



Psalms 78:2-4

I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings of old... We will not conceal them.

Parables Bookshelf - Series 1.5.4

This issue of PARABLES BOOKSHELF concludes the book *The Road from Babylon to Zion*.

Being in prison can be a very fruitful time in the lives of those who choose to make it so. Some of the most influential works of mankind were birthed by people in jail.

The apostle Paul wrote many of his letters to the churches while in prison. The books of Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon are often called "the prison epistles," because Paul wrote them while imprisoned in Rome.

As I mentioned in the

previous newsletter, John wrote the book of Revelation while exiled to the Isle of Patmos as a prisoner.

Many Christians throughout the years have found being in prison to be a very fruitful time. John Bunyan was put in prison in the late 1600s in England. While there, he wrote the classic Christian book *The Pilgrim's Progress*. This book has been translated into more than 200 languages, and has never been out of print since it was first published in 1678. Millions of copies have been printed

over the past 332 years.

Apart from writing, many people have made use of time in prison to memorize the Scriptures, become grounded in the word of God, to evangelize others. Some well known Christians, such as Charles Colson, came to Christ while in prison.

God tells us in His word that "all things" work together for good in the lives of God's children. It is quite often the things that are the most difficult that hold the promise of producing the most good in our lives.

Food for Thought

"He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose."

Jim Elliot

"The Christian does not think that God will love us because we are good, but God will make us good because he loves us."

C.S. Lewis

Scripture Memory

Matthew 4:4

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

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The Road from Babylon to Zion

Chapter 6 - The Silence of the Lambs

There is a lesson I have been learning on the road to Zion. It is often a difficult lesson to walk out, but one in

There is a time to be silent before those who do not understand the experiences that we are enduring.

which I desire to prevail and succeed. It is to remain silent when others accuse falsely, and to respond with peace when I am reviled. Yahshua demonstrated in His own life that it is futile to try to defend oneself in

the face of godless enemies. There is a time and place to give a defense of the gospel that we preach, but there is likewise a time to be silent before those who do not understand the experiences that we are enduring.

Isaiah 53:7

He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth.

Matthew 27:12-14

And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He did not answer. Then Pilate said to Him, "Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?" And He did not answer him with regard to even a single charge, so the governor was quite amazed.

Yes, Pilate was amazed at the restraint that Yahshua demonstrated in the face of His accusers. It is equally amazing to me that those who observed the suffering of Christ considered Him to be enduring the wrath of God due to His own sin.

Isaiah 53:4

Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

Certainly, we think, God must have been interested in justifying His Son in the eyes of sinful men and women. Certainly God would intervene and pronounce from heaven, "This is My beloved Son. With Him I am well pleased." Yet during the moment of Yahshua's trial, scourging, and crucifixion there were no voices from

heaven to announce Yahweh's displeasure with the Chief Priest, the Sanhedrin, the Pharisees, and the leaders of the Jews. Remarkably, Yahshua Himself remained silent.

I can understand the remarkable nature of this, for when I began enduring a firestorm of criticism for the path I was walking, there was much within me that wanted to shout out that I was merely following the leading of the Spirit. I wanted dull eared Christians to perceive what paths Yahweh will lead His faithful ones down. I wanted others to see that I was not smitten and stricken of God, but that the Father was pleased with my obedience to walk the path He had directed me down. I wanted to give the evidences of Yahweh's leading and prove conclusively to others that this path I was walking was laid on me as obedience.

There were some instances where I tried to bring others to understand why I had been removed from my place of ministry and why I was being commanded to walk a walk of faith in regard to my family's provision. When my family: parents, a brother and sister, expressed disapproval of my walk I wanted to convince them of the reality of Yahweh's direction in my life. When fellow saints did not understand, I wanted them to see. But without exception, I was never able to bring anyone to a place of understanding. Those who did not see, still did not see after I spoke to them. Instead, I felt like I had just participated in a futile exercise of self-justification.

After a few times of sharing with others who condemned my walk, I saw the futility of trying to convince them otherwise. I felt the conviction of the Spirit that I was to not defend myself or my reputation. I was to leave my defense TOTALLY in the hands of the Father. He will vindicate all of His servants in His time.

Part of the Father's will in this is that His Overcomers should die to their own reputations. It is the Father's will that His elect should die to all that is of self and that has its roots in pride. The soul of man wants others to think well of itself. Our soul does not want others to think lowly and unworthy things about us. Self wants to be respected, but the scriptures reveal that the way to exaltation is the path of humility and suffering.

Luke 6:22, 26

"Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you,

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and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man... Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for their fathers used to treat the false prophets in the same way.”

It was the religious people of the day that rejected Yahshua. It was those who considered themselves guardians of the Law and of the holy writings of the prophets and patriarchs who condemned One who was totally righteous. Yahshua has given fair warning that all of His disciples will endure the same.

John 15:20-21

“Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me.”

I know there are many who will read these words who are walking down difficult roads due to choosing to be obedient to the voice of the Spirit. These ones will be misjudged by family and friends and other Christians who do not understand the ways of God. It is a bitter thing to have others look at your greatest trials, your greatest acts of obedience and faithfulness to God, and to esteem you as a sinner, or to consider you to be deluded. The temptation will arise to justify yourself before the eyes of others. You will want others to say “Well done!”, and to encourage you on your path, but instead you will receive misunderstanding and discouragement.

Listen to the voice of the Spirit when these times come. You will hear Him speaking to you and encouraging you to rest and remain silent. He will exhort you to leave your reputation completely in the hands of the Father and to seek only His approval. If you are concerned that others do not recognize your obedience, and you are insistent that they should acknowledge your faithfulness, you will only become angry and embittered when they don't. Know this with confidence, Yahweh will in His time reveal those who are faithful and those who are not.

Consider David. He had the anointing oil poured over his head by the most revered man of God in his day. It was prophesied that he was a man after God's heart and that Yahweh would establish him as king. Did anyone

acknowledge this? Did anyone honor those qualities in David that God was so pleased with? No! David's father thought so little of him that he did not even invite him to meet the prophet Samuel when Samuel told Jesse to bring all of his sons. After Samuel anointed David, Jesse sent David back out to tend sheep.

When David was sent by his father to check on the welfare of his brothers who were serving in King Saul's army, David's oldest brother Eliab despised David, and he was offended that David did not understand why no one had answered the challenge of Goliath.

I Samuel 17:28

Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger burned against David and he said, "Why have you come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your insolence and the wickedness of your heart; for you have come down in order to see the battle."

No, David's own family did not see in him the things that so captivated the heart of Yahweh. David was little esteemed in the eyes of his family. After David slew Goliath Saul brought David to be with him in his household and to be a servant to the king. Yet Saul was jealous of David because he saw that God was with him. Saul did not acknowledge that David was pleasing to God, nor did he give him honor. Instead, Saul sought to kill David without a cause. We are told that David had to flee, and his family had to flee as well. David had to take his parents to a foreign land to stay.

*It was the religious people
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I Samuel 22:3-4

And David went from there to Mizpah of Moab; and he said to the king of Moab, "Please let my father and my mother come and stay with you until I know what God will do for me." Then he left them with the king of Moab; and they stayed with him all the time that David was in the stronghold.”

Do you think that even then David's parents acknowledged that he was God's anointed and that he was righteous in his actions? I think not. I suspect that they

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blamed David for having to flee from the land of their inheritance. We have these words of David in Psalm 27:

Psalms 27:9-10

Do not hide Your face from me, do not turn Your servant away in anger; You have been my help; do not abandon me nor forsake me, O God of my salvation! For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but Yahweh will take me up.

What bitterness it must have been to David for his family to forsake him and to

Do not allow your anguish and pain to lead you to speak rash words in defense of yourself.

not understand that he was suffering unjustly. I suspect David came to a point where he no longer tried to convince them of his faithfulness to God. I believe he came to a point of accepting

that his obedience would only be known to Yahweh.

