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NO.237

## A STONE OF STUMBLING

### THE DAY OF GOD

Paul received the great commission to take the Gospel to the Gentiles. His anointing in the revelations for the Church is unsurpassed, but we should not ignore Peter to whom Jesus directed the question, *“Who say ye that I am?”* It was Peter who was first to receive the answer directly from the Father *“Thou art the Christ.”*

If we count the book of Hebrews, Paul has posted fourteen epistles while Peter has only two, but these two are most impressive indeed for Peter wrote about the things that are to take place at the end of this age.

*“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt away with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”*

*“Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?”* (II Pet.3: 10,12)

Peter is describing a day when all things that men have set up and trusted are dissolved by fire. At the same time, he is telling us to look for that day and to hasten its coming. To hasten is to cause to hurry. Indeed who among us is not desiring to see God's kingdom come quickly in our earth? But are we yearning to be consumed by fire? Are we praying for the end of this Adam man? YES.

The desires of our hearts and the prayer that Jesus taught us to pray are hastening or causing to hurry the day that dissolves the heavens and melt the elements with fervent heat.

We know by the Spirit that this kind of fire cannot be extinguished by our valiant firefighters. This is the fire that reduces the works of men to ashes. This is the Day of the Lord and the devouring fire that the prophet Joel saw. This day began in us. The Adam man and all its works were finished on the cross and now we are seeing the consuming of that work as governments, nations and even civilizations collapse; this is the fire of God.

Peter reminds us of the day when the Lord destroyed the world by water. *“Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”*(II Pet.3: 6-7)

We know that God had purposed all things from the foundation of the world and that *“..the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world.”* (Rev.13: 8b) At the set time, all these things have been coming to pass in the earth. What was God's purpose for the destruction that took place in Noah's day?

*“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the*

*thoughts of his heart was only evil continually...And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.” (Gen.6: 5,7,8)*

God warned Noah of what He was about to do. He gave him detailed instructions on how to build the ark that would save the seed of life in the earth. As it is in our day, evil peaked in the days of Noah and it was also the end of an age.

But God in His grace and mercy had made a way to preserve the seed of life in the earth. At that time Noah was the savior that God chose. His name means “comfort” and indeed he was the 'comforter' who heard from God and made the way for them out of the storm. Now, Christ is our Savior. His Spirit comforts us with His Word of truth as He makes all things new within and without.

We know that God has no plan to destroy His beautiful creation but the cross of Jesus His Son unequivocally declares that the earth (body) and heaven (carnal mind) of the Adam man has its end. All that the Adam man has built, God is consuming by fire. In Noah's day, life was preserved in the ark and in our day, life is preserved in Christ.

## REPENTANCE

Peter declared, *“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”* (II Pet.3: 9) This is clear: God's will is that all men come to repentance. It is also clear that without repentance man will perish.

Paul tells us that it is the GOODNESS OF GOD THAT LEADS TO REPENTANCE. Repentance is not something we can work up or that some of us are endowed with more than others; it is the goodness of God that leads us there. But what does the “goodness of God” consist of? Could it be that it is the goodness of God that creates the fires that brings a man to repentance? Indeed, this is the pur-

pose of the fires. Each will go through as much fire as is needed to bring total repentance. This is God's will.

The fire that Jesus has kindled in the earth is doing its perfect work. *“I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?”* (Luke 12: 49) Our God is a consuming fire and the closer we come to the day of His appearing, the hotter the fire becomes.

But we have an Ark of safety. It is Christ within. It is His very nature come forth in a people. As it was in the time of the building of the temple, the stones have been chiseled and shaped in the quarry. Then without the sound of a hammer, they have been placed in order where they fit. This has been accomplished by the power of God's Spirit. The Body of Christ is the temple where God abides in the earth and it is the only place of refuge.

The prophet Obediah saw that *“Saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the Lord's.”* (Obe.Vs.21) These saviours are the sons of God who will rule and reign with Christ and bring deliverance to the groaning and suffering creation. The day of fire indeed is an awesome day, but it is the love of God come to set all men free.

## THE STUMBLING STONE

It is only as we mature in Christ and His light penetrates our understanding that we begin to think the thoughts of God. *“But as it is written, eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”* (I Cor. 2: 9-10)

The Spirit has taken us on a treasure hunt. Little by little, He has been answering the questions that even angels sought after but could not know. He has been revealing the secret things that God has prepared for us. This is the way “resurrection” works in us. It takes place day by day as we walk with Him

even as Enoch walked with Him and was not. The Spirit within is constantly revealing hidden truths to us so some days we seem to see clearly and then everything is fuzzy again. As we open our spiritual ear to hear, the Spirit unveils the riches that are hid in the Christ within.

