner light apart from that which strikes it. However, this we know is merely an optical illusion, because no jewel possesses light within itself. So with the saints of God and the gifts and graces that are conferred upon us! The light that shines out from us is not a self-generated light; rather, it is the same light *which He is*. Apart from God we are nothing, even as the brilliance of the jewel darkens and dies when removed from the light.

Jewels are beautiful. Precious stones have a beauty of form and color that delights the eye. Stones capture light. Diamonds sparkle in the light and it is the light that gives each stone its brilliant form and color. Walk into any jewelry store and you will notice that the stones are all displayed under light. A stone has only little beauty apart from light! The stone captures the color in the white light that we cannot see. It gathers it, intensifies it, and reflects it. Visualize spread out before you on a cloth of midnight blue velvet, some jewels of beauty. The clear, icy sparkle of the diamond, the warmth of glowing red of the ruby, the cool green of the emerald beside the regal purple of an amethyst. See also a sapphire reflecting the blue of heaven; a chalcedony, pale blue, translucent, and wax-like; and interspersed among them all, lustrous pearls, warm glowing spheres so strikingly different from the sharp facets of the other gems, all reflecting the *same light* in gloriously different hues, none detracting from the other, but all enhancing the beauty of the whole.

In its spiritual application, those many-hued stones bring out the varied qualities of the nature and glory of God, made known through His people. Your life in Christ has infinite possibilities, but you must *walk in the light as He is in the light* for it to be seen! There will be different rays of His glory revealed through different members of the Christ-body, illustrated by these different precious stones, which are the emblems employed, to set forth the luster of God's elect, in heavenly brilliance and glory, and the way in which He displays the beauty which He has formed in them. Put a light through an emerald, and it is quite different from that of the ruby, and though we are all partakers of the same grace and glory of God, that grace and glory will shine through each differently, and no two are alike. It would be an immense pity if all the saints were like a truckload of bricks — all the same shape and color. What a dull, drab city it would be! Just as there are no two leaves of the forest alike, and no two snowflakes alike, so there are no two sons and no two daughters of God alike! All are alike in being perfected in His image, but all are different in the expression of that image, just as children are different expressions of their parents.

Many years ago Bill Britton sent out a little writing titled A PARABLE OF TRUE RICHES. It went like this:

Two men were going through a dark forest one night when they heard a cry for help. They were on a long journey, with only a certain amount of time to complete it, so they were in a hurry. The path they were on was narrow, and rather hard to follow. They pondered the question as to whether or not they should answer the cry for help. It might be a trap. Or they might get lost in the dark forest. In any event, they would lose a lot of time. But they decided that if someone was in need of help, they really should find time. So they plunged into the forest, following the sounds of the cry for help. Deep in the forest they found him. He was a little old man pinned under a large tree limb that had fallen upon him. One of the wolves of the forest had also heard him, and was almost upon him. But the two men drove the beast away with clubs. They lifted the limb and released the man. He was bruised and sore, but there were no broken bones, and in a few minutes he was feeling much better.

He was very grateful, and thanked them profusely. He said, "You men have saved my life, and I want to do something for you that will make you very happy." They laughed at this, and said, "Why old man, what in the world could you do to make us happy? That is very foolish talk. You must be joking." They laughed some more. This angered him very much. He said, "You should not have laughed at me. I am not joking. You saved my life and I am going to make you very happy. But because you laughed at me, you will also be very sad. Tonight on your journey, you will come across a dry creek bed. Stop and pick up some of the stones from the creek bed, and tomorrow you will be very happy and very sad." They were puzzled by this, and asked him to tell them the answer to this riddle. But he would only say, "When the sun comes up in the morning, look at the stones from the creek, and you will know the answer to the riddle."

As they continued their journey, they talked about the riddle and tried to figure out the answer, but to no avail. Finally, during the night they crossed the creek. They remembered what the old man had said, and each one picked up a handful of stones from the creek bed and put them in his pocket. They continued on till morning. As the sun was rising, they stopped and sat down to rest for a few minutes. It was then they remembered the riddle, and how they were to look at the stones in the light of the sun, and know the answer to the riddle. To their amazement and joy, when they examined the stones, they found them to be precious jewels — rubies, diamonds, pearls, and emeralds. With only a handful of these gems, they were richer than they had ever dreamed of being! They each had wealth enough to build a house of their own, and money to live on. They were very happy, and danced around in joy and glee.