For many years David walked in wilderness places where he was humiliated time and again. At his lowest point, the very men who attached themselves to him spoke of stoning him. On another occasion when David and his men had faithfully guarded a wealthy man's flocks and kept all of his shepherds from harm, this man acted despitely toward David and spoke false and insulting words about David's character and motives.

I Samuel 25:10-11

But Nabal answered David's servants and said, "Who is David? And who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants today who are each breaking away from his master. Shall I then take my bread and my water and my meat that I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to men whose origin I do not know?"

Nabal accused David of being an unfaithful servant to King Saul when David had been the most faithful of servants. Nabal accused David of having rebelliously broken off from Saul when the truth was that Saul was seeking to kill David without a reason. In great anger and exasperation, David responded from his soul and he and his men went forth with the intent to kill every member of Nabal's household. Yet God sent an intercessor in the form of Nabal's wife Abigail to keep David from taking vengeance into his own hand. David listened to the voice

of Abigail and he was genuinely grateful that he did not carry out the rash action that his soul was leading him to perform.

I Samuel 25:32-33

Then David said to Abigail, "Blessed be Yahweh God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me, and blessed be your discernment, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodshed and from avenging myself by my own hand.

The saints who journey to Zion will encounter many events similar to this one. People will deliberately interpret events in a manner that is inconsistent with the judgment of Yahweh. They will speak evil of your good works and they will reproach you for your obedience. The tendency of the flesh and soul of man is to respond in defense of one's reputation, even as David set out to do. Yet, Yahweh will send an intercessor in the form of His Spirit to counsel us to not go down this path, nor to take up the sword in defense of ourselves.

Abigail healed David's wounded spirit by telling him that he would surely see the fulfillment of all the things God had promised him. In the same way, the Spirit binds up our hurts and reminds us of the calling set before us and the surety of our inheritance if we will continue to walk faithfully before God.

The Spirit would entreat us to not use the sword in our own defense. What is the sword that we are tempted to take up? It is the tongue.

Proverbs 12:18

There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

Do not allow your anguish and pain to lead you to speak rash words in defense of yourself. Do not give in to the temptation to slash and cut others in retaliation for their condemnation and misjudgment of your faithful walk. Follow the example of our faithful Savior and restrain your lips from speaking in your own defense. Give place to God to vindicate you in His own way and time. We are to count it a joy and a blessing when others speak evil of us for our obedience. We will in no way lose our reward.

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I Peter 4:14

If you are reproached for the name of Christ, happy are you; for the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you: on their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified.

Yes, it brings glory to God when we restrain our lips. When we are reviled we are to speak a blessing in return. When men and women do not understand, when family and friends condemn our walk, we are to entrust our reputation to the hands of the Father and in due time He will manifest His righteous servants.

Those who would be citizens of Zion must rule over their tongues.

Psalms 141:3

Set a guard, O Yahweh, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips.

Do not seek to justify yourself, but allow room for the Father to do so.

Proverbs 27:2

Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; someone else, and not your own lips.

The road to Zion is a pathway of humility. If you can be evil spoken of and not speak a word of rebuttal or retaliation then you have chosen righteously and are being conformed to the image of Christ. If you can earnestly pray that those who have misjudged you should be forgiven and their trespasses not held against them, then you are making progress toward Zion's gates.

It takes faith to remain silent when being falsely condemned. The saint must believe that although man judges many things falsely, Yahweh will judge with righteousness and fairness. The saint must believe his or her vindication will come, that their obedience will have its reward in the hour appointed. Only by having this faith can the saint be at peace. Only then can the lambs of God remain silent.

May you know this peace, for surely the promises of God

will come. They will hasten forward and not delay.

Chapter 7 - The Endurance of the Saints

We have seen in previous chapters that the ambushes of the enemy are many, and this book cannot attempt to relate every specific snare and trap of the enemy. Yet all of the ambushes of Satan serve a purpose in the life of the Elect of God. To the extent that the saint overcomes the flesh, the world, and Satan, they are conformed to the image of Christ. Yahweh does not present tests and trials to the saint that they might fail, but that they might Overcome and share in the victory of Christ.

It is to be noted that most of the trials spoken of here relate to attitude. Will the saint allow his or her hurts and offenses to produce bitterness in their life, or will they put on a heart of forgiveness, mercy and love? Will the saint fall to the peril of self-pity, or will they put on a heart of faith and look to the joy and reward set before them? Will the saint allow their tongue to slash and cut others who stand as enemies before them, or will the saint exercise self-discipline by ruling over their tongue?

The road to Zion is a pathway of humility.

If the Father were simply interested in His Elect being born again of the Spirit, then He could easily have chosen to catch the saints up to heaven at the moment of their new birth. Yet He does not do so. He leaves the newborn saint in an often hostile environment where growth is mandatory. He causes the saint to undergo one test of faith after another in order that their faith might be perfected. A perfected faith is the object of the Father's working in our lives, and it is a most precious thing in His sight.

I Peter 1:6-7

In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Yahshua the Messiah...

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When we have been made outcasts, when we have been scorned and rejected, when our words have been twisted and our motives impugned, when we are persecuted for the obedience we walk in, it is in these circumstances that we have opportunity to have the life of Christ re-

Yahweh has no pleasure in the saint that lacks endurance.

vealed to all of creation through these vessels of clay. When we have been given promises, and the promises are delayed; when we have hoped against hope for something, and the hope has tarried; when our

hearts have wept with the bitterness of this cruel world and we have longed for love and justice and righteousness to break forth; it is then that patience is acquired to the perfecting of our faith.

James 1:2-4

Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

It takes endurance to bring the saints to the place where they are "perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." The Father is patient in His activity toward us. If we fail the test the first time, He will bring us to the test yet again. He is persistent because He yearns for maturity and perfection in His children.

This is perhaps one of the most difficult aspects of the road to Zion. It is a seemingly endless road. It is not a road that is traversed in a moment, but a road that requires endurance if one would reach the end. The saint that goes a distance and then refuses to go any further will fail to reach the destination and receive the prize. The saint must endure to the end of the race.

Hebrews 10:36-39

For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. **FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY. BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH; AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM.** But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the

preserving of the soul.

Note once more the use of the word endurance in this scripture. Yahweh has no pleasure in the saint that lacks endurance. The last days have been foretold to be perilous time where the love of many will fail. Many who once professed faith in God will fall away, but the Overcomers will endure to the end.

Matthew 24:12-13

"Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved."

Mark 13:13

"You will be hated by all because of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he will be saved."

I know many of those reading these words feel that they are at the end of their endurance. The way has been bitter and hard. Your heart has been broken time and again, and your hope has been deferred. Thinking about enduring yet more trials, suffering, and delays tears at your heart. Yet the reward is great for the one who overcomes to the end. If we could see the reward we would say with Paul, "I consider that these momentary, light afflictions are not worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed in us." Look at some of what is promised to the one who overcomes to the end.

Revelation 2:7

"To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God."

Revelation 2:11

"He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death [the lake of fire]."

Revelation 2:17

"To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it."

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Revelation 2:26-28

"He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES, as I also have received authority from My Father; and I will give him the morning star."

Revelation 3:5

"He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels."

Revelation 3:12

"He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name."

Revelation 3:21

"He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."

Revelation 21:1-7

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." Then He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son."

Please note that these promises are all for the Overcomer. It does not say that everyone who confesses the name of Christ will receive these promises. It does not say that everyone who has at some time in their life followed Christ will partake of these things. It says, "He who overcomes." These promises are for the Overcomer, only. Many are the children of God who will fail to attain to these things and there will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth among multitudes of those who filled the pews of their local church building week after week and year after year.