Peter tells us that the Day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night. This means that while people sleep, the thief comes without warning. Indeed, the entire world is in the darkness of night. The people are spiritually asleep. They may see changes taking place in the world around them, but they are not aware that these are the result of huge changes that are happening in the heavens...they are *passing away with a great noise!*

The “heavens” that have been ruling and governing the affairs of men, are the minds of those who control societies and nations and set up laws for them to follow. Some of these minds are brilliant and others are cruel and despotic. Today we see a new phenomenon brought about by the way that the people are connected through the Internet and social media. The people in darkness are now united and no longer passive; they are violently rebelling against governments. Evil is destroying itself. This also is the fire of God.

It was when we yielded ourselves to the Lord that He came into our lives and changed our heavens (minds). We became new creatures. The things and the people who were once our friends, dropped out of our lives. The “heavens” that once ruled us passed away and we began a new walk, guided by the Word of God who became Lord of our lives.

He began this work in His called out people. It was very sudden when the Lord came to me and changed my life completely. My plans, my goals were no longer the same. My heavens, the mind and thoughts that had led me passed away with a great noise. The Day of the Lord had begun for me.

Peter writes, *“Also the works that are therein shall be burned up.”* The things that had been established by man: cultures and even civilizations are being consumed by fire. Our God is a consuming fire. Is

it any wonder that the world around us is in turmoil? Everything that man has set up is being consumed to make way for the new heavens and the new earth.

We are coming to the end of an age and His church in all her glory is ready to appear. She has been purified by fire. There was a day when she was lukewarm as Laodicea. She thought she was *“rich and increased with goods and had need of nothing; He called her wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”*(Rev.3: 17)

Jesus had gone through the uttermost fire himself when with great love He spoke to her heart and counseled her. *“I counsel thee to buy gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich.”* (Vs.18a) She took His counsel and bought gold tried in the fire. This means that she turned away from loving the material goods of this world and she sought after the enduring things of Spirit, even God's nature.

God does not count the things of this world as riches. John exhorts us, *“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”*(I Jn.2:15)

God's fire does not only burn out the dross, it produces refined gold- gold tried in the fire. God's gold is not free. When His church found the gold of the Spirit, He led her through the fire. She did not just learn the truth, she became truth. When I learned that I had to love and forgive even those who resented me, He put me through circumstances that proved my heart.

We learn the lesson by the book and then we are tested through the fires of life. *When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.”* (Isa.43: 2b) We cannot take this work in our own hands, we cannot kindle the fires ourselves, but the Spirit will lead us in the right way and at the right time.

Jesus also counsels His church to go and buy *“white raiment that she may be clothed and that the shame of her nakedness may not appear.”* Raiment

speak of covering of the flesh body. Garments to cover the shame of the Adam man. This has nothing to do with long or short sleeves or long or short skirts although we are called to modesty. Above all she must be clothed with His righteousness. This speaks of our conduct, actions and attitudes.

He first separates us from the love of the world and its pleasures and He delivers us from religious spirits that seek the admiration of man. His Holy Spirit leads us through the fiery trials that change our hearts and our conduct. We are no longer naked and shameful. We are clothed with new garments.

Let us not confuse this work with our own works of righteousness which are so desirable in our eyes but are as filthy rags to the Lord. The Holy Spirit raises us above the need to be acceptable to those who demand that we follow the traditions of men and who pile guilt on us when we refuse.

The Spirit teaches us to not feel guilty when we no longer meet the ideals of our friends and even family. This is costly but such are the garments that we need to buy and to wear. If our friends turn from us, then they were not our friends to begin with. If our family turns against us then they had too much control over our lives. We no longer wear the same "garments;" we have changed our robes. *"Our inward man is renewed day by day."* (II Cor.4:16b)

Then Jesus counsels her to anoint her eyes with eye salve that she may see. As individuals and as a church we need to see. There is an old proverb that declares, *"In the kingdom of the blind, the one-eyed man is king."* Indeed, He has revealed much truth to us and if we compare ourselves to the totally blind, we are rulers in the Spirit.