But suddenly they became very sad. For they only had a handful of these precious gems. And had they only known what was so near and available to them during their journey through the dark night, they would have emptied their packs of all their other baggage, and filled their packs with these riches. Had they done this, they would have been a hundred times richer than they were now. Instead of having just a comfortable living, they could have had anything they wanted and a life beyond their wildest dreams! The very thought of what they had missed on their journey, made them very sad.

This is a parable, dear friend, of your life and mine, and of our journey into the kingdom of God. There is One who has made great riches available to you, obtainable as you make your journey through the dark night of earth's sorrows, trials, and testings. But you must "lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset you, and *look unto Jesus,*" in order to appropriate what has been set aside for you. There is much baggage that must be unloaded from your life, and great and glorious things of the spirit which must be acquired in its place. But it is worth it! Nothing in this earthly life is so precious as to compare with that which God has prepared for them that love Him! "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, but lay up treasures in heaven," Jesus said. Paul tells us that all the heavenly treasures of wisdom and knowledge are *hid in Christ*. Only as you acquire these spiritual treasures *on your journey* will you have the beautiful gems of divine nature, wisdom, power, grace, and glory with which to be adorned in the city of God!

Simply by believing the truths of sonship and the kingdom, you will not just wake up one fine morning to find yourself *adorned* with the priceless jewels of the bride of the Lamb and the glory of New Jerusalem. Oh, no! These wonderful heavenly and divine virtues and excellencies must be acquired on your journey through this age of darkness on planet earth. Cast aside all the useless weights of carnality and flesh and self and religion that hold you down to the earthly realm, and apprehend the treasures of heaven that will make you rich with heavenly wealth! Neglect not so great a salvation, neglect not such a divine provision, neglect not such a high and holy calling — or you will be very happy and very sad. You will be very happy that you have made it into the kingdom of God — and you will be very sad that you have arrived there a spiritual pauper! You don't think so? Then let us heed the sobering words of Paul the apostle wherein he wrote, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man *build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: BUT HE HIMSELF SHALL BE SAVED, YET SO AS BY FIRE*" (I Cor. 3:11-15). If what you have gathered in this life and adorned yourself with, and built up upon the foundation of the city of God goes up in smoke, you will only be able to stand in the ashes of God's great bonfire and let God "wipe the tears from your eyes."

In the 17th century, scientists came to understand gems as "rare and noble productions of nature." They are distilled from duller rocks by processes that often involve the play of fierce heat and pressure deep within the earth's crust. And they derive their loveliness from a variety of prosaic sources. For example, precious ruby and the common abrasive emery consist of the same basic mineral, corundum; the difference between them is accounted for by the presence of minute traces of other substances. Diamond is chemically identical to graphite, only a different crystalline structure gives the diamond the hardness, clarity, and flash for which it is so highly esteemed.

As diamonds and other precious stones pass through long seasons of intense heat and cold and pressure in nature's laboratory before they reach their perfection of beauty, so must every member of God's elect pass through pain and suffering and dealings and challenges before we can be perfected. And though chemists can make diamonds and other precious stones artificially, yet when we apply careful tests to them we see their defects. That's why a zircon, though it superficially resembles a diamond, has very little value when compared with a genuine diamond! So we cannot reach in a single day, or without the heat and cold and pressure of life's experiences, such perfection that we will have no defects in us, but by continually living in the presence of our Father, and subject to the deep dealings of God in our lives through the crucible of experience, we will become perfect even as He is perfect! Our Lord Jesus is the pattern and example for every son of God, "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation *perfect through sufferings*," for, "though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being *made perfect*, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him" (Heb. 2:10; 5:8-9).

Let us, therefore, meditate upon the precious stones of earth and see by the spirit the analogy that the Lord draws between them and His elect people who become His holy city, His perfect and heavenly government over all things. Let us notice some common characteristics of precious stones and see how beautifully they illustrate the spiritual characteristics in the lives of God's sons.

Jewels are RARE, PRECIOUS, PURE, BRILLIANT, BEAUTIFUL, AND VALUABLE!