Did you note that Revelation 2:11 stated that "He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death"? Revelation 21:8 clearly identifies the second death as the lake of fire.

Revelation 21:8

"But for the cowardly and unbelieving..., their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

How many of the saints have been falsely taught that the lake of fire is only for those who never confessed faith in Christ? It is only the Overcomer who has been promised to be spared from the second death which is the lake of fire. Many who are of the household of God will share a place with the unbeliever, and that place is in the lake of fire. Yahshua spoke of servants in His household who acknowledged Him as Lord, but who acted in a wicked and unbelieving manner. He stated that they would share the following punishment.

*These promises are
for the Overcomer,
only.*

Luke 12:46

The Lord of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and assign him a place with the unbelievers.

Look carefully at these three scriptures side by side:

But for the cowardly and unbelieving..., their part will be

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in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

The Lord of that [wicked] slave will come..., and assign him a place with the unbelievers.

He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death...

If you wonder what benefit there is in your enduring so many trials, taking up your cross and following in the path of Yahshua when so many other saints treat the

It takes endurance to be accounted as an Overcomer...

cross as an optional part of Christianity that they have opted out of, then consider these scriptures. These lukewarm saints will be spewed out of Yahshua's mouth. They will be assigned a portion with the

unbelievers. They will endure the second death, the Lake of Fire, which purifies all those who would not voluntarily submit to the purging processes of God while in this life. They will endure the fires of purification until all that is not of Christ in their life is burned away.

[To read more of this matter of Yahweh's purpose for the Lake of Fire, I would encourage you to read the article "God's Plan of the Ages" which can be found at <http://heart4god.8k.com> .]

It takes endurance to be accounted as an Overcomer, and this endurance is possibly the hardest thing to attain on the Road to Zion. We are told that "for the joy set before Him, Yahshua endured the cross." What a joy is set before the Elect of God, as well. The Overcomer is promised all of the following:

- To eat of the Tree of Life that is in the Paradise of God.
- To be spared from the second death.
- To eat of the hidden manna reserved for the Overcomers.
- To be given a name written on a white stone that only the Overcomer and God know.
- Authority over the nations, and the right to rule over

them.

- The morning star.
- White raiment to clothe themselves with (Righteousness).
- Their name will be confessed before Yahweh and before His angels.
- They will be made a pillar in the house of God and they will not go out from there anymore.
- They will have Yahweh's name written on them, and the name of the New Jerusalem, and Yahshua's new name.
- They will sit with Yahshua on His throne.
- They will inherit the New Heaven and New Earth, and the New Jerusalem.
- They will have every tear wiped away.
- They will know death no longer.
- Mourning and crying and pain will be no more.
- They will be able to drink of the water of life freely.
- Yahshua will be their God and the Overcomers will be His son.

Such are the awesome promises reserved for the Overcomers in Christ. Yahweh does not bestow such valuable treasures lightly. This life on earth is a proving ground to determine who will be worthy to receive such things. When Yahshua comes He will bring His reward with Him and give to each saint according to their works.

Revelation 22:12

"Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done."

With all this in mind, we are exhorted to not grow weary in well doing, but to persevere.

Galatians 6:9

Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.

II Thessalonians 3:13

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But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good.

Hebrews 12:3

For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

We have need of this endurance on the road to Zion. It is one thing to exclaim as did Peter, "I am ready even to die with You", but can we endure a thousand deaths to the life of our soul over a prolonged period of time? This same man who said he would die with Christ asked Him, "How many times must I forgive my brother?" It is often a more difficult thing to bear up under insults and offenses over a prolonged period of time than it is to give one's life as a martyr for Christ.

You who have committed your life to Christ, do you have the endurance to be falsely judged and misunderstood by family today, and tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow, and the day after that with no end in sight? Will you graciously bear this and choose to forgive all who offend day after day? You who hope in God for some promise, will you continue to wait months, years and decades, if the promise should tarry, without becoming embittered toward God? You who are undergoing financial lack, are you content to remain in this state of lack when you see the wicked prospering around you and you know God could do so much more for you? Will you remain patient and not murmur and complain against God?

Believe me, I know these are difficult things, and often my flesh and my soul want to cry out, "Enough! I can endure no more! I will endure no more!" Yet the Spirit within restrains me from these rebellious declarations. Inside I have felt crushed and broken time and again, but obedience demands that I do nothing but submit to the crushing of God. I know that as the hard outer shell of the old man is crushed, the sweet and aromatic fragrance of Christ is released to come forth.

It would be nice if such transformation to the image of Christ could occur in a moment of time, but for the last two thousand years man has known this rending of his being that the life of Christ might be manifested. As a seed that spends much time under the soil being subjected to drought, flood, frost and heat that the husk

might be broken open and new life spring forth, even so has the germ of Divine life within man's flesh been seeking to burst forth in new life without the restraint of the shell that has hindered it and held it back for so long.

The time is near at hand for man to cast off this mortal shroud and put on immortality, to put off this body of corruption and put on incorruption. It was prophesied that after two days (two thousand years) of this torn and anguished state where our flesh and spirit have waged war in our members that Yahshua would raise us up and heal us. We are now entering the third day and the promise of Sonship is at hand, yet it is reserved for those who exercise endurance and walk as Overcomers.

We have need of this endurance on the road to Zion.

Hosea 6:1-3

"Come, let us return to Yahweh. For He has torn us, but He will heal us; He has wounded us, but He will bandage us. He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day, that we may live before Him. So let us know, let us press on to know Yahweh. His going forth is as certain as the dawn; and He will come to us like the rain, like the spring rain watering the earth."

As you journey to Zion, keep in mind these words of the apostle Paul.

Hebrews 10:36

For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.

Selah

Chapter 8 - Deception Does Abound

As I have been journeying from Babylon to Zion I have noted an alarming number of saints who have fallen for the deceit of Satan. It seems that those who have been waylaid by deception far outnumber those who remain

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on the narrow path of truth. Much of this deception is extremely serious in nature, and many have gotten off the narrow path and are in danger of failing to achieve the goal and prize that has been set before them.

In the past few years the Father has led me to encounter one group or person after another who have fallen into deception, and He has led me to examine the teachings they espouse to discern what is good and what is evil in them. When people are deceived, they quite often have some truth mixed in with error. Often there is a great deal of truth, and those saints that are mired in deception and error have in many cases been given genuine revelation from the Spirit of God. However, a little leaven will leaven the entire lump, and a little error mixed in with truth corrupts the whole body of teaching and poisons all who feed on such a mixture.

There is a tremendous amount of deception in the Babylonian church system. Babylon has mixed the worship of Yahweh with many idols. Babylon wants to serve the One true God, and also pursue the things that satisfy the flesh and soul of man. The Feast days of Yahweh, Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles and many others have been

Not all who journey out of Babylon endure to the end.

replaced with festivals of pagan origin, Christmas, Easter, Halloween, etc.. The Babylonian church does not think twice about this substitution, nor of the myriad of other false traditions that have been imported into

the life of mainstream denominations, and the abandonment of the doctrine of the apostles and prophets.

Entire books have been written that expose the pagan practices of the harlot church system and I could write volumes just declaring some of the more profound deceptions that have been foisted upon the church. But it is not Babylon that I am interested in here. There is a great body of people who have made an exit from Babylon, and who have aspired to walk in truth, but many of these saints have themselves embraced great deception and they are in danger of losing much of the reward that was placed before them.

Not all who journey out of Babylon endure to the end. Not all remain free of grotesque error and deception. We have many examples in scripture that reveal this truth. Consider Abram when he was called to come out of the

land of idolatry he lived in, which was Ur of the Chaldees. Abram's father Nahor also set himself to journey with his son, and to leave the idolatry of Ur behind. Additionally Lot, Abram's nephew, began the same journey.