But if we stand next to our Lord, we find that we indeed need eye salve. He is the One who has this precious salve. It is an anointing that keeps opening our understanding to His Word so that we can joyfully say, *"I was blind but now I see!"*

We buy this anointing from Him as He speaks to us and we receive His Word. This sounds simple but I have found that there were things He spoke to me that were hard to receive. I have even tried to find

another interpretation to dreams I did not want to know. But sooner or later I was convicted and had to submit to the truth. The cost of the eye salve is great because it calls on us to lay aside our strong opinions and to squarely face the truth. Understanding is our seeing eye. When we understand something we may even exclaim, *"Oh! I see!"*

It is when our hearts are ready to submit to His ways that we are able to see by the Spirit. Our carnal minds judge everything and everyone by the worldly and sophisticated standard of man's traditions. The traits that our ancestors passed down to us are ever present in our carnal minds and our flesh leans toward them; our deliverance is in the cross.

As long as I still identify myself after the ways of my ancestry, I am blind and cannot see. But when the same Spirit that kept the Lord Jesus on the cross, keeps me there also, I find the eye-salve to heal my spiritual blindness.

We are truly on a journey and as we walk, the Spirit of truth reveals more truth to us daily. If we do not reject the truth, we are anointing our eyes with eye salve. As we walk, we leave behind the traditions of our youth and also the traditions that the church has instilled in us.

There may have been a time when some of us rejected the truth of the Baptism in the Holy Ghost and especially speaking in tongues. We may have found ourselves stubbornly saying that tongues were of the devil and we closed the door to the Spirit and remained blind.

We may have embraced the "rapture" theory as a way of escape. Some of my Baptist neighbors have staked their hope on the rapture and will not be moved. It is a tactic of the enemy to take a truth and build error on it. This is why the Baptism with the Holy Ghost is vital to our spiritual awakening. He is the Spirit of truth who leads us into all truths.

### **THE STONE THAT THE BUILDERS REJECTED**

After the Holy Ghost came down in the upper room, the disciples began to follow the Spirit and to

teach according to what they were hearing directly from Him. They had no “New Testament” available for them to check things out. There were the Scriptures but most of them were fishermen and were not educated in these things. Jesus had called them out and had led them each day, but now He was gone. So they found a new sure way. They found the sure witness of the Holy Spirit within.

When Paul came on the scene, he was well learned in the Scriptures. He was a highly educated Pharisee who had been taught by one of the most prestigious teachers of that time: Gamaliel. Yet he declared, *“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood. Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.”* (Gal. 1: 15-18)

His mother's womb was Judaism and Paul said God separated him from that. Paul did not go to New Testament seminary nor was he taught by the apostles who actually walked with Jesus. Paul spent three years alone in the desert listening to the Holy Spirit who had called him. His great credentials as a Pharisee of Pharisees was of no value as a Christian. His new credentials were his times spent hearing from the Spirit of God.

This is the way God ordains those that He calls to the ministry of the Word. How many times have I been asked, *“Where did you learn all this? Who taught you?”* When I answer that I learn by dreams and revelations of the Spirit, they turn away and cannot believe.

If I said I had graduated from Harvard's school of Divinity, I would earn their great respect. **The word that comes by revelation of the Holy Spirit is the stumbling block and the stone that the builders have rejected and still reject.** Those who were called to build the church upon the foundation rejected the Word of truth that the Spirit was speaking

to them. Thus they rejected the head stone and they built their own religious structures and not the true temple.

The first disciples of Jesus and the apostle Paul all taught what the Spirit was teaching them each day. For this reason they encountered contradicting views on some of their teachings, but their hearts were right and they began to build the spiritual body that we are continuing and finishing today.

Peter taught many great revelations. It was Paul who established the church in the deepest truths. Reconciliation was current and uncontested among the first disciples. As Paul wrote, they were committed to that word, *“To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.”* (II Cor. 5: 19-20)

Paul's revelation was clear; God was reconciling THE WORLD to Himself and that was the message that God had committed to Him and to all the ministers of the Gospel. They had been made “ambassadors” which means they were not representing themselves or their own ideas, but they were speaking according to the words of their King. There was no argument, they were told that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.

As time went, the Spirit began to reveal more and more how that reconciliation was to take place. First the sons of God would come to full maturity (perfection) and they would deliver from corruption and death. In Rome this Gospel encountered more opposition. The Greeks and the Romans were at two opposite ends of the pole. The Greeks had their many gods depicting love and abundance while the Romans were people of law and order.