First, jewels are *rare*. Think about it — if you went out in search of precious stones how long and painstakingly must you search before one is found? The majority of stones are common and therefore of very little value. Lorain and I have through years past enjoyed hiking and camping in the mountains of the southwest, and it is impressive to explore the high and numberless mountains of solid stone. And yet, it is awesome to think that the stone revealed through upturned mountains is slight in comparison to the vast quantity of stone buried deep beneath the surface! Our son, Andy, since he was a teenager has been a rock hound. He can tell you that the occasional precious piece is rare indeed! And is this not an appropriate illustration of the rarity of finding a mature and perfected son of God among the hundreds of millions of professed believers in the world? Rare indeed is a saint who has seen the vision of God's truth and is yielding himself under the dealing hand of the Father to become a son indeed! No wonder Jesus said to His small group of footstep followers, "Fear not, *little flock*, it is the Father's good pleasure to give *you* the kingdom!"

Then, too, jewels are *precious*. One could actually hold in his hands precious gems which would be worth more than half a billion dollars! Some jewels, because of their history, are virtually priceless. To illustrate the immense value of gems think of the Empire State Building in New York City. Thousands of skilled artisans worked for many, many months erecting this architectural masterpiece towering over one hundred stories high. Incomprehensible amounts of steel, concrete, wood, and other materials were gathered from many quarters to go into its construction. At last this gleaming masterpiece was completed, a monument to man's ingenuity, at a cost of some twenty-eight million dollars those many years ago. Yet — just one small handful of gems could be worth many, many times the present value of this marvelously imposing structure! Of such value are God's elect in His eyes! For you see, the powers and processes that go into making a priceless gem exceed by millions of times the work and powers that were involved in the construction of the Empire State Building. This speaks to us of the great value of the dealings, pressures, tribulations, processings, testings, quickenings, blessings, and workings of God in the lives of His called and separated people! Is this not what Paul meant when he wrote, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are *not worthy to be compared* with the *glory* which shall be *revealed in us!*" (Rom. 8:18). Those radiating His glory, as the result of all His deep and powerful processings, are His *precious ones!* That is why the trial of our faith is declared to be *more precious* than fine gold! That certainly puts it in the *gem* category!

The best jewels are *pure*. Geologists tell us that precious stones were once part of the surrounding elements in which they are found. Through the ages earth movement, pressure, and heat began a separating work, and finally that which was once mixed and impure became crystal, free from alloy, and that which was commonplace became a jewel! How often does the call of a son parallel this process! The intense

pressure and heat of our trials and tribulations, and Father's crushings and provings, separate out of our lives the flinty disposition of self-will and the clay of carnality and instability. We know that the diamond was once carbon, black and soft in comparison to the clarity and hardness of the final product. In the depths of the earth, lumps of carbon are subjected to intense heat and terrific pressure, and a miracle is performed! That which was black becomes crystalline clear, and the hardest substance known to man. What a lesson! Truly the power of God can take that which is weak and black and worthless and *transform it* into the very image and likeness of God! Oh, the wonder of it!

All of nature in the material creation, as designed by the wisdom of our heavenly Father, is a precise natural picture of the spiritual workings of God in His new creation. Every one of God's jewels, the bride of the Lamb and His company of sons, is to become pure in the kingdom of the Father! The very first call of the apprehended one is to separate himself from the contaminating elements of the world in which he is found! "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye *separate*, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and I will be a *Father* unto you, and ye shall be my *sons* and my *daughters*, saith the Lord Almighty" (II Cor. 6:17-18).

Jewels are *brilliant*. As I mentioned earlier, now and then the clear sparkle of a gem someone is wearing in a piece of jewelry catches our eye. We are fascinated by the delightful way facets reflect in varying hues the rays of light which fall upon them! The various hues represent different aspects or facets of the divine nature such as love, goodness, grace, peace, faith, strength, wisdom, and power. All these are contained in the *white light which He is!* We are called to radiate the multi-faceted glory of God! Paul speaks of the "manifold wisdom" of God. Manifold means "many-splendored" or "many-sided" or "multi-faceted." Every part of God's glory is many-faceted, meaning that all are revealed in different ways in the lives of God's chosen ones just as light is reflected by a diamond. This can be done only by a people processed as a priceless gem! Common stones radiate nothing of His many-faceted glory! All you see is the stone, not the beauty in the light it reflects. Only to a processed, pure, gem-like people is the word of the Lord sent, declaring, "Arise, shine, for *thy light* is come, and the *glory* of the Lord is *risen upon thee*... His glory shall be *seen* upon thee. And nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising" (Isa. 60:1-3).