Abram's father Nahor failed to go the distance, however. Instead, he settled in Haran which was far short of the goal. True, he no longer lived in Ur, but neither did he make it to the land of promise. It takes faith and patient endurance to go the whole distance to which the Father calls us. Abram continued on from Haran without his father, and Lot continued the journey with Abram.

The tragic story of Lot is well known. Upon arriving in the land of promise Abram and Lot separated for they both were very wealthy and had many flocks and servants and strife was arising between their servants. Abram gave Lot first choice regarding where he would go and Lot chose that which was pleasing to the eye and attractive to the senses. He settled in the rich and fertile plains of Sodom and Gomorrah.

When the judgment of God came upon the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot and his family were brought out at the hand of angels by the mercy of God, but Lot lost all that he owned. His wife, whose heart had become attached to Sodom, disobeyed and looked back and she was turned into a pillar of salt. Lot was a man who was now destitute. All he owned was gone and his wife was dead. He suffered tremendous loss.

The story of Abram's journey from Ur of the Chaldees is typical of the journey many are being called to in this hour. There are many who are setting forth, but not all are enduring to the end. Like Nahor and Lot, it seems that a majority of those who set forth to Zion are falling short of the promise. Many are falling short of the goal as they are falling prey to deception and error. This deception is a mark of the last days.

Matthew 24:11, 24

"Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many...

"For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect."

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II Peter 2:1-3

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies... Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; and in their greed they will exploit you with false words...

II Peter 3:17

You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness...

The deception spoken of in these verses is not something that is for future days. It is here now. I am witnessing false prophets and false anointed ones (Christs) who are luring many into deception and into spiritual death.

This can be a difficult matter to discern, for there are many kingdom truths that are being unveiled in this hour that have been hidden from former generations. The best wine has been saved for last. I read a word that was posted on a prophetic website this week where the writer was giving a list of signs to discern heretical teachings. One of his signs of heresy was if the teaching was new. In this the author is wrong, and his tests for heresy were manmade, not of the Spirit of God.

There is much heresy, much that is false and deceptive, in traditions and doctrines of demons that have been around for generations. Being new does not make something a heresy, nor does a teaching being old and established make it truth. With Yahweh there is nothing that is truly new, but Yahweh's unfolding of truth to man is progressive. Some of the greatest saints of previous ages longed to look into the things that are being revealed in this hour, but these things were closed to them.

Daniel 12:4, 8-10

"But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time... As for me, I heard but could not understand; so I said, "My lord, what will be the outcome of these events?" He said, "Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time. Many will be purged, purified and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the

wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand."

Daniel 8:26

"The vision of the evenings and mornings which has been told is true; But keep the vision secret, for it pertains to many days in the future."

Revelation 10:4

When the seven peals of thunder had spoken, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up the things which the seven peals of thunder have spoken and do not write them."

There are many things that are concealed and sealed up until the end time. These things will be revealed, and according to the test of heresy that this man spoke of, these truths of God would be called heresy for they have been sealed up until this time.

There are numerous reasons why truth may appear new to the church in this hour. The church has undergone a long dark age where many kingdom truths that were seen by the early apostles were lost. Much is being restored in this hour, but it is a remnant that have ears to hear. There are also few saints who are able to eat meat, for many, though they should by now be teachers, are still requiring milk as they focus on the elementary (as in elementary school) principles of the Kingdom. What are these elementary principles?

It is a remnant that have ears to hear.

Hebrews 5:12-6:2

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil. Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of instruction

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about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and judgment.

What do the churches focus on week after week, year after year? Is it not elementary teaching about the Christ, about repentance from dead works and faith toward Christ? Is it not elementary teachings about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection from the dead and judgment? These are all elementary things. These things equate to learning the alphabet, counting to ten, learning basic colors and shapes, reading a clock, and other things our children learn while in elementary school. It would be totally inappropriate for a high school student to still be sitting in classes where the alphabet is being taught and students are learning to write out their letters. Yet many saints have been sitting in primary school for years in their churches. They have not progressed past drinking milk to eating meat.

I recently had a Christian brother from Colorado fly out to Georgia for some business in Atlanta. He had read some of my writings and wanted to speak with me. This brother only knew the elementary principles of Christ and he became offended when he heard me declare some things he had never heard before. He began scolding me for getting away from elementary principles. He told me that all I really needed to do was focus on evangelism and Gospel 101. Everything else he declared to be a waste of time and a distraction from the true purpose of the saints which he pronounced to be the winning of souls.

This mindset is a problem among the saints of God. Many saints read the command of Christ where He stated, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit..." (Matthew 28:19), and they interpret this to mean "get people born again and baptized." But making disciples is much more than getting people born again. It would be like a hospital that closed all of its facilities except for the maternity ward where babies were born. Life isn't complete at birth. There is much left to take place. There are children to be raised, young adults to be nurtured and taught to walk before God in the strength of their own relationship. There are adults to be equipped and released into their callings. There are the aged and wise ones who can oversee the saints and share from the storehouse of their experience

of walking with God.

The "great commission", as it is often called, is not to birth babies. It is to make disciples. It is to teach the saints the elementary principles of the Kingdom and then take them beyond these things. The very next verse after the above commissioning states:

Matthew 28:20

teaching them to observe ALL that I commanded you...

Yahshua did not just teach that the saints had to be born again. This part of His message is found in a few short verses in John chapter 3. He taught much more, so that John declared:

John 21:25

And there are also many other things which Yahshua did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written.

Yahshua taught the elementary principles, but he also fully revealed the Father (John 1:18). He revealed that a mature walk that is pleasing to the Father is one in which a man is fully conformed to the image of God. God has never given up or been diverted from His original intent declared in Genesis:

Genesis 1:26

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness..."

Yahshua revealed that man in God's image will live to do the will of the Father, and only the Father's will. He will do nothing of His own initiative. Six times in the gospel of John we have Yahshua's words that "I never do anything of My own initiative. I always do the will of the Father." Newborn saints know very little of this type of life. It is the mature who have learned to discern good and evil and to separate the Spirit from the soul (Hebrews 5:14, 4:12).

Paul told the Hebrew believers that he had many things he desired to speak to them, but they could not receive

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them for they were yet as babes when they should have been teachers. He wanted to speak many more things of Melchisedec and how this king/priest stood as an example of Yahweh's design for the saints. He wanted to declare things that only the mature can receive, but they were not able.

Yet, like this man who came to visit me, we have those today that say, "All we really need is milk. All else is a waste of time." This is great error. Let us go on to maturity. The Father has mysteries that He wishes to reveal to us. There are things that have not been formerly heard that He wishes to declare.

There are some who do have ears to hear today, yet a common reaction they get when they share what the Spirit is revealing is that their words are heresy. Their words are not what has been heard and declared in Babylon. They are speaking truths that have been lost, and revelations that have yet to be expressed, things that have been hidden and concealed until the last days. Do not write all such things off as heresy. At least be as the noble Bereans and search the scriptures to see if these things be true. Do not say, "But this is not what my preacher has told me", or "My parents did not believe this way", or "My church holds to another doctrine."

Luke 11:9-10

"So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened."

James 1:5

But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

There is much truth being unveiled in this hour, and every truth is new to man at some point. Do not declare something to be heresy unless you have first tested it by the Word and by the Spirit. Yet there is much deception and heresy present today. The saints must discern the difference between the true and the false. Look at the following two scriptures side by side and you will see the narrow path that the Elect must walk.

I Thessalonians 5:19-21

Do not quench the Spirit; do not despise prophetic utterances. But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good...