When the Roman Emperor Augustine was converted to Christ, He made Christianity the state religion. By law he enforced the rules and regulations of the newly founded Roman Catholic (universal) Church. As any good Roman believed, law and or-

der were a priority so the church imposed the law upon the Christians as well. The ways of hearing the Word by the Spirit of revelation became a thing of the past. The church now taught according to its own catechism and stressed the punishment in hell for all who did not adhere to its teachings.

Now, the word committed to the ministers was no longer the word of “reconciliation” but the word of condemnation, purgatory and damnation. This way the church held the people in bondage, *“If you disobey the church you are doomed to hell.”*

Christians were no longer taught to follow the Spirit within, they were taught to follow the disciplines of the church and the rules of their catechism. The beautiful living, talking stone that was the head of the building had been rejected by the builders. It had become a stumbling block.

*“...Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.”* (I Pet.2: 6-8)

We are called to learn from the Spirit, not from man's manuals. He is the living, breathing Word who abides in us and speaks to us daily. If we do not experience this, we must seek Him for it. My earnest prayer for each one is that the Christ within will arise and overthrow the fear of man and the need to please the ministry. That the Spirit of revelation in the knowledge of Christ will open a whole new world of peace and gratitude toward God in our hearts.

In the centuries since Jesus' resurrection, those who have dared to hear by the Spirit have found that they were not received in the Christian churches of this world. They retreated and became the “underground” church that we know today. This is the way that the Spirit has continued to strive and to build the beautiful church adorned as a bride that John saw coming down from God out of heaven

(the invisible realm of Spirit).

Indeed the true church has been hid in Christ in God. She has been giving birth to the true Word and this Word has been caught up to the throne of God. It has been kept under the authority of the Spirit until the day of the great manifestation that in time will deliver the whole world from the bondage of death and corruption. Thus will be fulfilled the ministry of reconciliation and God will be all in all.

As each new teaching of the Spirit broke through the darkness, the established church rejected it and those who preached it were cast out as heretics and often persecuted. In its infancy, the doctrine of the “Sons of God,” the doctrine of the “Just shall live by faith” and of the “Baptism in the Holy Ghost” all suffered persecution from the already established Church in the world.

Later, these doctrines became acceptable. But it cannot be for the true doctrine of “reconciliation.” This is the Word that the enemy has often twisted and polluted. It is a Word that the world hates and cannot receive because it proclaims the end of the Adam man and all his works.

### **A CLEAN HEART IS NOT EASILY DECEIVED**

Even among those who hear from the Spirit there arises differences of interpretation. It has been this way since the time of the first disciples. Paul knew this and he urged the church to *“endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bound of peace...till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ..”* (Eph.4: 3,13)

The church in the world has long recognized evangelists, pastors and teachers, but they have substituted their own apostles and prophets for the real ones. The reason for this is that they have chosen some of the Scriptures as their creeds and have turned away from moving on to more truth. The sad thing is that this does not only apply to the church in the world but also to some who have

come out of the church.

Paul exhorts us to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bound of peace until we all have the clear revelation of the knowledge of the Son of God. We have the written word to confirm what the Spirit speaks to us, but again, that is subject to interpretation. We have one another to confirm as well but here we can be respecters of persons without realizing it. So it remains that *“As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”* (Rom.8: 14)

It is certain that each time the Spirit brings in a wave of new revelation, the religious spirits that hide in the carnal minds, stand ready to muddy the waters and twist the truth into error. This is the work of the dragon waiting to devour the Manchild. We have seen his tactics time and again over the centuries. How can we know that what we hear is the truth? We must yield ourselves to the Holy Spirit within. He will give us a clean heart and make us free from the bondage of man's control. Thus we will never be deceived.

God's Spirit is faithful to do this cleansing work in us daily. He reveals the evil in our own hearts and minds. He teaches us that the lust of the heart is what leads to deception. James says that *“Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.”* (Jms.1: 14) We can have strong desires (lust) to be first in the Kingdom of God and be drawn to false teachings.

The Spirit does not only reveal truth about God's purposes to us, He reveals truth about us. As we receive this, He corrects us. If we give more honor to man than to Christ, He will reveal this to us and keep us from deception.

When we receive His Word, the Holy Spirit is faithful to reveal our hearts and He is quick to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. As long as the elect yield themselves to the cleansing of the Spirit, they cannot be deceived.