Jewels are also *beautiful!* So is the city of God! "Out of Zion, the *perfection of beauty*, God hath shined" (Ps. 50:2). And to the bride of Christ, the holy city, the word comes, "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the King *greatly desire thy beauty*: for He is thy Lord; and worship thou Him" (Ps. 45:10-11). Our Father is clothing us with the *beauty of holiness*, which is the emanation of the glory of His *light of life!*

In one of his excellent little papers Vern Goss wrote: "Peter declares that the true temple of God is built of lively stones, stones that are not hewn of men, but set by God as it pleases Him. A lively (living) stone is a building block of *life* — it has within its centrality the essence of life, that being God. A lively stone does not come from the natural order, the world, but comes from the supernatural order, God. A lively stone has been born of God and is not a product solely of the earth realm. Jesus told the Jews that though they were the children of Abraham they were not to be smug in that knowledge because God is able to take *stones* and raise them up into being the children of the kingdom! *Risen stones*, were once common and lifeless stones, but the resurrection power of God has caused them to arise into a state of life."

My heart has been stirred and thrilled beyond measure as I have mused upon the glories of the Holy City of God's great and eternal kingdom. It has stood out to me that the *names* of the twelve apostles of the Lamb are inscribed upon the twelve foundations of the city. Time and space do not permit us to explore the deep meaning within each of the names of these apostles, but each bespeaks of a foundational principle in the governmental realm of God. Some who read these lines may want to search this out for themselves. In the various symbols of this city we see different representations of truth and the purposes of God in His people. The walls speak to us of the strength of the Christ within as our defense against every enemy of the spiritual life. The gates portray those precious truths and experiences in God by which we are given an abundant entrance into the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. The foundations figure for us those foundational truths, experiences, ministries, and characteristics upon which the whole economy of God's kingdom in our lives rests. The temple of God, the city of God is built upon the *foundation* of the apostles

and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone. This means that Christ is *foundational* in the life of the new creation — there is that of Him that is laid in us as the basis, underlying principle, substratum, and support of all that is raised up in our lives. Christ Himself is *the apostle and high priest* of our profession, says the writer to the Hebrews. The apostles, that is, the *apostolic ministry*, is the underpinning of God's house, God's temple, God's city. Great is the mystery!

Our English word "apostle" transliterates the Greek word *apostolos* which means "one who is sent." During the earthly ministry of Jesus twelve disciples were called "apostles." These are the ones called in our text "the twelve apostles of the Lamb." This means that the twelve were specifically those who followed Jesus and were sent forth by Him as an extension and projection of His role as the "Lamb" of God. He came as God's Lamb, as God's sacrifice, not dying in our place, but dying "for us," that is, on our behalf, pouring out His life *for us* and *to us*, thereby giving us life! To give our life, to pour out our life, is another expression for dying in a sacrificial way, the principle and power of the LAMB. In Christ we see the pouring out of life without measure. It is a dying, and yet not dying, for the supply of life is inexhaustible, yet there is an eternal pouring out of that life. Thus eternal life is the LAMB LIFE, and in this pouring out the law is fulfilled, "Whoever *loses his life, lays down his life, pours out his life, shall save it.*" These apostles of Christ were the first after Jesus who lived out this principle of the laid down, poured out life, and therefore are called the twelve apostles *of the Lamb*. But ultimately, the symbol is not pointing exclusively to these twelve, for while we cannot explore the details of it now, the fact is that there were many apostles in the church in those days. The twelve are a symbol, signifying a greater truth! And the message is just this — those who are *sent* by the Father, who *lay down their lives in sacrificial dying, pouring out torrents of divine, eternal life to the people of God and to creation, ARE FOUNDATIONAL TO THE CITY OF GOD, WHICH IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD!* Oh, the mystery of it!