I John 4:1

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

We are not to despise prophecy and thereby grieve the Spirit, but we are to examine everything carefully. Do not throw out a word or teaching because it is new to you, but also be aware that there are many false prophets and every word must be tested to see if it is of the Spirit of Truth or the spirit of error.

There are some teachings that I have presented to the body, and because of them I have been labeled a heretic by some. Some who have called me a heretic are in places of public ministry, yet these same saints have failed the test of nobility practiced by the Bereans. They have not searched the scriptures to see whether what was proclaimed was true. In fact, some have flat out stated that they refuse to discuss certain issues with me. This is not a fulfillment of Paul's words to "examine everything carefully". It is simply being closed-minded.

Do not throw out a word or teaching because it is new to you...

At the beginning of this chapter it is necessary to declare the balance that must be attained by the Elect in this hour. We cannot be so narrow in our views that we refuse all that is new to us, for much new truth has been determined by the counsel of God to be unveiled in this hour. Yet we cannot be so open minded that we let our brains fall out. We are to not despise prophetic utterances and teachings, but we are to test them all.

In the past couple of years the Father has brought me to various encounters with individuals who were espousing particular beliefs, doctrines, and precepts. The Father desired that I should test these words, and I have done so. One such encounter occurred toward the end of a prolonged period where the Father had our family relying upon Him for every need to be met.

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For a period of a year and a half the Father placed me under the command to not work in a job to receive wages. He told me to step out in faith and He would take care of my family. I have a wife and two children, and we had no money in the bank so this was a real test for our family. When the Father first placed this obedience upon me I did not know how long He would have me to walk in this manner. Ultimately it was 18 months, and during this entire time we never lacked for food, clothing, shelter, or any necessary thing.

Toward the end of this time the Father did an incredible thing. He provided for us to purchase a motorhome with cash and to live for some months in it. We spent an entire month at the beach at the orchestration of the Father, and my wife and I celebrated our 16th anniversary during this month at the very same place that we had honeymooned 16 years previously. This place was

The name Yahweh alone occurs 6,828 times in the Old Testament.

Jekyll Island, Georgia. The Father showed us that this was a time of new beginnings for my wife and me. Eight is the number of new beginnings, and two times eight is sixteen, signifying new beginning for both of us. To further corroborate this it was the sixteenth month since I had followed the Father in obedience to not work, and we had just received a gift of \$8,000 which made purchasing the motorhome and taking this trip possible.

While we were at Jekyll Island and staying at an RV park, we met another family who were wintering there. This family were "Name Keepers" and "Sabbath Keepers". This means that they held to a doctrine that taught that the divine names Yahweh and Yahshua should be used, as well as some of the Hebrew references for deity such as Elohim and Adonai, but that other titles that have been substituted for the original names as recorded in scripture should be avoided. To this family the titles God and Lord were considered pagan and were strictly avoided. This family also believed they were to keep the Sabbath according to the Law of Moses and that no work was to be done from sundown on Friday to sundown on Saturday. They also practiced other aspects of the Torah such as eating kosher.

This family was in the RV park the whole time we were, but we didn't meet them until after we had been there several weeks. The husband was very outspoken in his beliefs and he invited us over for a chat. He told us all

about his beliefs regarding name-keeping and he gave me several teachings in printed form, as well as some files from his computer and I began doing what Paul commanded, to examine the teachings carefully. What I found was that there was much truth in the teachings he held to, but there was also leaven present, and the leaven needed to be removed.

I did not go looking for this encounter. The Father brought it to me, and He wanted me to look at this issue. I have since found that there are a lot of people who call themselves name-keepers, and many have their own distinct beliefs that keep them separated from one another. One thing that I noted is that those who are name-keepers often think they are the only group with the truth of God, and everyone else are heretics. Some of these groups unabashedly declare that their group is the only group approved of God, and the only ones who are truly saved. This, of course, is error.

This issue of using the divine names of God as recorded in scripture was something the Father wanted me to look into. I had long been interested in it, but I had not taken the time to really dig into it. When I was still a teenager I began to go through my King James Version of the Bible and write down the actual name or title as recorded in the original Hebrew in every verse beginning with Genesis 1:1. I would look the name up in my Strong's Concordance and write it above the word substituted by the translators. This was a daunting task, however, and I never finished it. The name Yahweh alone occurs 6,828 times in the Old Testament.

I was ready and eager to look into this matter when this man broached the subject with me. I took all that he gave me and read it, comparing every statement with scriptures, and praying earnestly that the Father would lead me into truth regarding the use of divine names. The Father was faithful and the Spirit revealed many things to me during this study. The conclusions of this study can be found in an article titled "The Usage of Divine Names" which is freely available at the website <http://heart4god.8k.com>.

There is some profound truth in what these groups taught, namely that the actual name of God (Yahweh) has been obscured and lost to multitudes of professing believers due to the practice of the translators of replacing it with titular substitutes. Many saints falsely think that Yahweh's name is God or LORD. These words are

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titles, not names, in the same way that Dad is a title, but all Dads have proper names. I believe it has been a deceit of Satan to obscure the name of Yahweh, but it has also served the purpose of Yahweh. Knowing someone's name is a sign of intimacy and the masses of professing Christians are not intimate with Him.

However, this man, his family, and the groups of which he was a part, though they had some truth, they also had much error. They teach that it is sinful to use the title LORD to refer to Yahweh or Yahshua because Baal is often translated into English as lord. But they have overlooked numerous scriptures where the word baal was actually used in reference to Yahweh, for baal was a rather generic term that could refer to any lord or master. On the other hand, a word that they state is acceptable, Elohim, is also a generic term referring to deity and it is used in various places in scripture to refer to false gods, such as the elohim of Egypt. Their logic in accepting one term and refusing another is nonsensical.

They also teach that Jesus is a pagan name and that it was derived from either the name Zeus or Isis and it should never be used. I searched this claim with a great deal of persistence and I found it to be unsubstantiated. Other logic employed by this man, and the groups that believe as he did, is not sound. This man told me that names don't change over time or across languages, so we are only correct when we use the original form of a name recorded in scripture. This is easily disproved, for even alphabets change, and the Hebrews themselves have had several quite remarkably distinct variations of their language and alphabet. Also, it is a simple matter to show that names do change over time and across languages, sometimes quite drastically.

As I examined this matter I found that a Latin form of Yah was Iah, Yah being a form of Yahweh used in numerous places in scripture, and the word for salvation, or save, was pronounced "soose". Combining these two we get Iesus (ee-ay-soose) which literally meant "Yah's salvation" to the Greek speaking people of the Roman Empire. "Yah's Salvation" is the meaning of the name of the Son of God recorded in scripture (Matthew 1:21). If you look at Matthew 1:21 in the Greek you will find that to the Greek, Iesus, from which we get Jesus, held the meaning mentioned here. It was not as this man asserted, some devilish plot to replace the name of the Son of God with the name of a Greek or Roman god or goddess. Yahshua would have been the name Jesus was known by among the Hebrews to whom He was sent. In Hebrew Yahshua holds the same meaning as does Iesus

in the Greek.

This man, his family, and the groups that teach the same things, have become islands unto themselves. They declare in many instances that you are not saved if you were baptized in the name of Jesus, God, or Lord. This man was re-baptized after he learned the names of Yahweh and Yahshua, and he suggested that others should be as well. This man was friendly to me and my family as long as I was reading the material he gave me, but when I came back and shared some of the error in the conclusions he was espousing he became angry and did not want to talk to me anymore.

I have found this to be a pattern among those who are walking in deception. They are often very closed to an honest examination of the scriptures, and they get angry very quickly with those who do not come to agreement with them. In adopting this attitude of impatience they effectively commit themselves to remaining in deception, for they will allow no light to enter into their spirit.