This brings us to the “woman clothed with the sun” that John saw in his vision on Patmos. *“And she being with child cried travailing in birth, and*

*pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And the tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to DEVOUR HER CHILD AS SOON AS HE WAS BORN.”* (Rev.12: 2-4)

This woman is the true church and this “man-child” is the Word of God that she is bringing into being. This is not a one day future happening. Line upon line and precept upon precept, the Christ or Manchild has been formed in the womb of the church and the dragon who abides in the carnal mind has been ready to devour him.

Each time truth is revealed, the dragon is poised to destroy it. When he cannot do this, he simply takes it and twists it into error. Have you ever heard a truth from the Lord and shared it with someone who began analyzing it by their intellect or carnal understanding and before you knew it, the truth had lost all its glory and power? The dragon had devoured the Manchild. That Word could no longer live in you. It was distorted and shattered. This is the work of the dragon.

## APOKATASTASIS

This is a Greek word found in the New Testament. It means “restoration of the primordial condition.” That is to say the saving of the world or universal salvation. *“And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution (apokatastasis) of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”* (Acts 3: 20-21)

According to this verse, the coming or next appearing of Jesus Christ will bring the time of this great restitution. It is a primordial restoration which means it will restore all things to their primary condition. The dictionary gives the meaning of “primary” as “highest in rank, quality or importance.”

Over the centuries, this restoration has been a subject of contention. It is only as the Spirit moves

upon our minds that we grasp its true meaning. When the Lord reveals a truth to us, at first we see as the blind man to whom Jesus restored sight: he saw men as trees. In man's zeal, it is easy to run with something before it is fully revealed. Then we have error mixed with the truth. This is what happened with some of our popular doctrines. The rapture doctrine began with a young Scottish woman who had a vision that was interpreted literally as Christians being caught up in the sky to escape the great tribulations.

Later, in 1909 an American student by the name of Cyrus Schofield popularized a study Bible of the Protestant King James Version. In his footnotes he inserted the literal interpretation of the rapture according to the vision seen in Scotland. This took off like wild fire and became the doctrine that so many are trusting in. Obviously this doctrine robs the people from the need to yield to the corrective and cleansing work of the Spirit. While the tribulations are already at work in the world, they are just waiting to be "raptured" out of them all. So they feel no need to yield to the Spirit to be cleansed and ready to be overcomers in these last times.

Origen was a scholar and theologian of the third century and an advocate of the doctrine we know as "Universal Salvation." At times, he also preached the Gospel of "eternal hell" but it was clear that he only did this to scare the people into coming to church and abiding by its rules; this in view of being more economically effective. For his beliefs in Universal Salvation, Origen was posthumously excommunicated from the Catholic church and declared a heretic in the sixth century.

Paul established the first churches in Asia and preached the Gospel of grace and truth, "*For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*" (Jn.1: 17)

After the conversion of the Roman Emperor Constantine in the third to fourth century, Christianity became a state religion and the Roman Catholic (universal) Church brought in many laws and penances to govern the people. To keep them under control, the doctrine of eternal punishment became

part of the catechism of the church. All who did not abide in church doctrine were condemned to hell or purgatory. We know that many individuals were still hearing by the Spirit, but if they were known they suffered dreadful persecutions. We know of some who were burnt at the stake for disagreeing with church doctrine. Among many, Joan of Arc who was led by visions of God to deliver France from the enemy was inhumanly burnt at the stakes.

The answer to all our questions are contained in the Christ within. His sheep hear His voice and they are taught by His Holy Spirit. Jesus must have had this in mind when He said, "*And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*" (Jn.14: 16-17)

Indeed, He is our Comforter because He reveals truth to our hearts and minds. As He cleanses us from all the traditions that our ancestors and our teachers have instilled in us. As we yield ourselves to Him daily, He comforts us with truth. It is such great comfort to be persuaded by Him and to know THE TRUTH THAT MAKES US FREE.

My mission through these writings is not to influence you with what I believe. It is to urge you to seek the Spirit of truth who abides in you. I pray that my experiences might stir the witness of His Spirit in you and that His voice will become clearer to you each day. This is how we build one another in love.

May we love one another and leave each other free to seek Him and hear His voice. This is the commission we all have as called-out servants of Jesus Christ. In this way, He brings us to "... *the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*" (Eph.4: 13)

Because of His love, *Jackie Caporaso*