May the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God grant us understanding in this unique and momentous hour at the transition of the ages. It is my deepest conviction that God is raising up and sending forth an entirely *new apostolic ministry* in this present day. I do not hesitate to declare to you that the apostles' ministry has always been essentially that of bringing in a NEW ORDER. A friend has shared the following insights into this great truth: "Apostles build where *no other man has built*. So if a man is doing what others have done for years before him, or what was done two thousand years ago, I do not see that as a true apostolic ministry today. Moses, as an apostle, brought in an entirely new order. He went up into the mountain and brought down the 'house law' for the new dispensation. Jesus, as the 'apostle of our profession' ushered in a whole new age, and the church age apostles established that new thing. Apostleship is associated with NEW THINGS, foundation layers, those who CRACK THE FORM OF THE FORMER AGE and bring forth the essence of it and build the essence. Jesus, as an apostle, cracked the form of the Old Covenant and brought forth the essence of it in Himself.

"Many brethren have felt an inward call to apostolic ministry in this hour, and not yet understanding the fullness of what the Lord is doing have tried to apply this call in the wrong realm — moving under 'church order' in an attempt to fulfill it. The sun is now setting on the church age and the transcendent glory of that brighter and greater age when the body of Christ has been brought to its fullness, the manifestation of the sons of God, and all nations brought under the dominion of the kingdom of God, is even now dawning upon us. It is now time for *the apostles of the kingdom* to be sent forth, and these apostles will CRACK THE FORM of the church age and bring forth its content as an essence that the church has never yet known. These can be naught but the *first* of the *firstfruits company*. These must be brought forth prior to the establishing of the kingdom, as the *foundations* of the kingdom are laid in them" — end quote.

MEASURING THE CITY

"And he that talked with me had a *golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof*. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he *measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs*. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he *measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel*" (Rev. 21:15-17).

In his vision, John now observes the angel or messenger about to measure the city with his golden measuring rod. The city is tetragonal — foursquare — in shape. In fact it is a perfect cube since its width, length, and height are equal. There were several kinds of “cubits” used in those days as units of measurement. The ordinary cubit in use among the people of Israel was six handbreadths (spans), corresponding to the length of one’s forearm from the elbow to the center finger. But in Ezekiel 40:5, the messenger measuring the temple in Ezekiel’s vision uses a cubit measure with a span (handbreadth) added — the six-span cubit (six: the number of man) that symbolized *human imperfection* being **changed** to the seven-span cubit that symbolized the *spiritual perfection* of the temple of God. Ezekiel tells us, “And behold, there was a wall all around the outside area of the house of the Lord, and in the man’s hand a measuring reed six long cubits in length, *each cubit being longer than the usual one by a handbreadth*: so he measured...the wall” (Eze. 40:5, Amplified). So the messenger in Ezekiel’s vision used what he called the “long cubit,” or the seven-spanned cubit signifying *divine perfection*.

The King James Bible says of this measurement that it was “*according to the measure of a man*, that is, of *the angel*.” But that is not how the Greek text reads! The words “according to” are not in the Greek, but are added by the translators. The literal rendering is, “And he measured its wall, a hundred and forty-four cubits — the measure of **a man, which is, a messenger**.” It should not be difficult to tell that the reference is to “a man” and not “the man,” that is, “the messenger” that John saw measuring the city. It points to **another man, another messenger, beyond** the one having the golden reed that John saw in vision! It should also not be difficult to see that that man is THE CHRIST! Always in scripture, when we find someone being sent forth with a measuring reed, to measure the temple of God, or the house of God, or the city of God, they are being sent to measure the spiritual condition of that temple or that city. So we see that the messenger was sent with a measuring reed to measure the holy city or to measure the spiritual condition and stature of the Lord’s elect.

May our heavenly Father now give understanding to all who read these lines! To “measure” the city signifies inspection, examination, to take inventory, an evaluation of just how much we have experienced of Christ and the life of sonship, to determine just where we are in our growth and development in the spirit, the state of our progress into the fullness of God. Trying to accomplish any of this by human effort, natural understanding and logic, fleshly ability, or religious exercises is a most heinous pit into which to fall! The “measuring” can only be done by the Spirit who searches all things! “For the *Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God*. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God” (I Cor. 2:10-11). The message is clear — only the Spirit of God can determine our *spiritual stature*!