*People who are
deceived are that way
for a reason.*

This encounter was merely one of many of which the Father has brought me to in recent years. I learned much through the encounter and, through the things the Father revealed to me as I carefully examined what was being taught, I have been able to help others who were dealing with the same topic. It would have been wrong, and detrimental to my own understanding, had I simply perceived error and rejected everything this man was saying. The Father does not want us to have this type of knee jerk reaction to the things we encounter. He desires that we should be diligent and faithful in our examination of prophecies and teachings.

We should not be frightened by teachings that are new to us, nor fear that we will be swept away into deception. Those who are faithful will be led into truth by the Spirit. People who are deceived are that way for a reason. I have found that there are three things that particularly open people up to deception and error. Bitterness, a failure to walk in the truth that has been given, and rebellion against the governmental order of God will all open the saint up to deception.

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I know of one brother who has a website with many teachings, and he has a small following of people. For a time he was given many revelations from the Father that were quite profound. However, a root of bitterness was present in this man's life and this led to the defiling of his ministry. I have watched as his teachings have strayed off into greater degrees of error and deception until he is now declaring that he is the Elijah for the last days, and that he is also the true apostle that replaces Judas.

Such claims should be patently absurd to the saints, but there are a small number of people who have gotten caught up in his deception and who believe his words. I

Truth and error will both increase alongside one another.

visited with this man in his home, and he has a precious family. Later, when I tried to show him from scripture how his claims could not be true, he became angry and refused to discuss the issues

with me, declaring that my attitude was wrong toward him and that I was attacking him. Again, an unwillingness to faithfully examine the scriptures was present and has resulted in this man being hardened against the truth and it has kept him from coming out of deception. I believe bitterness in this man's life against fellow ministers who mistreated him was the open door that opened him up to the deceptions of Satan.

We are also told in scripture that failing to have a sincere love of the truth will lead one to embracing deception. If the saint has been given light and truth, but has failed to walk in it, even what they have will be taken away and the Father will consequently send delusion to these saints who did not love the truth.

II Thessalonians 2:10-11

Because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false...

There are other things that open the saints up to deception: rebellion against the governmental order of Yahweh; harboring idols in one's heart; and a spirit of unbelief are some of the more evident things.

In the hour in which we live it is somewhat paradoxical that truth and error will both increase alongside one another. The elect of God must not be closed to the unveiling of things previously hidden, but at the same time they must guard against the deceit of Satan. They must not despise or reject prophecies and teaching, but they must carefully examine every word. A failure in either direction will hinder the saint from reaching the goal the Father has set before them.

Guard your heart, put away bitterness, walk in the light you have been given, put on a heart of humility, and earnestly seek the Father that He might guide you into all truth and you will do well on your journey to Zion.

Chapter 9 - Conspiracy, Incorporated

The matter to be discussed in this chapter is very important. Multitudes of saints are falling for this particular trap of the enemy. Nearly every week I get a letter from someone that sends me some warning of dire things that are occurring in the world, or a link to some site where such issues are discussed. There is a whole industry that has sprung up to fulfill the desire of those who want to be kept up-to-date about the latest thing that is happening in the kingdom of darkness.

I have heard the stories about the secret societies, the Trilateral Commission, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Skull and Bones organization, the international bankers, the Bilderbergers, the Rothschilds, the Jesuits, the United Nations and its New World Order, the smart chips and digital implants, the secret prison camps, the black helicopters, and government complicity in just about every evil deed imaginable, etc., etc.. I would think it remarkable if any of the readers of this book have not heard many of the same stories.

Although I know there is a great deal of speculation and wild imagination relating to these matters, I also recognize some truth in the stories. I would not tell you that all such stories are false, nor that every conspiracy theory is the product of a suspicious and delusional mind, for there truly are many conspiracies in the world, and there are many wicked men who are pawns of Satan who are working out his evil schemes in this world. The person who believes that history is simply a product of chance is really somewhat naive. Many of the wars and events of history have been the product of collaboration

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and collusion among evil men who were working out their own agendas. Conspiracies are real.

The question is not whether there is truth in these stories, the question the saints should ask is, "Would the Father have me to focus on these matters?" There is a whole industry built around exploiting the interest of people, mostly Christians, who are fearful or curious about end time events, and the number of books, cassette tapes, radio broadcasts, television shows, magazines, video tapes, etc., that are put out continually to discuss these matters is legion.

I have found many saints inside and outside of Babylon to be focused on these matters. I get "emergency" e-mails from saints who have heard some new pronouncement of events that are occurring and they feel that everyone should know about it, although the reason why is often unclear, for quite often there is nothing the saint can do about this "emergency" matter.

The tone of the letters I get from people who are focused on these issues is always the same, they are full of fear. Some people are angry as well, but fear is always present. Focusing on what evil men are doing in the world always produces fear in the hearts of God's children.

Focus is vastly important for the saint who would journey toward Zion. Our focus should be on the joy set before us, not the plans and schemes of wickedness in this world. A focus on Yahshua will produce peace and faith in the life of the saint. A focus on the conspiracies of wicked men and of angels will produce a troubled soul and stir up fear.

Consider the account of Peter and the other disciples who were crossing the Sea of Galilee on a stormy night when they saw Yahshua walking on the water. The disciples were afraid that they were soon to be under the water, drowned and dead, while Yahshua demonstrated how to put the water under His feet. Peter called out to his Master and said, "Lord, if it is really You, then bid me come to you on the water." In reply Yahshua said, "Come."

Matthew 14:29-31

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Yahshua. But when he saw the

wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Yahshua reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

Peter was able to put the stormy water under his feet while he looked to Yahshua. The scriptures say that he "walked on water and came toward Yahshua." Never before had it ever been recorded that any man had walked on water. What Peter did was extraordinary. It was miraculous, and he did it because he saw Yahshua doing it and Peter's eyes were on Yahshua.

But then Peter looked to the wind and the waves. He took his eyes off of Yahshua and looked at the raging storm around him, and we are told that "he was afraid and beginning to sink." No longer was Peter able to do the miraculous when his focus was taken off of his Savior. Instead fear gripped his heart and he began to succumb to the wind and the storm.

When Peter cried out for Yahshua to save him we are told that Yahshua immediately reached out His hand and caught Peter. I am confident that Peter's focus then returned to his Savior, that he saw his hand in Yahshua's hand, and his faith returned and he was able to return to the boat.

Notice how critical focus was to this entire episode. In the midst of the storm when Peter kept his eyes on the Savior he was able to rise above the stormy waters and place them under his feet. We live in days when many storms are stirring and they are about to break forth upon this world with great suddenness and fury. Yet we can rise above the storms, putting them under our feet, and maintain a peace and a calm in the midst of the storm. To do so we must focus on Yahshua. If we look at the storms and make them our focus we will succumb to fear and will be overwhelmed by them. We can only walk as Overcomers as we keep our eyes on Messiah.

Focus is vastly important for the saint who would journey toward Zion.

Many are making the storms of this world their focus. By constantly paying attention to what is going on in the world as it relates to wicked men and their schemes,

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these saints are filling their minds with fear and they are being assailed by doubts. As they see the schemes of evil men moving forward they become fearful of the power of these same men. Yet evil men are merely pawns in God's hands. They can do nothing without His permission. Their power is an illusion. The early apostles understood this.

Acts 4:23-29

And when they had been released, they went to their own companions, and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. And when they heard this, they lifted their voices to God with one accord and said, "O Lord, it is Thou who didst make the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that is in them, who by the Holy Spirit, through the mouth of our father David Thy servant, didst say, 'Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples devise futile things? The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ.' For truly in this city there were gathered together against Thy holy servant Jesus, whom Thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever Thy hand and Thy purpose predestined to occur.

Did you note that it said that Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles (Romans) and the people of Israel only did

*Yahshua would not focus
on the schemes of
wickedness.*

what Yahweh's hand and purpose had predestined? They simply fulfilled the plan of God. It was necessary that the Messiah should suffer and then die for the sins of the people. Satan did not have a victory

on the day Yahshua was crucified. It was the day of Satan's doom.

In the same way there are many people today who are raging against God and they are devising futile things. Kings (mighty ones) are taking their stand, and rulers are gathering together (conspiring). Yet not a one will prevail in their wickedness. Certainly, many saints will be martyred, even as Yahshua was martyred, but the end will be glory for the saints and judgment for the wicked.

Why focus on what wicked men are doing? The predestined purposes of Yahweh are moving forward and they cannot be turned. Has it not been prophesied that in the

last days men will wax worse and worse? Has it not been foretold that wickedness will abound? Why make this wickedness your focus? It will only bring trouble to your spirit. Instead, focus on Christ. He will put every enemy under His feet. He will rule the world with a rod of iron, and He will use His saints to accomplish these things.

Follow Yahshua's own example when people came to Him to disturb Him with news of a conspiracy being birthed by King Herod to capture Him.

Luke 13:31-32

Just at that time some Pharisees approached, saying to Him, "Go away, leave here, for Herod wants to kill You." And He said to them, "Go and tell that fox, "Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I reach My goal.'"

The Pharisees wanted Yahshua to be manipulated by fear. They wanted Him to change His plans to avoid the schemes of wicked men. But look at Yahshua's confidence. He would not allow fear to rule for even one minute. He would not focus on the schemes of wickedness. Instead He declared that nothing could be done to Him until the time set by the Father. He said, "I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I reach my goal." Herod could not change the timetable of God by so much as a second.

This is the confidence that God would have the Elect to walk in today. Know that it is the Father that orders the steps of the righteous. The Elect are not at the mercy of scheming men or fallen angels. Their lives are kept in the palm of the Father's hand. Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ: not tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword, neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing. We are always kept in the love of God. No New World Order, no secret society, no international banker, no world government, no scheme of man, can do anything to alter the plan of Yahweh for our lives. He alone orders our steps, and He will bring us forth victorious over all.

I am not saying that we should be ignorant of the day and time we live in. It is well and good to know that things are marching forward to a great confrontation between good and evil, between the kingdom of light

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and the kingdom of darkness. There is nothing wrong with being aware of what is going on in the world, but we should not make it our focus. We should make Yahweh our focus, and we should know what He says about these days. Let the nations rage and peoples plot futile conspiracies. Yahweh's predestined plan will be accomplished right on time and in the exact manner that He has determined.

You can know that you live in stormy times without making the storm your focus. What possible benefit is there in staring at the wind and the waves, looking intently to the schemes and actions of sinful men? You will only find your soul troubled as you do so and your faith will flee away. Heed the words of Paul to the Hebrew believers:

Hebrews 12:1-2

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Yahshua, the author and perfecter of faith...

Those who run a race with diligence are those who are focused on the finish line. They are not staring at the crowds in the stadium, nor looking to the flowers and grass planted beside the race track. They are focused on the goal. In the same way the Overcomers are to focus on Christ who is the goal and sum of all things for the saint. Let us "fix our eyes" on Yahshua. Let us have our eyes fastened and immovable upon Him. Then we will rise above the storm and the waves, and we will find every enemy under our feet.

There are many people who will come to you in the same way that the Pharisees came to Yahshua, and they will tell you of some plot or conspiracy that is being hatched in this sinful world by wicked men. Don't give into the temptation to run and hide. Don't focus on the vain plots of men and their raging against God and His anointed ones. Respond as did Yahshua. Tell them a thing or two. Tell them that you will do the will of God until you have reached the end of the race, and then you will have reached your goal. It is Yahweh that determines where the finish line is for each saint, not man.

Stand firm in your confidence in God. Storms will come. Men's hearts will fail them for fear due to the calamities

to come upon this world, but those whose eyes are on Yahshua will be kept in peace. Is there anything you cannot endure if you have peace?

Fix your eyes on Yahshua. Fix them and do not look to the right or to the left. Refuse the bait when people come and tell you to focus on the wind and the waves. Remain steadfast.

Fix your eyes on Yahshua.

Chapter 10 - Zion's Gates

The chapters of this book have examined many of the ambushes, traps, and snares along the road as one journey from Babylon to Zion. Not all such hazards can be addressed in one book, and this writer has spoken only of those things that he has personally encountered. I pray that many might be helped along their own journey by the words recorded here, and that they might overcome all and reach their goal.

Fix your eyes on
Yahshua.

The first chapter of this book spoke of Babylon, and attempted to give some definition to it. It seems fitting that the last chapter should speak of Zion. Zion is the goal set before the saint, but what is Zion? We have mentioned some things that are characteristic of Zion throughout the book, and we have contrasted it with Babylon.

In chapter one it was mentioned that, at its heart, Babylon represents a spiritual principle, and we must conclude the same for Zion. If Babylon represents mankind attempting to ascend to God by their own labor, sweat, and efforts, then Zion in contrast must be a people who are at rest, resting in the finished work of Yahshua. If Babylon is typified by men and women living according to the leading of their flesh and soul, then Zion is typified by those who walk by the Spirit. If Babylon is unbelief and sin, then Zion is faith and obedience.

The pathway to Zion is the way of the cross, and those who are citizens of Zion are being conformed to the im-

The Road from Babylon to Zion

age of Christ as they submit to the purging, refining, and purification of Yahweh.

In the Old Testament, Zion was identified as one of the hills, the highest hill, in Jerusalem. It was the hill that David's throne sat upon. Yet Zion and Jerusalem were not part of Israel when David became King. This man with the heart after God had to take it by force. David saw Jerusalem and Zion as beautiful and he wanted them for his capital, his home, his dwelling place.

II Samuel 5:6-8

And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who spoke to David, saying, "You shall not come in here; but the blind and the lame will repel you," thinking, "David cannot come in here." Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion (that is, the City of David). Now David said on that day, "Whoever climbs up by way of the water shaft and defeats the Jebusites (the lame and the blind, who are hated by David's soul), he shall be chief and captain." Therefore they say, "The blind and the lame shall not come into the house."

What awesome prophecies and spiritual truths are revealed in these words. When David went to capture Jerusalem, the stronghold of Zion, the Jebusites who inhabited it said that the lame and the blind would be able to keep David out. David in return said that his soul hated the lame and the blind, and the saying arose that the blind and the lame would not come into the habitation of Zion (II Samuel 5:6-8). The blind represent those without spiritual vision, and the lame those who fail in obedience. Those who dwell in Zion must have spiritual vision and obedience.

*Those who dwell in Zion
must have spiritual
vision...*

It is quite striking that the manner in which historians and archaeologists have identified Zion's hill today is by finding the spring that feeds the water channel that supplied water to Zion. This water channel was the path that David's army took to enter into Zion and wrest it from the Jebusites. Astonishingly, the spring of water today is called the "Virgin's Fount."

What a picture this is of spiritual truth. One must battle

to enter into Zion, and the entrance is through the Virgin's Fount. Water is for cleansing and all those who enter Zion must be cleansed. What a perfect correlation this is to John's words that the 144,000 are on Zion and they are all virgins, not having been defiled by women.

Revelation 14:1-5

Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps. And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth. These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste (virgins). These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb. And no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless.

It is certainly no coincidence that the spring that provides water to Zion is called the Virgin's Fount today. This depiction of those who inhabit Zion as virgins has nothing to do with men or women who are physical virgins. The scriptures are speaking of spiritual virgins. We see this symbolism used in Paul's writings.

II Corinthians 11:2

For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.

Those who are pure virgins are those who remain pure in their devotion to Christ. They are not harlots in their affections. They do not profess love of Christ and also harbor a love for the world and its idols. They have been cleansed and purified of all other loves until they are focused only upon one thing, which is Christ. The next verse reveals what constitutes unfaithfulness.