Is this not what is meant when John says, “And he that talked with me had a *golden reed to measure the city*.” Oh, yes! God is the One who initiates the action, and the Lord Himself is the One who gives the empowerment for measuring, who searches out the line, who plumbs the depths — not us! John wasn’t told to measure the city, he could only report the result of the measuring. Until we can see all people and all things as *God sees them*, we form opinions and make judgments about people and spiritual things and moves of God by outward appearances or by our own preconceived judgment! It is not the measure by the reed in the hand of the messenger sent from God, that is, the Holy Spirit! Those who walk in the living truth and in the Spirit and by the Spirit, judge all things by the *mind of Christ* — hence the measuring reed! Only in the Spirit and by the Spirit are we able to perceive and see the true reality of all things.

When John sees the messenger measuring the holy city we must understand what the measure is. Christ Jesus Himself is the measure! He is the golden reed! Truly, He is the measure, for all God’s elect are being brought unto “a *perfect man*, unto the *measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*!” Now the only thing we can measure by when we measure the bride of the Lamb and the city of the great King is the nature, the character, the wisdom, the glory, and the power of our Lord Jesus Christ. In chapter eleven of the Revelation John was given a reed like unto a rod and told to rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein (Rev. 11:1). Now it does not say that the temple at that time measured up to the full stature of Christ. It is my conviction that it did not! You see, John was given a reed like unto a rod with which to measure the temple. The reed was just a very common measuring rod, of ordinary, plain, weak, and destructible material, signifying that the standard for this measurement was not extremely high. But when we come to the holy city at the close of the dealings of God throughout the book of

Revelation, the messenger who measures the city has a *golden reed*, indicating that it is now time for the elect of God to be found perfect. Gold is the symbol in scripture representing the incorruptible, divine nature of God. Just as gold is the perfect metal that cannot be tarnished, so God's nature is perfection and cannot be tarnished!

Therefore, when the *temple of God* in chapter eleven becomes the *golden city of God* in chapter twenty-one, John reveals to us that "he that talked with me had a *golden reed to measure the city*, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof." Ah — now the rod is no longer a simple reed, it is a *golden reed*. Gold, as I mentioned, speaks of divine nature, revealing to us the great truth that the city has now become no longer a temple of ordinary stones, measured by an ordinary reed, but it is a city of gold and precious gems — it has attained fully to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, and is therefore *measured to a higher standard*, even the gold standard, as indicated by the golden reed. Full measure! The quality of the measure and the quality of the city correspond — both are gold. As the temple we are measured to a lesser standard, and are even measured by our brethren (John), for we are still growing, learning, developing, maturing, and becoming. But that is an imperfect measure as Paul has written, "...but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise" (II Cor. 10:12). This is not the measure of the city! The city is a people that has attained to the full perfection of God's nature and glory! Only the Spirit of God can measure the city by the standard of God's Christ! Isn't it wonderful!

THE CITY FOURSQUARE

"And the city lieth *foursquare*, and the length is as large as the breadth; and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The *length and the breadth and the height of it are equal*" (Rev. 21:16).

In reference to this beautiful description Ray Prinzing has pointed out that "foursquare" and the "equality" of all its sides denote that there is **COMPLETENESS IN EVERY PART**. Quality is not sacrificed for quantity. There are no highs and lows. Equality is revealed in every dimension and inworking. When every individual member of the Lord's elect is brought "*unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*," all will be equal — God **ALL *in all!*** When He is **THE ALL** in you, and He is **THE ALL** in your brother — that's true equality!

Another has pointed out that in ancient times the cube was held to be the most perfect of all geometric forms. In keeping with that, the only thing in the whole Old Testament economy of types and shadows that was foursquare, or a cube, was the Holy of holies in the tabernacle of Moses in the wilderness. The outer court was rectangular. The holy place was rectangular. But the most holy place was a cube — ten cubits by ten cubits by ten cubits. All spiritual truth and reality embodied in the typology of the Holy of holies is ultimately fulfilled in this city. The new Jerusalem is a people that has come to perfection in the full stature of the Son of God! There is no temple or sanctuary in the holy city, and no varied courts, rooms, or compartments. The entire city itself **IS ALL SANCTUARY, THE GLORY OF GOD FILLS THE WHOLE!** As a cube, full of the divine presence and power, the city stands as the ultimate Holy of holies — hence the name — the *Holy City*. The immediate presence and glory of God is no longer in a reserved place in His kingdom, for it floods all who comprise the city. It is the full and complete revelation, the unveiling of the glory of God in and through His **GOVERNMENTAL PEOPLE**. It is indeed wonderful!

To be continued...

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