II Corinthians 11:3

But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the sim-

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plicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

We are called to a pure and simple devotion to Christ. He is to be our only desire and our single pursuit. Many are the saints who profess devotion to Christ, but their lives reveal that they are devoted to other things. They labor for that which perishes, and they fail to walk in the Spirit fulfilling all obedience and walking in all truth. These are not pure virgins. In their hearts they desire Christ and something else. Self has not been crucified.

Those who are the 144,000 dwelling on Mount Zion are pure virgins in their devotion to Christ. When Yahshua calls they respond with obedience, even to the crucifying of their own flesh, will and desires. They may struggle, but in the end they will respond, "Not my will, but Your will be done."

In an earlier chapter we looked at those things that are promised to the Overcomer in Christ. The 144,000 are overcomers and will partake of all these promises. The number 144,000 does not necessarily speak of the actual number of saints anymore than virgins speaks of those who have never had sexual relations. Revelation is a book of symbols that must be interpreted by the Spirit of Yahweh. In another passage in Revelation John reveals that the 144,000 are comprised of 12,000 saints from twelve different tribes of Israel. This too is symbolic speech.

Twelve is the number of divine government and election. Yahweh chose twelve tribes to represent Him to the world. Yahshua chose twelve disciples to do the same. The 144,000 represent the elect of God who are called to rule and reign with Him. Symbolically they are 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes of Israel.

They are firstfruits unto God, the first to be conformed to the image of Christ. These have submitted voluntarily to the cross during their life on earth. They have walked in faith and chosen a path of obedience to God. They have been aliens and strangers in this world and have had no permanent home here, looking instead to the promises of God. They have not been as Esau who traded his birthright for a pot of stew, fulfilling of his fleshly desires while sacrificing his inheritance. The Overcomers have chosen Yahweh over the world.

I John 2:15-17

Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

James is even more plain, and he uses language that is in perfect agreement with what John has written regarding the 144,000 virgins on Mount Zion.

James 4:4

You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

If adulteresses are those who are friends (lovers) of the world, then virgins are those who deny the world and love only Christ. Zion is a place of heavenly vision, where the saints look beyond that which their natural senses report to see into the heavenlies. That is why the blind cannot enter into Zion. The blind see only what their physical senses report. The blind live always in the physical to attain the pleasure of the moment. The blind will not choose to turn away from the pursuit of the things of this present world, for they do not see the better and more glorious inheritance that lies ahead.

Zion is a realm of purity.

Zion is a realm of purity. Babylon is a corrupt mixture which is detestable in the sight of God. Babylon mixes the pursuit of Christ with a pursuit of the world and all it offers. Zion has come out of Babylon, out of mixture, into a pure devotion to Christ.

Is Christ alone enough to satisfy you, or do you, along with the manna from heaven, also cry out for quail to satisfy your flesh? Is it sufficient in your heart to have only Christ, and to forego any demand that you have all the nice things that others have? Are you content to know lack in the things of the world, and still consider

The Road from Babylon to Zion

yourself rich in Christ? Or do you murmur and complain that you do not have all the luxuries that are afforded to others?

Those who do not have eyes to perceive the riches of Christ will always cry out for quail. The manna that has come down out of heaven does not satisfy them. The manna (Christ) feeds the spirit, but many saints want to feed the flesh as well. If God were to determine that you were to live as one who is destitute in this life with no home of your own, no new cars, no nice clothes, suffering lack even in the area of food, would you be satisfied?

There was a time during the 18 months that the Father forbid me to work when we did not have any meat in the

For a time we got down to having only a bag of grits...

house. For a time we got down to having only a bag of grits and some butter. In the darkest hour we even went without electricity in the house and I had to cook the grits on a gas grill outside. Yet during this time

the Father gave me the grace to thank Him that we had food and that we were not going hungry. I meant this with all the sincerity of my heart.

When we did not have meat I thanked Yahweh for what we did have. I did not want to be as the generation of Israelites in the wilderness that murmured and complained against God. I did not want to be disqualified from entering into the promised rest. Though I did not demand it, the Father did give us meat. It was only a short time that we were without meat, and it would have been a short time for Israel, too had they not murmured and complained. They did not have to die in the wilderness. They did not have to suffer a forty year delay to enter into the promised land.

What the Israelites underwent was a symbolic representation of the test before the saints today. Yahshua declared that He is the bread come down out of heaven. In the same way He is testing the saints to see if they will be satisfied with Him, and Him alone. All those who travel to Zion will go through wilderness places. They will know lack in some manner or another. It may be a lack of food. It may be a lack of clothing. It may be a lack of shelter. It may be enduring sickness. It may be deprivation of any number of things. Yahweh will allow us to suffer these things to see whether we are pure virgins in

our hearts, or not.

Will we blubber like babies saying, "Did you bring us out to this wilderness to die?" Will we demand quail, and dream of the leeks and onions that others are eating? Or will we be satisfied with Christ, our manna, our daily bread?

I am speaking from a place of experience when I say that the test is not easy. Our flesh desires many things that compete with our devotion to Christ. We must crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts (Galatians 5). When the flesh yearns for that which is withheld by the will of God, we must buffet our body and keep it under subjection to the spirit. We must make the good confession that we are satisfied with Christ alone.

This is the purity of devotion found in the inhabitants of Zion.

The glory and fulfillment and joy and satisfaction of those who dwell in Zion is seen in this verse that we have looked at already:

Revelation 14:1

Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.

Do you see it? The Lamb is standing on Mount Zion along with the 144,000. The Lamb is in the midst of Zion. The Lamb has been the focus of those who left Babylon. The Lamb has been their passion and desire. It is for the Lamb that they have endured rejection, shame, scorn, heartache, lack and many other things. It is in pursuit of the Lamb that they have known sorrow and grief. The saints of Zion have been pursuing the Lamb, and now having attained the goal they find themselves dwelling with the Lamb of God. Hallelu-Yah.

Isaiah 51:11-12

So the ransomed of Yahweh will return and come with joyful shouting to Zion, and everlasting joy will be on their heads. They will obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing will flee away. I, even I, am He who

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comforts you.

Hebrews 12:1-2

Therefore..., let us run with endurance the race that is set before us..., fixing our eyes on Yahshua.

Yahshua is the glory of Zion. He is the joy set before every saint of God, yet many saints are blind and lame. They do not see the glory of Yahshua, nor will they make the effort to follow hard after Him. For this reason the blind and the lame will not enter the habitation of Zion.

If you see the glory of Christ, if He has become your passionate pursuit, the Lily of the Valley, the Pearl of great price, if He is that which you desperately seek, then blessed are you. May you rise up on strong legs and swift feet and pursue Him to the end.

The gates of Zion await you, and inside is the everlasting joy.

*Yahshua is the glory
of Zion.*

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PARABLES PRECEPT—The Hebrew Alphabet



(Image source: Ancient Hebrew Resource Center's Website)

The Hebrew letter pictured above is Resh. The word Resh in Hebrew means “head,” and it is believed that the early pictograph for this letter was an image of a man’s head.

Abraham, and his descendants for many centuries were shepherds. The word for shepherd in Hebrew is *ra-ah*.

Ra-ah - 

It is spelled with the letter Resh, which is a man’s head, followed by the letter Ayin, which is an eye. A shepherd is one who closely watches over the flock. This understanding has continued even into modern times, but is often applied to a minister’s duties in overseeing the church, which is called the flock of God.

The apostle Paul spoke the fol-

lowing words to the elders of the early church.

Acts 20:28-29

Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock...

A spiritual shepherd today is one who continues to observe carefully the flock of God that he might properly care for them and defend them against all enemies.